

The Global Dimensions of Britain and France's Crimean War Naval Campaigns against Russia, 1854-1856.

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Abstract

The Crimean War was fought far outside its namesake peninsula in the Black Sea Region. Between 1854 and 1856, Anglo-French naval forces attacked the Russian Empire in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific. These campaigns receive little attention from modern historians, and much of the work that does exist relies on a limited number of English-language sources. This dissertation, on the other hand, is a comprehensive examination of these campaigns built on a foundation of primary documents written in English, French, and Russian. It also synthesizes relevant secondary scholarship in order to provide a comprehensive background for the three major European belligerents and to consider the perspectives of the other polities impacted by the conflict, specifically Sweden-Norway, Denmark, China, and Japan.

This work's approach yields a more complete understanding of the worldwide context in which the Crimean War occurred. Ultimately, the wide-ranging imperial conflict that emerges starkly contrasts with customary depictions of the conflict as a petty, regionalized example noteworthy only as a cautionary tale of failed diplomacy and generalship or as a venue for advances in battlefield medicine, journalism, and photography.

La Guerre de Crimée se déroula aussi hors de sa péninsule éponyme dans la région de la Mer Noire. Entre 1854 et 1856, des forces franco-britanniques attaquèrent l'Empire Russe dans la Mer Baltique, la Mer Blanche, ainsi que dans l'Océan Pacifique. Ces campagnes ont reçu peu d'attention de la part des historiens des temps modernes, et la majorité de ces efforts se basent seulement sur des sources anglaises. Au contraire, ce mémoire contient une analyse exhaustive de ces campagnes se basant sur des documents originaux anglais, français et russes. Il synthétise les études modernes dans le but d'offrir un arrière-plan complet pour les trois grandes puissances européennes, ainsi que dans le but de considérer les perspectives des autres puissances impactées par le conflit, en particulier la Suède-Norvège, le Danemark, la Chine et le Japon.

L'approche de cette étude offre une compréhension exhaustive du contexte mondial dans lequel la Guerre de Crimée se déroula. Finalement, le conflit impérial de grande envergure qui émerge s'oppose aux présentations usuelles du conflit comme étant un insignifiant exemple régional de note seulement comme un avertissement d'une diplomatie et d'une stratégie échouée, ou simplement comme une avenue pour des progrès dans la médecine de guerre, le journalisme ainsi que la photographie.

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The inevitable typographic errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

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Introduction

More Than A Crimean War

The Crimean War was fought far from its namesake peninsula in what is now Ukraine. Between 1854 and 1856, British and French forces attacked Czarist Russia in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific Ocean. The latter two campaigns receive little attention from modern historians, and much of the work that does exist relies primarily or even exclusively on British archival sources. When it comes to understanding a multifaceted conflict, such a concentration is “excessively partial and limited.”¹ Fortunately, the pioneering works of area specialists and maritime historians have provided detailed analyses of the struggle for control of the Baltic between 1854 and 1856. Yet even those efforts have not adequately shaped our understanding of the conflict. As recently as 2004, the then-British Ambassador to Finland “pointed out that Finland was well over a thousand miles north of the Crimea” when the war’s sesquicentennial celebrations in Helsinki were first mentioned by a colleague.²

The Crimean War was not the type of ‘World War’ seen in the eighteenth, early nineteenth, or twentieth centuries. The Seven Years’ and Napoleonic Wars involved more extensive areas and many more belligerents in naval and land warfare “far more intense and prolonged” than anything seen between 1854 and 1856.³ Anglo-French campaigns against Russia in East Asia were not even the “First Pacific War” featured in the title of the only modern English-language monograph on the subject.⁴ The complexity of hostilities outside the Crimean Peninsula, though, illuminates the most appropriate method for examining the struggle. Considering the wide range of powers and issues ultimately demonstrates that the Crimean War was much more than a few battles and a siege in southern Ukraine. Events in the Baltic, White

¹ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), IX.

² Kirk, Matthew. “Crimea in Finland: Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Finland, Matthew Kirk, Describes the Impact of the Crimean War on That Country and How It Is Being Commemorated.” *History Today*, Vol. 54, No. 8 (August, 2004). Pgs. 3-4.

³ Fletcher, Ian and Natalia Ishchenko. *The Crimean War: A Clash of Empires*. (Staplehurst, UK: Spellmount, 2004), XI.

⁴ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008). A Russian work, Zavrazhnov, Yuri. [Russian-language]. *Forget The Admiral: A Historical Reflection with Investigation*. (Petropavlovsk, Russia: Novaia Kniga, 2005), also claims on its first page that the struggle “was the first world war.”

Sea, and Pacific instead mattered both in terms of understanding the conflict and its impact, which extended far beyond the narrow terms codified by the 1856 Treaty of Paris.

The prevailing scholarly view that the Crimean Peninsula and Black Sea “was certainly the most important theatre of war where the military decision was to be forced” is not incorrect, but is rather incomplete.⁵ *De facto* chief Allied strategist Sir James Graham, for one, never intended the assault on Sevastopol to be a siege at all, and instead called for a grand raid to precede a “more important spring campaign in the Baltic.”⁶ As British Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon put it, the “object of the expedition...should be...to finish the Eastern question in the Euxine (Black Sea) before the Baltic opens & we can pay a visit to Cronstadt.”⁷ Although a credible naval threat to the Russian Imperial Capital at St. Petersburg only materialized in 1856, by that point it was accompanied by mounting fiscal difficulties, a deteriorating diplomatic position, and an inadequate economic base. These reasons, rather than the loss of the peripheral Sevastopol fortress in September of 1855, prompted Czar Alexander II and his advisors to sue for peace. The multiplicity of factors contributing to the Russian Empire’s capitulation demands a comparative examination of all the Crimean conflict’s theaters, as well as the political and economic context that framed this imperial struggle.

Mid-nineteenth century conflict among the French, British, and Czarist empires was a seminal moment in a protracted competition for influence in the Baltic Region. Relations among these belligerents were further complicated by the involvement of neutral Sweden-Norway and Denmark, as well as the dynamics of Russia’s relationship with subject groups including Finns and Lapps. The interests of other neutral powers including Prussia and the Hapsburg Empire also came into play, but are already discussed at length in other, diplomatic histories of the conflict. Britain’s Royal Navy dispatched a fleet to the Baltic Sea prior to formal declarations of war in late March, 1854,⁸ and a French fleet followed. Allied diplomatic efforts in the Baltic also intensified following the outbreak of war, but were initially fruitless. Swedish-Norwegian King Oscar I’s numerous reservations combined with the indecisiveness of British Prime Minister

⁵ Fletcher and Ishchenko, XI.

⁶ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 159. See also: Lambert, Andrew. *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 46.

⁷ FO 519/170 [January 10th, 1854] (NA).

⁸ Britain and France declared war on March 27th and 28th respectively, with Russian responding in kind on April 11th. Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 119.

Aberdeen's divided coalition cabinet and Napoleon III's fickle approach to diplomacy to ensure that Sweden-Norway did not immediately enter the fray. This was especially problematic because an even more pressing problem confronted British and French forces in the Baltic: how to assault major Russian coastal fortifications without sustaining massive casualties. Imaginative proposals involving toxic fumes and damming major rivers with sunken warships aside, the effectiveness of Allied squadrons against Russian fortifications was limited. The vulnerabilities of even the most advanced wooden-hulled warships, a lack of gunboats and mortar vessels, and aimless mandates born from poor strategic planning all conspired against the prospect of immediate Allied success in the region, as did a complex and difficult-to-enforce blockade. With time, however, British and French forces did manage to undertake several significant operations. 1854 saw the siege and capture of Bomarsund in the Åland Islands, which lie between Finland and Sweden. A year later, Anglo-French forces bombarded the Sveaborg Fortress complex, which protected the harbor of Helsingfors (modern Helsinki). A 'Great Armament' of flotilla craft threatened to surpass even this destruction in 1856, but Russia accepted peace terms before a naval assault could be executed on St. Petersburg's defenses.

Russian shores and seaborne commerce also faced attack from France and Britain in the White Sea. These northern waters had been a major outlet for Russian trade centuries before the Czars won access to the Baltic. Allied operations in the White Sea were nowhere near as extensive as those in the Baltic and Pacific. Nevertheless, they serve to highlight pressing issues in international maritime law. In fact, the principles enshrined in the 1856 Paris Declaration Respecting Maritime Law became one of the cornerstones of a modern legal framework that prohibits time-honored practices of naval warfare such as privateering. French involvement in the 1855 White Sea Campaign also yielded knowledge relating to the treatment of scurvy. Russian accounts of events such as the 1854 British bombardment of the fortified Solovetsky Monastery complex, meanwhile, reveal significant differences in attitudes towards the press and propaganda in both the Russian and British Empires.

Wartime events in the Pacific Ocean fit into an even larger puzzle of the multifaceted imperial interests that intersected with the aspirations of East Asian governments and the United States. British and French naval squadrons in the region were focused on aggressively defending or even creating commercial opportunities rather than destroying them. The Crimean War's belligerents, in fact encountered a range of neutral powers in the Pacific with dramatically

different capabilities, from an expansionist United States to a vulnerable Kingdom of Hawaii. Conflict also ensured that its belligerents would consider how to acquire or defend distant colonies, especially neighboring Alaska and Vancouver Island. Unlike in other regions, though, Russian statesmen managed to use the Crimean conflict in the Pacific to their advantage. Russia's reward was the extraction of substantial territorial concessions from a faltering Qing China and commercial concessions from Tokugawa Japan that went beyond those obtained by the United States and Britain.

Allied forces in the Pacific, meanwhile, were required to remain vigilant against piracy in South Asian waters and to attempt to forestall any American annexation of Hawaii. They were also had to confront France's main concern in the Pacific; Russian "corsairs," or privateers outfitted in American ports such as San Francisco. Conditions favorable to Western commerce also had to be forcibly maintained or even created in the face of domestic unrest in China and South America and an oft-uncooperative government in Japan. British and Russian efforts to 'open' Tokugawa Japan were closely connected to the Crimean War, but remain less studied than those of an American squadron led by Commodore Matthew Perry. This further illustrates the fact that French, Russian, and especially British interests in the Pacific during the 1850s were complex and not easily reducible to a straightforward trilateral conflict between 1854 and 1856.

The Crimean War influenced historical events ranging from the sale of Alaska to the Swedish retention of the Finmark (Finnmark) region in northern Norway. Yet the Peace of Paris did not contain territorial redistributions or dramatic regime changes found in other settlements, such as the Treaty of Versailles. Czarist possessions including Finland and Poland had to wait another six decades before obtaining independence through armed conflict. Napoleon III of France continued to pursue an adventurous foreign policy from Mexico to modern Vietnam in the years that followed, and competition between the British and Russian Empires in Central Asia actually became more acute in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Most tellingly, the Crimean War was not even the last war between Czarist Russia and Ottoman Turkey. Scarcely two decades after the 1856 Treaty of Paris, Russian and Turkish forces, along with those of smaller powers such as Romania, again clashed in the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia. The pattern was repeated on an even larger scale during the First World War. Regardless, it is a mistake to view the Crimean War as insignificant because of the limited terms on which it formally ended. The following chapters demonstrate that even the most distant theatres of conflict between 1854-

1856 witnessed significant events that were not reflected in the agreement that brought peace. These included Japan's economic relationship with European powers and Russian expansion in East Asia in addition to the more commonly discussed sale of Alaska to the United States and the unification of Germany.

What is to be gained from a comprehensive examination of military campaigns in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific between 1854 and 1856? Simply put, we gain a more complete understanding of both the Crimean War and the context in which it occurred. This understanding reveals a wide-ranging conflict in terms of geographic scope, the number of belligerent and neutral states concerned, and the diversity of imperial interests at work on the periphery or entirely outside of Europe. A more complete picture of the War, in turn, sheds light on its significant impact on international law and East Asia, neither of which were even remotely related to the Charge of the Light Brigade, Florence Nightingale, or Sebastopol. The conflict that emerges from the following pages thus stands in stark contrast to the customary presentation of the Crimean War as a petty, regionalized conflict noteworthy only as a cautionary tale of failed diplomacy and generalship or as simply a venue for individual heroism.

Notes

The Crimean War unfolded in diverse regions with competing national traditions. Consequently, it involved languages that were unfamiliar to many Western European leaders and scholars in the 1850s. There have been a number of changes in the names of geographic locations mentioned, especially in Finland. Below is a table of the current and former place names most relevant to the topic.

This study's content focuses on conflict among the British, French, and Russian Empires between 1854 and 1856. It is important to note, however, that fighting between Russian and Ottoman Turkish forces actually began in 1853.

Specific amounts of Francs, Pounds, and Rubles are also quoted in United States Dollars in order to provide a neutral common denominator with which to make transnational comparisons.

Lastly, the correct name of the conflict is the subject of ongoing scholarly debate. Contemporary British accounts often referred to "the Russian War," while the French occasionally preferred "la Guerre d'Orient." These are unsatisfactory from a Russian and even Ottoman perspective, but so is "the Eastern War." Historians of multiple nationalities came to accept the "Crimean War" designation. In keeping with Napoleon Bonaparte's observation that History is the version of past events upon which people have decided to agree, this study acknowledges the mainstream of modern historiography by continuing to use "the Crimean War." Content rather than terminology is employed in an effort to counteract the danger of producing a "Crimeocentric"⁹ account that does not do justice to all the War's theatres.

<u>Nineteenth Century Name</u>	<u>Modern Name</u>
Åbo	Turku
Brahestad	Raahe
De Castries Bay	De Kastri Bay
Eckness	Tammisaari
Elgsnabben	Alvsnabben

⁹ Lambert, Andrew D. *The Crimean War. British Grand Strategy Against Russia, 1853-1856*. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1991), 202.

Gamla (Gamala) Carleby	Kokkola
Helsingfors	Helsinki
Kioge Bay	Koge But
Libau	Liepja
Nargen	Naissar
Reval or Revel	Tallinn
Sweaborg	Suomenlinna
Uleåborg	Oulu
Viborg	Viipuri
Wingo Sound	Vinga

Alternate Spellings and Dates:

Spelling in the nineteenth century was not uniform, and considerable variation existed among or even within¹⁰ different sources. This is especially the case when native speakers of English and French attempted to transcribe or translate Russian names. The City of Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula, for instance, was also spelled Petropaulovsk, Petropavlovski, Petropavlowsk, and Petropaulovski. Likewise, the initial surname of Russia's Governor-General in Eastern Siberia, Muravyov, was also spelled Muraviev, Muravyev, Murav'ev, etc. This work initially provides current spellings and place names in parentheses following the most common variation of the original 19th century spelling or name.

Russia marked dates on a Julian Calendar until 1917, a practice which is sometimes referred to as 'old style.' This system differed from the 'new style' Gregorian Calendar employed by the Britain, France, and many other powers. In order to avoid confusion, all dates are provided in reference to the current Gregorian Calendar.

¹⁰ British (eventual) Rear-Admiral Erasmus Ommanney, for instance, used multiple variations of the "Solovetsky Monastery" within the same letters [British Library Additional Manuscript 41340, Folios 146-155].

Literature Review

At first glance, reviewing all of the literature related to the Crimean War seems an impossibly daunting task. Over a million distinct publications specifically refer to the conflict, and the number of books specifically devoted to the conflict extends well into the hundreds and continues to expand. English-language books alone, for example, examine not only military history but also specific thematic issues arising from the War. These include politics, diplomacy, economics, technology, maritime law, medicine, photography, journalism, and literature, to name only some. The ranks of these books do not even include closely-related works that address issues such as Russian expansion along the Amur River at Chinese expense during the conflict and after. What analytically useful conclusions, then, can be drawn from this vast array of printed sources? The answer is simple: a scholarly English-language history of all the Crimean War's naval campaigns has yet to be written.

The first issue that immediately becomes apparent in a consideration of the Crimean War's historiography is a marked disconnect between modern scholarship on the conflict as a whole and accounts written in the 19th century. These latter sources, penned in English, French, and German in particular, typically devote multiple chapters to events in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific. Consider, for example, the extensive treatment devoted to Anglo-French campaigns in the Baltic in works such as César Lecat Bazancourt's 1858 *L'expédition de Crimée*,¹ George Dodd's *Pictorial History of the Russian War*,² and Wilhelm Rüstow's *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*.³ This contrasts with more scattered references to the same theatre in recent works such as Orlando Figes' 2010 *The Crimean War: A History*,⁴ which mentioned the Baltic 33 different times without ever devoting more than a single page to that dimension of the Crimean conflict. Even more disappointing, however, was the approach taken by German historian Winfried Baumgart during what he intended to be a comprehensive overview of historical events in every theatre.⁵ In an extreme departure from his meticulous presentation of primary source and archival evidence in the *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* series of compendia and other

¹ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L'expédition de Crimée*. (Paris: Librairie D'Amyot, 1858),

² Dodd, George. *Pictorial History of the Russian War, 1854-5-6, with Maps, Plans, and Wood Engravings*. (Edinburgh and London, UK: W. and R. Chambers, 1856)

³ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855).

⁴ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010).

⁵ Baumgart, Winfried. *The Crimean War, 1853-1856*. (London, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

chapters of *The Crimean War*, Baumgart neglected to support his arguments relating to the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific adequately or, on occasion, at all. This brings us to the second issue related to historical writing and the Crimean War: many relevant works are of poor quality, and better-researched ones have yet to be translated from languages such as Russian and French.

Russian-language historical accounts of the Crimean War as a whole and in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific exhibit a remarkable continuity in subject matter from the 19th century until the present, in contrast to Western European and North American works. Both Czarist-era accounts such as Modest Ivanovic Bogdanovic's 1876 "*Eastern War 1853-1856*"⁶ and Soviet-era studies, exemplified by Evgenii Viktorovich Tarle's 1950 "*Crimean War (Volume II)*"⁷ for example, thoroughly cover campaigns outside of the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia. These general histories have been continuously complemented by more specialized Russian-language works on the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific, including studies of individual theatres and compendia of primary sources discussed later in this section. French military historian Michèle Battesti's doctoral dissertation "*La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)*"⁸ initially promised to provide a global account of the conflict based on French archival sources. It succeeded in doing so for the Baltic, but fell short in its examination of events in the White Sea and Pacific. The result for these latter two regions was a brief summary bereft of archival evidence and similar to content to the only English-language book comparable to the present dissertation: Peter Duckers' 2011 *The Crimean War at Sea, 1854-1856: The Naval Campaigns Against Russia*.⁹

Instead of obviating the need for this dissertation, Duckers' approach instead amplifies it. The amateur historian's bibliography, for example, does not include a single original document or any French and Russian-language sources. Even in its discussion of only British-language references, Duckers' work misses the wealth of information held in repositories such as the United Kingdom's National Archives, National Maritime Museum, British Library, and Hydrographic Office. Its discussion of the White Sea campaigns, for example, was limited to

⁶ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. "*Eastern War 1853-1856*." (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876).

⁷ Tarle, Yevgeny (Evgenii) Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950).

⁸ Battesti, Michèle. "*La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)*." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie Doctoral Dissertation, 1997).

⁹ Duckers, Peter. *The Crimean War at Sea: The Naval Campaigns Against Russia, 1854-1856*. (Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword Maritime Press, 2011).

references drawn exclusively from a half-dozen or so articles in the *Illustrated London News* and *The Times*, often written weeks or months after the events they described. In conjunction with Tarle's heavy emphasis on Communist ideology and Russian nationalism and Battesti's abandonment of primary sources when discussing the Pacific, a scholarly history backed by an appropriate range of sources has yet to be written. In the absence of a well-researched general history written within the last century, the field is instead left with a series of regionally-focused works, which vary widely in quality.

One of the first histories of the 1854 Baltic Campaign to employ primary documents was Sir Charles Napier's extended defense of his actions in the edited volume *History of The Baltic Campaign Of 1854, From Documents And Other Materials Furnished By Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier*.¹⁰ 90 years after Napier and his editor crafted their case using Napier's correspondence with Graham, Admiralty Librarian David Bonner-Smith edited two compendia for his country's Navy Records Society.¹¹ Both volumes employed records drawn exclusively from what was then known as the Public Record Office in order to outline Britain's Baltic naval campaigns of 1854 and 1855. This approach certainly helped illuminate the perspective of senior British naval authorities, but, apart from an introductory section, was not intended to have any sort of narrative structure or place military events in context. More problematic, however, was the exclusion of French and Russian perspectives along with key English-language documents held by the National Maritime Museum and British Library. This problem also detracted from German historian Wilhelm Treue's coverage of the Baltic in his 1954 polemic *Der Krimkrieg un die Entstehung der modernen Flotten*.¹² Fortunately, however, the pioneering work of King's College (London) historian Andrew Lambert more than adequately responded to the challenge of synthesizing an extremely broad range of documentary evidence into two comprehensive studies of Britain's role in the Baltic during the conflict. The first and most thorough was his 1983

¹⁰ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *History of The Baltic Campaign Of 1854, From Documents And Other Materials Furnished By Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857)

¹¹ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943) and Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944),

¹² Treue, Wilhelm. *Der Krimkrieg und die Entstehung der modernen Flotten*. (Göttingen, Germany: Musterschmidt Wissenschaftlicher Verlag: 1954).

doctoral dissertation, “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.”¹³ A monograph followed in 1990, entitled *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*,¹⁴ and popular demand caused it to be re-issued in 2011. Meanwhile, in the interim, several additional articles from the same author dealt with wartime events such as the British raids along the Gulf of Bothnia’s coast and an Anglo-French fleet’s 1855 bombardment of the Sweaborg fortress complex.¹⁵

The 1988 edition of Basil Greenhill and Ann Giffard’s *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*¹⁶ combined close analysis of Swedish-language sources with extended excerpts from the correspondence of senior British officers. As valuable as their Scandinavian-language sources were, however, their treatment of British sources was problematic for several reasons. Firstly, Greenhill and Giffard’s repeated use of page-long block quotes interrupted any semblance of flow or analysis, as some sections seemed to be written more by British officers than the authors. The second and even more frustrating issue was the couple’s penchant for excluding dates and other key information from citations such as page numbers from citations, as ‘*op. cit.*’ sufficed for hundreds of footnotes. *The British Assault on Finland* did, however, highlight the critical importance of two earlier accounts: the *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*¹⁷ and General Mikhail Borodkin’s 1905 *The War on the Finnish Coast*.¹⁸

The edited correspondence of Sullivan, architect of the Allies’ 1855 campaign in the region, comprises a valuable addition to a particular type of source: ‘reminiscences’ or other memoir-type compilations of primary documents and recollections. The memoirs of Russian Adjutant-General Nikolay Arkas,¹⁹ for example, provide a valuable if sadly unique perspective

¹³ Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London Doctoral Dissertation, 1983).

¹⁴ Lambert, Andrew. *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990)

¹⁵ Lambert, Andrew. “Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855.” *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004). <www.jmr.nmm.ac.uk> and Lambert, Andrew. “Under the Heel of Britannia: The Bombardment of Sweaborg 9–11 August 1855” in Hore, Peter (Ed.) *Seapower Ashore: 200 Years of Royal Navy Operations on Land* (London, UK: Chatham, 2001).

¹⁶ Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988).

¹⁷ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896).

¹⁸ Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905).

¹⁹ Zaionchokovsky, A. [Russian-Language]. “From the Memoirs of Adjutant-General N.A. Arkas.” *The Historical Messenger*, Vol. 84 (April, 1901).

on high-level Russian decision-making in the Baltic during the conflict's first months. English-language work regarding Sullivan, on the other hand, is joined by similar treatments of senior British captains including Sir Astley Cooper Key and Lord Clarence Paget,²⁰ though Sullivan's perspective remains especially important. This was due to a combination of the hydrographic officer's candor and his unparalleled position of importance as a trusted advisor to Sir James Graham and Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Saunders Dundas. Sullivan's wartime experiences off the Estonian coast were also critical because of the perspectives he gained from extended dinner conversations as a guest of Estonian noble families. The background and experiences of senior British and French officers are also well-documented thanks to the work of Andrew Lambert and John Knox Laughton in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*²¹ and Etienne Taillemite's *Dictionnaire des Marins Francais*.²² Individual officers' prior experiences came even more sharply into focus through Charles Stephenson's *The Admiral's Secret Weapon: Lord Dundonald and the Origins of Chemical Warfare*.²³ That eccentric officer's decades-long fascination with early forms of chemical warfare led him to propose attacking first Cronstadt and then Sevastopol with toxic sulphur fumes and smoke vessels, which complemented other British schemes for damming the River Neva and flooding St. Petersburg.

British Admiralty war-planning was also examined in some detail in Charles Iain Hamilton's 1976 article "Sir James Graham, the Baltic Campaign, and War-Planning at Admiralty in 1854."²⁴ Hamilton's work, like John Grainger's later book on the Pacific, combined a novel subject with an extremely unfortunate tendency to make bold conclusions without firmly grounding them with historical evidence. It is thus unsurprising that Hamilton's studies have been superseded by Lambert's more meticulous approach and explains why the present study and other works cite the latter scholar so much more often. David Murphy's *Ireland and the Crimean War*,²⁵ though, relied so heavily on Lambert's work that it did not consider a full range of sources in its coverage of Irishmen in the Royal Navy. Broad coverage was also especially necessary

²⁰ Colomb, Philip Howard. *Memoirs of Admiral the Right Honorable Sir Astley Cooper Key*. (London, UK: Methuen and Company, 1898) and Otway, Sir Arthur (Ed.). *Autobiography and Journals of Admiral Lord Clarence E Paget, GCB*. (London, UK: Chapman and Hall, 1896).

²¹ Available online at: www.oxforddnb.com.

²² Taillemite, Etienne. *Dictionnaire des Marins Francais*. (Paris, France: Editions Maritimes et d'Outre-Mer, 1982).

²³ Stephenson, Charles. *The Admiral's Secret Weapon: Lord Dundonald and the Origins of Chemical Warfare*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006).

²⁴ Hamilton, Charles Iain. "Sir James Graham, the Baltic Campaign, and War-Planning at Admiralty in 1854." *The Historical Journal*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (1976), Pgs. 89-112.

²⁵ Murphy, David. *Ireland and the Crimean War*. (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2002).

because of Sweden-Norway's relationship to the conflict's northernmost theatres in the Baltic and White Sea. Alan Palmer's sweeping 2005 overview *Northern Shores: A History of the Baltic Sea and its Peoples*²⁶ provided an excellent if understandably brief summary of the Crimean conflict's Baltic dimension, which Scandinavian historians had covered in more depth but usually in languages other than English.

The United Kingdoms of Sweden and Norway's decision to remain neutral throughout much of the Crimean War interested Swedish historians throughout the 20th century's first half. Carl Hallendorff, in particular, produced several original monographs and a large number of chapters for edited works on Sweden's involvement in the conflict.²⁷ Carl Fredrik Palmstierna's overview history *Sverige, Ryssland, och England 1833-1855* and Carl Runeberg's *Sveriges Politik under Krimkriget, Neutralitetsförklaringen, 1853-1854*, further complemented Hallendorff's writing.²⁸ Palmstierna's interest in Sweden-Norway's relationship to the Crimean War was an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation, and he also wrote English language articles including "Sweden and the Russian Bogey: a New Light on Palmerston's Foreign Policy."²⁹ Danish Nobel laureate Fredrik Bajer also took an interest in Denmark's position between 1854 and 1856, which resulted in both Danish and French-language articles from 1900-1914.³⁰ Bajer's work was joined by other French-language diplomatic histories³¹ and was most significantly expanded by the definitive monograph *Danish Neutrality During the Crimean War: Denmark Between the Hammer and the Anvil*, translated from Danish into English in 1977.³² After a mid-century lull, scholarship on Scandinavia and the Crimean War reemerged in the 1970s thanks to Edgar Anderson, President of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies. Anderson

²⁶ Palmer, Alan. *Northern Shores: A History of the Baltic Sea and its Peoples*. (London, UK: John Murray, 2005).

²⁷ See, for example: Hallendorff, Carl. *Oscar I, Napoleon, och Nikolaus*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Hugo Gebers Förlag, 1918) and Hallendorff, Carl. *Oskar I och Karl XV* (Volume 12) in Emil Hildebrand and Ludvig Stavenow (Eds.) *Sveriges Historia Till Våra Daga*. (Stockholm, Sweden: P.A. Norstedt and Sons, 1923).

²⁸ Palmstierna, Carl Fredrik. *Sverige, Ryssland, och England 1833-1855*. (Stockholm, Sweden: P.A. Norstedt and Sons, 1932) and Runeberg, Carl Michael. *Sveriges Politik under Krimkriget, Neutralitetsförklaringen, 1853-1854*. (Ekenäs, now Raseborg, Finland: Ekenäs Tryckeri, 1934)

²⁹ Palmstierna, Carl Fredrik. "Sweden and the Russian Bogey: a New Light on Palmerston's Foreign Policy." *The Nineteenth Century and After*. Vol. 113 (1933), 739-754.

³⁰ See, for example: Bajer, Fredrik. *Le Système Scandinave de Neutralité pendant la Guerre de Crimée et son Origine Historique*. "Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique". Vol. 14 (1900), 259-288.

³¹ See, for example: Cullberg, Albin. *La politique du roi Oscar I pendant la Guerre de Crimée: Etudes Diplomatiques sur les Négociations Secrètes entre les Cabinets de Stockholm, Paris, Pétersbourg et Londres les Années 1853-1856*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Författarens Förlag, 1912).

³² Halicz, Emanuel [Jane Cave, Translator]. *Danish Neutrality During the Crimean War: Denmark Between the Hammer and the Anvil*. (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1977).

published three foundational articles on the Crimean War in the Baltic,³³ and supervised Axel Jonasson, an important contributor to scholarship on Sweden's approach to Anglo-Russian conflict in the Baltic during the 1850s.³⁴

Sweden-Norway was also involved in Anglo-Russian conflict over Finmark (Finnmark), which attracted the attention of diplomatic historian Paul Knaplund in the 1925 article "Finmark in British Diplomacy, 1836-1855."³⁵ Three quarters of a century later, Imperial Russia's, rather than Britain's, relationship with Northern Norway formed the basis for Norwegian historian Jens Petter Nielsen's 2002 study "The Russia of the Tsar and North Norway. 'The Russian Danger' Revisited."³⁶ Finmark and the White Sea remain the least-studied of all the Crimean War's theatres, however, and English-language scholarship is still confined to a handful of works. These begin with a single chapter at the end of British geographer Thomas Milner's 1854 *The Baltic: Its Gates, Shores, and Cities*,³⁷ and culminate in a recent 2011 book chapter by Andrew Lambert examining Britain's efforts in the White Sea during the conflict's initial year.³⁸ There was also a brief exchange of articles in the Cambridge journal *Polar Record* during the 1980s, initiated by its post-2006 editor and long-time Crimean War enthusiast Ian R. Stone.³⁹ His initial article may have sufficed as an extremely general overview of British activities in the region during the War, but it and subsequent submissions were all marred by the same fundamental problem: an utterly inadequate base of sources similar to the one found in Ducker's book. Worse still than their limited references, these articles have made fundamental factual errors. One even took the absurd

³³ Anderson, Edgar: "The Crimean War in the Baltic Area." *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1974). Pgs. 339-361; "The Role of the Crimean War in Northern Europe." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1972). Pgs. 42-59; and "The Scandinavian Area and the Crimean War in the Baltic." *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (1969). Pgs. 263-275.

³⁴ Jonasson, Axel E. 'Swedish Neutrality during the Crimean War.' (San Jose, California. California State College, now University Master's Thesis, 1970) and "The Crimean War, the Beginning of Strict Swedish Neutrality, and the Myth of Swedish Intervention in the Baltic." *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1973). Pgs. 244-253.

³⁵ Knaplund, Paul. "Finmark in British Diplomacy, 1836-1855," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1925).

³⁶ Nielsen, Jens Petter. "The Russia of the Tsar and North Norway. 'The Russian Danger' Revisited." *Acta Borealia*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2002).

³⁷ Milner, Thomas. *The Baltic: Its Gates, Shores, and Cities*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854).

³⁸ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011).

³⁹ Stone, Ian R. "The Crimean War in the Arctic." *Polar Record*, Vol. 21, No. 135 (1983). Pgs. 577-581; Barr, William. "The Crimean War in the Arctic: The Russian Viewpoint." *Polar Record*, Vol. 22, No. 137 (1984). Pgs. 194-197; Savours, Ann. "The Crimean War in the Arctic: A Further Note." *Polar Record*, Vol. 22, No. 139 (1985). Pgs. 427-429; and Stone, Ian R. "The Crimean War in the Arctic: A Further Note." *Polar Record*, Vol. 22, No. 140 (1985). Pgs. 531-536.

approach of equating “The Russian Viewpoint” with a few pages of Stalin Prize-winner Yevgeny Viktorovich Tarle’s obviously-biased commentary and a handful of English-language articles in *The Times*.⁴⁰

Recent Russian scholarship is incomparably better-researched, especially Ruslan Davydov and Gennadii Popov’s “*Defense of the Russian North During the Crimean War*.”⁴¹ Davydov, an Arkhangelsk-based researcher with the Russian Academy of Sciences, employed a more complete array of Russian-language primary sources in his examination of the Crimean War’s northernmost theatre. His co-authored monograph and several more specialized articles, however, have yet to be translated into English. Furthermore, like many Russian works, its access to British archival documents is limited at best. French archival documents are also excluded, just as they were in Lambert’s chapter on British efforts in 1854. Although the French did not make many operational contributions to the campaign, their naval records contemporary periodicals including the *L’Abeille Médicale*⁴² reveal that these campaigns in the White Sea played a surprisingly important role in the development of French naval medicine and hygiene. They also underscore the point that, with the exception of some sections of Battesti’s doctoral dissertation and a French Naval Academy master’s thesis from the 1930s, the present study is unique in its consideration of documents held in France’s naval archives.

Lieutenant de Vaisseau Erulin’s aforementioned mid-1930s thesis remains one of the best overall sources for understanding the Crimean War in the Pacific. War-related developments in this region and East Asia, more than any other, remain fractionalized in spite of an attempt to unify them in John Grainger’s 2008 monograph *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*.⁴³ As is discussed in some detail in Chapter Six and elsewhere in the present work, this amateur British historian proudly showcased a staggering disregard for the wealth of information available in French and Russian, not to mention the perspectives of East Asian societies including China and Japan. Perhaps a scathing review in the *Journal of Military History*⁴⁴ said it best when arguing that Grainger’s work was not an academic history and that it should have been a

⁴⁰ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950).

⁴¹ Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. “*Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events*.” (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005).

⁴² “Scourbut: Emploi du Suc de Citronne Comme Moyen Préventif et Curatif.” *L’Abeille Médicale*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1856).

⁴³ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008).

⁴⁴ Ion, A. Hamish. Review of “The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856” in *The Journal of Military History*. Vol. 22, No. 4 (October, 2008), 1298-1299.

publication of the (UK) Navy Records Society rather than a stand-alone book. Grainger's shocking perspective is exemplified in the following passage from the *First Pacific War's* introduction, which argues:

"I do not know all of the languages involved...yet this is less vital than it appears, for the central players in these events were always British. It was a British expedition, with French participants added, which was the precipitating cause of the whole sequence, and the others who were involved were largely reacting to what the British did, either actively or unconsciously."⁴⁵

The fundamental problem with Grainger's work was not even that he used an extremely narrow base of English-language sources to draw broad conclusions about events that often did not even directly involve the British. It is rather that his conclusions, even regarding British actions, were often patently incorrect. The only English-language master's or doctoral dissertation on the subject also veered away from scholarly objectivity when it employed a severely limited number of biased British accounts to draw sweeping conclusions about French actions.⁴⁶ Although it at least had the virtue of featuring an entirely original source in British Royal Marine Captain Charles Parker's journal, the thesis confined itself to recounting the activities of Britain's "South American" naval station during the conflict's first year. This is completely understandable for a master's thesis of limited scope, but ultimately means that a satisfactory general history of the Crimean War in the Pacific and East Asia is still lacking. In its place sits a plethora of more specialized works, to which this discussion now turns.

Literature on the Crimean War in the Pacific can be broadly divided into six different categories. The first grouping comprises these attempts to provide a broad overview of the conflict, to which it is possible to add several Russian works and John Stephan's 1969 article "The Crimean War in the Far East."⁴⁷ Newly-discovered sources render one of Stephan's conclusion superfluous, but the article did not manifest the same degree of ideological bias that seeped into its mid-20th century Russian-language counterparts, Chapter Eight of Tarle's 1950 "*Crimean War (Volume II)*"⁴⁸ and Mikhail Sergeev's "*The Defense of Petropavlovsk on*

⁴⁵ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2008), XIII-XIV.

⁴⁶ Parker, Robert. "The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War." (Newcastle, UK: University of Newcastle Master's Thesis, 2003).

⁴⁷ Stephan, John J. "The Crimean War in the Far East." *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1969).

⁴⁸ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950).

Kamchatka.⁴⁹ Local historian Yuri Zavrazhnov's more recent "*Forget The Admiral: A Historical Reflection with Investigation*"⁵⁰ boasted an extensive bibliography including Western sources, but still lacked access to the critical mass of primary documents held at British and French archives. The work was also written with an informal style and tone that indicates it is not a purely academic study, which is off-putting for more serious scholars. The later are thus especially fortunate to have the second group of sources on the conflict, which includes commercially published primary documents in which participants wrote their own accounts of the historical events in question.

Although they are seldom or never cited by English-language historiography, several compilations of Russian documents relating to the Allied assault on Petropavlovsk and related events have appeared within the last 25 years. These include an expanded 1989 second edition of Boris Polevoi's "*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents*"⁵¹ and the more recent 2010 "*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents*," by Natalia Kiseleva.⁵² Both compendia contain significant amounts of documents beyond those reprinted in individual academic journals. These articles include, for example, Aleksandr Preobrazhenskii's reproduction of Russian Admiral and Military Governor Vasily Zavoyko's official report on the Battle of Petropavlovsk in August and September of 1854⁵³ and Captain Aleksandr Arbuzov's 1870 recollection of his role in the same engagement.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Sergeev, M.A. [Russian-language]. "*The Defense of Petropavlovsk on Kamchatka*." (Moscow: USSR Ministry of Defense, 1954)."

⁵⁰ Zavrazhnov, Yuri. [Russian-language]. "*Forget The Admiral: A Historical Reflection with Investigation*." (Petropavlovsk, Russia: Novaia Kniga, 2005).

⁵¹ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. "*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents (Second Edition)*." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989).

⁵² Natalia, Kiseleva. [Russian-language]. "*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents*." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010).

⁵³ Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and Preobrazhenskii, A.A. [Russian-language]. "Report of Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French Squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854." *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951).

⁵⁴ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. "The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant)." *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870).

French naval officer Édouard Polydore Vanéechout also wrote an extensive account of his wartime experiences under the pseudonym Edmond du Hailley.⁵⁵ It appeared in several different print formats and has remained a favorite source for British, French, and Russian historians alike. An even more revealing French source, though, is Tugdual de Kerros's edited edition of Jean-René-Maurice de Kerret's *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*.⁵⁶ This collection mostly consists of a detailed journal and works of art produced by de Kerret, a nobleman hoping for adventure by volunteering as an illustrator aboard a French warship. Yet it also adds especially candid letters from the private family archives of two French Captains who played an important role during the Battle of Petropavlovsk. These flatly contradict key details of the 'official' account that their commander and British counterparts transmitted to Paris and London, respectively. William Petty Ashcroft's multi-part "Reminiscences," recorded by an elderly British sailor a half-century after the Crimean War, are also particularly important because they are one of the few Allied sources written by neither an officer nor aristocrat. It is not always possible to obtain these types of perspective for the Allies' 1855 Pacific campaign, however. For that voyage, a Royal Engineering Captain who accepted an invitation to "cruise" with a friend wrote the most detailed non-archival source in English.⁵⁷

Russian naval officers also published written accounts of their experiences in East Asia, one of which also became noteworthy for its literary merit. Russian Vice-Admiral Yevfimiy Vasilyevich Putyatin's (Putiatin's) secretary during his efforts to 'open' Japan happened to be the writer Ivan Aleksandrovich Goncharov, who used his experiences to create the famous travelogue *Frigate Pallada*.⁵⁸ A lieutenant on the frigate *Diana*, Baltic nobleman Nikolay Schilling, published the Russian-language "Memories of an Old Sailor" in 1892, which recorded his observations as a member of Putyatin's mission and as a prisoner of war in 1855 and 1856.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Du Hailley, Edmond. (Édouard Polydore Vanéechout). *Campagnes et Stations sur les Côtes de l'Amérique du Nord*. (Paris, France: Librairie de la Société de Gens de Lettres, 1864). Also see the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for an identical version in periodical form.

⁵⁶ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004).

⁵⁷ Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition Against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 2.

⁵⁸ For an English translation, see: Goncharov, Ivan Aleksandrovich and Klaus Goetze [Translator]. *Frigate Pallada*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

⁵⁹ Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. "(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*" and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971). The work has also been recently translated into English. See: <www.schilling-verband.de>.

Halfway across the Pacific, a diary kept by American Minister to Hawai'i David Lawrence Gregg also provides observations from an officially neutral if hardly unbaised American perspective.⁶⁰ This brings us to our third, and smallest source group: the relevant portions of works focused on the maritime history of the Northwest Coast of British North America, now British Columbia. Especially important are a monograph and articles by Canadian maritime historian Barry Gough, which deal partially or, in some cases exclusively, with the Crimean conflict's Pacific dimension.⁶¹ Although it includes some Russian sources, Dr. Gough's work confines itself to examining events from a British perspective, in keeping with the author's broader research interests and even the subtitle of his article in *Military Affairs*: "British Strategy and Naval Operations."⁶² Canadian scholarship developed further when Professors George and Helen Akrigg located Crimean War-related correspondence in British Columbia's archive while researching and writing a focused history of the British steamer *Virago*.⁶³ The Akriggs were thus able to incorporate detailed descriptions found in navigational officer George Hastings Inskip's journal into their account of the 1854 fighting at Petropavlovsk, in which the *Virago* played a critical role as the Allies' only steam-powered warship. Ultimately, both the Akriggs' and Gough's research reveal the importance of examining a wide range of historical sub-disciplines, even those that initially seem geographically distant, when researching such a wide-ranging struggle. This becomes even more apparent upon consideration of the next two groups of sources, which focus on larger processes at work in the Pacific and East Asia during the 1850s.

A gap or, more accurately a yawning chasm, is readily apparent in historiography's approach towards the Crimean War in the Pacific. Existing literature, with few exceptions, separates Anglo-French and Russian military campaigns from their impact on two critical developments in East Asia: Russia's territorial expansion at Chinese expense as well as British and Russian efforts to 'open' Japan to trade and/or diplomacy regardless of Japanese preferences. This brings us to the fourth group of sources, which relates to the efforts of local Russian administrators to expand their Empire's territorial holdings along the strategic Amur River at

⁶⁰ Gregg, David Lawrence and Pauline King (Ed.). *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg: An American Diplomat in Hawaii 1853-1858*. (Honolulu, Hawai'i: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982).

⁶¹ Gough, Barry M. *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America 1810-1914 : A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy*. (Vancouver, Canada : University of British Columbia Press, 1971) and Gough, Barry M. "The Crimean War in the Pacific: British Strategy and Naval Operations." *Military Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (December, 1973), 130-136.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Akrigg, George P. and Helen B. Akrigg. *H.M.S Virago in the Pacific: 1851-1855*. (Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press, 1992).

Chinese expense. The topic was briefly surveyed in John Stephan's overview *The Russian Far East* in 1994.⁶⁴ Mark Bassin's 1999 monograph *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*,⁶⁵ however, examines this aspect of Stephan's subject-matter far more comprehensively. Bassin's book grew out of his 1983 doctoral dissertation "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865,"⁶⁶ and both works were built on a close reading of an impressive variety of Russian-language primary sources. The efforts of United States Naval War College Professor Sarah Paine focused even more specifically on the Sino-Russian conflict that resulted from the Russian expansion Bassin studied,⁶⁷ but by far the most helpful work on the topic was Rosemary Quested's *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860*.⁶⁸ Quested's work, complemented by a joint Sino-American 1968 journal article,⁶⁹ is an absolutely essential resource for Chinese archival documents that reveal the Qing Government's perspectives on the Crimean conflict and war-related developments.

The fifth source group concerns the Crimean War's relationship to the other substantial East Asian state at the time: Tokugawa Japan. Contrary to the popular and scholarly attention devoted to Commodore Matthew Perry's missions, the British and Russian Empires also conducted extensive negotiations with the island shogunate during the Crimean War: the British mission because of the conflict, the Russian mission in spite of it. The entire course of Britain's confused negotiations with Japanese plenipotentiaries was the subject of William Beasley's *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan*.⁷⁰ It was joined by a cluster of mid-20th century articles⁷¹ most of which focused on Anglo-Japanese misunderstandings caused by a mutual lack of cultural

⁶⁴ Stephan, John J. *The Russian Far East: A History*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994).

⁶⁵ Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ Bassin, Mark. "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865." (Berkeley, California: University of California Doctoral Dissertation, 1983).

⁶⁷ Paine, Sarah. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

⁶⁸ Quested, Rosemary K. *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860*. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Oxford, UK; and New York: Oxford University Press for the University of Malaysia, 1968).

⁶⁹ Wong, George H.C. and Allan B. Cole. "Sino-Russian Border Relations, 1850-1860." *The Chung Chi Journal of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1966).

⁷⁰ Beasley, William G. *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan, 1834-1858*. (London, UK: Luzac, 1951. Re-issued in paperback by Routledge, 1995).

⁷¹ See, for example: Beasley, William G. "The Language Problem in the Anglo-Japanese Negotiations of 1854." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. Vol. 13, No. 3 (1950), 746-758; Fox, Grace. "The Anglo-Japanese Convention of 1854." *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1941), 411-434; and Eckel, Paul E. "The Crimean War and Japan." *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (February, 1944), 109-118.

and linguistic understanding. The problem with this early scholarship, however, is that scholars other than Beasley were unable to match his command of the available historical evidence. American historian Paul Eckel's 1944 article "The Crimean War and Japan," for example, shamefully missed the clearly-stated point of Britain's initial wartime mission under Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling.⁷² This was especially unfortunate given that Japanese historian Takehiko Okuhira had already drawn accurate conclusions from both British and Japanese records less than eight years earlier, in 1936.⁷³ It is also fortunate that more recent works including Mitani Hiroshi's 2006 *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*⁷⁴ and Donald Keene's *Travelers of a Hundred Ages: the Japanese as Revealed through 1,000 Years of Diaries*⁷⁵ offer similar evidence-based accounts of Japanese perspectives towards powers including Britain and Russia during the 1850s.

In conjunction with sections of Michael Auslin's 2004 *Negotiating with Imperialism: the Unequal Treaties and Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*⁷⁶ and William McOmie's voluminous *The Opening of Japan, 1853-1855*,⁷⁷ these works paint a clearer overall picture of the Crimean War's relationship to Japan. George Alexander Lensen's pioneering 1959 study of Russia's mission to Japan in the 1850s⁷⁸ is also an invaluable resource when it comes to Russo-Japanese relations during the War, and is further complemented by articles including McOmie's 1995 "The Russians in Nagasaki, 1853-54--Another Look at Some Russian, English, and Japanese Sources."⁷⁹ Yet another series of articles on Russian voyages to Japan, in fact, brings us to the sixth and final group of sources on the Crimean War in the Pacific. This group includes sources that examine the careers of particularly influential individual, especially Russian-employed

⁷² See Chapter Six of the present study for further details.

⁷³ Okuhira Takehiko. [Japanese-Language] "The Crimean War and the Far East, Part 1 [Kurimiya sensō to kyokutō (ichi)]." *Kokusaihō Gaikō Zasshi*. Vol. 35, No.1 (1936), 42-68 and "The Crimean War and the Far East, Part 2 [Kurimiya sensō to kyokutō (ichi)]." *Kokusaihō Gaikō Zasshi*. Vol. 35, No. 4 (1936), 15-45.

⁷⁴ Hiroshi, Mitani. (David Noble, Translator and Nihon Rekishi Gakkai, Ed.). *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokoyo: International House of Japan for the International Library Trust, 2006).

⁷⁵ Keene, Donald. *Travelers of a Hundred Ages: the Japanese as Revealed through 1,000 Years of Diaries*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ Auslin, Michael. *Negotiating with Imperialism: the Unequal Treaties and Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).

⁷⁷ McOmie, William. *The Opening of Japan, 1853-1855*. (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2006).

⁷⁸ Lensen, George Alexander. *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697-1875*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959).

⁷⁹ McOmie, William. "The Russians in Nagasaki, 1853-54--Another Look at Some Russian, English, and Japanese Sources." *Acta Slavica Iaponica*. Vol. 13 (1995), 42-60.

Japanologist Philipp Franz von Siebold, British Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, and Governor-General of Eastern Siberia Nikolay Nikolaevich Muravyov.

The foundational source for Russia's wartime role in East Asia is Ivan Barsukov's 1891 biographical compilation of documents related to Muravyov and his expansionist efforts.⁸⁰ The importance of these two volumes and other Russian-language compilations has only grown over the last century because the original copies of many documents have been destroyed or lost. Barsukov's volumes also formed the backbone of Harvard scholar Joseph Lewis Sullivan's 1955 doctoral dissertation "Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky"⁸¹ and made significant contributions to both of the aforementioned works by Mark Bassin. The field is also fortunate that Rear-Admiral James Stirling, the driving force behind Britain's wartime missions to Japan, was an important figure in Australian history. Stirling thus merited a full biography by Australian scholar Pamela Statham-Drew, which included a substantive discussion of his activities around Japan.⁸² Last, and certainly not least, the well-researched work of German historian Edgar Franz has produced several monographs and articles on the German-born Japanologist Philipp Franz von Siebold's contribution Russia's Japan expeditions in the 1850s.⁸³

In the end, surveying literature on the Crimean War in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific offers a clear view of the present work's originality. Some dissertations position themselves as filling a gap in existing scholarly literature, while others emphasize their discovery and analysis of new sources. The current study does both, but further builds its coverage of a unique topic not on one or two new sources but on two novel bases of French and Russian-language primary documents. It is also unique in terms of its approach to conflict in the Pacific in that it combines three sequences of events; the Anglo-French South American Squadrons' Pacific Campaign, Russian expansion along the Amur, and Western missions to Japan; all of which are normally

⁸⁰ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volumes I and II)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891).

⁸¹ Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. "Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky." (Doctoral Dissertation, Harvard University, 1955).

⁸² Statham-Drew, Pamela. James Stirling: *Admiral and Founding Governor of Western Australia*. (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2003).

⁸³ See, for example; Franz, Edgar. *Philipp Franz von Siebold and Russian Policy and Action on Opening Japan to the West in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. (Munich, Germany: Iudicium Verlag, 2005), which emphasizes that not all German-language studies of Siebold discuss the scientist's connection to Russian authorities. Also see Franz's journal articles, including: "Siebold's Influence on the Instructions of the Russian Government to Admiral Putiatin." *Bunka (Tōhoku University)*. Vol. 66, Nos. 3-4 (2003), 137-156; "Siebold's Endeavors in the Year 1854 to Induce the Russian Government to Initiate Activities for the Opening of Japan." *Bunka (Tōhoku University)*. Vol. 66, Nos. 1-2 (2002), 167-186; and, with Tadashi Yoshida, "Philipp Franz von Siebold's Correspondence with Leading Russian Diplomats in the Context of the Endeavors to Open Japan for Trade and Navigation." *Northeast Asian Studies*. Vol. 7 (2003), 125-146.

separated in English-language historiography. The existence of numerous, albeit scattered and often flawed, secondary sources is encouraging for the present project. These works indicate that the current study's originality is not simply attributable to a lack of interest in or efforts related to the topic, and the best of them form an indispensable foundation alongside primary sources that together allows the following study to take shape.

Chapter One

Historical and Resource Background

Great Britain and France formally declared war on the Russian Empire in late March of 1854.¹ In order to understand the capabilities of the Crimean War's belligerents, however, it is necessary to look further into the past. Mid nineteenth century political leaders 'decided they wanted war more than they wanted peace,'² for multiple reasons. Regardless, they all confronted a world in which power had shifted dramatically since the Napoleonic Wars. Intervening economic development favored Britain over the Russian Empire, while France sought to recover its ability to influence European and world affairs. The following chapter synthesizes existing secondary sources in order to provide a comparative account of the human, economic, and financial resources available to the great power belligerents between 1854 and 1856.

At the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the British, Czarist, and Habsburg Empires found themselves "at the leading edge of power" in Europe along with Prussia.³ In crafting a peace settlement, they attempted to ensure that a restored Bourbon monarchy would henceforth determine France's foreign policy. Domestic instability in France quickly frustrated these designs, and the restored Bourbon monarchy was overthrown in 1830. Following another revolution in 1848, Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew Louis Napoleon was elected President of France. This office was a brief stepping-stone, and Louis Napoleon became Emperor Napoleon III by virtue of a 1851 *coup d'état*. His Imperial Majesty was determined to revise the European order established at Vienna and accordingly attempted to increase French influence in neighboring territories and those further afield, including the Ottoman Empire, China, and the Pacific.

The British and Czarist Empires were already concerned with ruling on a transcontinental scale by the 1850s. The British Empire had not yet reached its territorial apogee, but still boasted large swaths of territory in what later became Australia, India, Canada, and South Africa. Major colonial possessions were complemented by numerous island colonies and strategically located ports, such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Britain's informal economic influence, supported by its Royal Navy, predominated in Latin America and Portugal and continued to expand in China. The mercantile and maritime underpinnings of informal imperialism, on the other hand, were

¹ British and French declarations of war were issued on March 27th and 28th, respectively. Goldfrank, David M. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 264. Fighting between the Russian and Ottoman Empires had commenced the previous year.

² To paraphrase former United States Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick.

³ Mann, Michael. *The Sources of Social Power (Volume II): The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1.

ill-suited for furthering similar Russian objectives. When Russia's rulers extended their dominion, they did so through direct territorial conquest. The Czarist Empire stretched from the Baltic Sea to Alaska in 1854, and was also expanding in Central Asia and consolidating its hold over the Caucasus. The vast extent of both empires indicated that a mid-century Anglo-Russian war would assume global dimensions, just as had past conflicts including the Seven Years' and Napoleonic Wars.

Britain, Russia, and their respective forces faced a different set of participants at each venue in their nineteenth century tournament for international predominance.⁴ They sometimes even found themselves on the same side during events such as the 1827 Battle of Navarino, in which a combined Russo-Anglo-French naval squadron decisively defeated an Ottoman Fleet off Greece. Navarino and an 1840 Anglo-Austrian bombardment of Acre, Syria highlighted the difficulty faced by European powers in answering "the Eastern Question" presented by a weakening Ottoman Empire. Although the underlying causes and benchmarks of Ottoman decline remain the subjects of scholarly debate,⁵ the mid-nineteenth century Ottoman Empire indisputably required strong allies in order to have any prospect of battlefield success. Fortunately for the Ottomans; Britain, France and, later, the Italian State of Sardinia-Piedmont were willing to come to their aid during the Crimean War, albeit in furtherance of their own interests.

Great power diplomacy at major diplomatic meetings in the early 19th century concentrated on apportioning territories in what became Germany, Italy, and Poland⁶ rather than delineating British and Russian spheres of influence in distant lands. This is hardly surprising given a geopolitical climate in which extra-European expansion was far easier than making equivalent gains on the continent. Yet the powers at Vienna also declined to act in concert to balance their interests in Ottoman domains. Such an outcome was problematic because the Ottoman Empire's location involved interests perceived as vital by Russia, Austria, and Great Britain. Conflicts originating in Ottoman territories provided numerous challenges to a European system regulated by the five great powers acting in concert decades prior to the 1850s. Each situation, including an 1828-1829 Russo-Ottoman War, was nevertheless settled through diplomacy. This historical pattern begs two questions in relation to the Crimean War. The first asks why great powers would go to war with one another when past crises had not escalated. The

⁴ Ingram, Edward. "Great Britain and Russia" in Thompson, William R. (Ed.). *Great Power Rivalries*. (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 270.

⁵ Lieven, Dominic. *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*. (New Haven, Connecticut and London, UK: Yale University Press, 2002), 139.

⁶ Lyons, Martyn. *Post-Revolutionary Europe, 1815-1856*. (New York and Hampshire, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 239.

second focuses more specifically on why Britain and France allied with one another and the Ottoman Empire in 1854 at the expense of a Czarist Empire while Prussia, Sweden-Norway, and Habsburg Austria remained neutral. Both questions, along with detailed examinations of diplomatic efforts immediately prior to the War, have occupied generations of historians and remain the focus of many academic analyses of the conflict.⁷ Consequently, subsequent chapters instead explore elements of both questions as they relate to events outside the Crimean Peninsula and Black Sea.

These military actions in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific are best explained through recognizing that an Anglo-French alliance against Russia was far from inevitable at any point in the early to mid 19th century. Anglo-French rather than Anglo-Russian rivalry was the driving force behind technological advancements in warship design and propulsion in the decades preceding the Crimean War, and British strategic planners had concentrated on meeting a perceived French threat throughout the 1840s.⁸ The Francophobia of British First Lords of the Admiralty Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood had a noteworthy impact on Anglo-French efforts against Russia in the Baltic in both 1854 and 1855.⁹ Their sentiments were widely shared by a generation of British and French political leaders that came of age during the Napoleonic Wars. Lord Raglan, for instance, had an “unfortunate habit of referring to the enemy as ‘the French’”¹⁰ even as he was fighting alongside them. A bilateral Anglo-French alliance was only formalized on April 10th, 1854,¹¹ some two weeks after both countries had already declared war on the Russian Empire. The alliance survived the Crimean conflict and facilitated joint Anglo-French intervention in China, but did not last even a full decade.

Britain may have perceived France as its main European rival, but the former’s global interests were more directly threatened by Russia in the mid 19th century.¹² Losses during the preceding century meant that, by the mid-1800s, the French colonial empire was limited to coastal enclaves, island archipelagos, and portions of Algeria not bordering British possessions. Russian expansion, on the other hand, could indirectly threaten British rule in the Indian

⁷ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2011); Baumgart, Winfried. *The Crimean War 1853-1856* (London, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Curtiss, John Shelton. *Russia’s Crimean War* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1979); etc.

⁸ Lambert, Andrew. *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 25.

⁹ Lambert, Andrew D. “Arms Races and Cooperation: the Anglo-French Crimean War Coalition 1854-1856” in Elleman and Paine (Eds.). *Naval Coalition Warfare: from the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 41.

¹¹ Goldfrank, David. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 265.

¹² Bartlett, Christopher J. *Peace, War, and the European Powers, 1814-1914*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 18.

Subcontinent even from a considerable distance.¹³ The Czars had not completed their conquest of Central Asia in the 1850s, but key British leaders correctly anticipated that Russian advances into Asia ‘were easy to go forward but difficult to stop.’¹⁴ An adversarial Anglo-Russian relationship prevailed everywhere in the world except for, ironically, the only adjacent territories in the British and Russian Empires. Russian Alaska and British Columbia remained neutral during the Crimean War by mutual agreement. Anglo-Russian conflict during the century’s middle decades instead consisted of a struggle for “intermediate areas” in the Baltic, Ottoman Empire, Caucasus, and Pacific.¹⁵ These areas became especially important during the Crimean War, when circumstances challenged Britain and France to attack the Czarist Empire outside of Central Europe.

Standard imperial practice relied heavily on “gunboat diplomacy” in dealing with non-European opponents in the mid 19th century.¹⁶ Deployment of technologically advanced naval and amphibious detachments would not be as effective during the Crimean War. Major coastal cities in the European domains of the Czarist Empire, especially the Imperial Capital at St. Petersburg, were strongly fortified. Wartime events also demonstrated that even the most distant Czarist possessions, such as the Town of Petropavlovsk on the Pacific Ocean or the Solovetsky Monastery Complex in the White Sea, were capable of resisting bombardment by smaller Allied naval squadrons. The insular nature of Russia’s resource base meant that its defeat required a degree of military and diplomatic effort not found in mid-century colonial campaigns. As Napoleon III commented “the war (French generals) waged in (Algeria) was of a peculiar character and did not render them more capable of conducting great strategical operations in Europe.”¹⁷ When the effects of those efforts finally materialized in 1856, the heavily indebted government of Czar Alexander II was forced to accept humiliating peace terms despite still enjoying a large manpower advantage.

The states discussed thus far may have been peers in a diplomatic sense, but they were far from equals in population size. The Czarist Empire boasted over 70.6 million subjects in 1854, with 1.68 million of them residing in Finland.¹⁸ This was more than the combined total of France, at 36.23 million, and the British Isles, with 27.68 million.¹⁹ The Habsburg Empire, for

¹³ Presniakov, A. E. [Judith C. Zacek, Ed. and Translator]. *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia: the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1974), 63.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Jelavich, Barbara. “British Means of Offense against Russia in the 19th Century.” *Russian History*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1974), 119.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁷ Thompson, J.M. *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire*. (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1954), 157.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 80.

the sake of comparison, ruled 30.71 million²⁰ while the United States had not yet surpassed 25 million.²¹ Sweden-Norway consisted of just over 5 million inhabitants, and Denmark fell short of even 1.5 million.²²

Population size alone does not exclusively determine power. Finns, for example, exercised a far greater influence in the 19th century Czarist Empire than was suggested by their share of its population. An entire third, or estimated 420 million, of the Earth's 1.2 billion people in 1854 occupied the same Qing China that was successfully coerced by the British, French, and Russian Empires before the decade had concluded.²³ Japan's 27.2 million residents in 1852²⁴ compared well to the number of inhabitants in the United States and British Isles, yet both independently forced Japan to yield concessions within three years.

Losses suffered by China, Japan, and Russia in the 1850s emphasize the necessity of considering factors besides demographic ones in assessing the resources available to a state. Russia's ability to harness its population's military potential, for instance, was circumscribed by factors such as a poor transportation network and the comparatively inefficient institution of serfdom. British military recruitment, on the other hand, was hampered by its leaders' reluctance to employ coercive methods such as forcible conscription. British parliamentarians were also wary of the domestic consequences of high casualties and wartime expenditures, as were their French counterparts. War and economics, not simply demographics, have always been intimately related. The Crimean War, though, is distinguished by being the first historical instance of at least one substantially industrialized state, Great Britain, fighting another major power. Technology and economic strength alone could not always decide the outcomes of individual engagements, but they shaped how the war was fought and heavily influenced the Czarist Empire's ultimate defeat.

The Crimean War came at a time when industrialization was shifting the world's wealth and technological prowess towards Northern Europe and North America at the expense of areas such as China and the Indian Subcontinent. Although numerical measurements can minimize the achievements of non-monetary societies, quantitative data relating to major states are striking.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Goldfrank, David. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 9.

²² Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 80.

²³ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Africa, Asia, and Oceania, 1750-2000 (Fourth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 56.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Relative Shares of World Manufacturing Output ²⁵ (in percentage)		
	1830	1860
British Isles	9.5	19.9
China	29.8	19.7
France	5.2	7.9
United States	2.4	7.2
Russian Empire	5.6	7.0
Habsburg Empire	3.2	4.2
Japan	2.8	2.6

Mid-century disparities are even more prominent when considered in conjunction with the population figures mentioned earlier. These figures reveal that modest growth in the Czarist Empire could not match the exponential pace of economic development in France and the British Isles.

Per Capita Levels of Industrialization ²⁶ (relative to the British Isles in 1900, at 100)		
	1830	1860
British Isles	25	64
France	12	20
United States	14	21
Habsburg Empire	8	11
Russia	7	8
Japan	7	7
China	6	4

A more specific examination paints an even bleaker picture of the Czarist Empire's economic resources. Russia's relatively modest industrial growth was led by cotton textile manufacturing and sugar beet processing²⁷ and supported by industries requiring only "limited capital and technology," such as liquor distillation.²⁸ The machinery necessary for even simple tasks such as printing designs on cotton cloth had to be imported from Britain or other technologically advanced countries.²⁹ The relative production of Russia's iron industry, concentrated around the Ural Mountains, had declined precipitously from its world-leading position at the start of the Napoleonic Wars. Consider the production of pig iron, or iron refined to an intermediate state. This commodity formed the backbone of arms manufacturing and

²⁵ Kennedy, Paul. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. (New York: Random House, 1987), 149.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Ellison, Herbert J. "Economic Modernization in Imperial Russia: Purposes and Achievements." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December, 1965), 527.

²⁸ Blackwell, William L. *The Industrialization of Russia: An Historical Perspective*. (New York: Thomas Crowell and Co., 1970), 8.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

infrastructure such as bridges, railways, and frames for large buildings. In 1854, the British Isles produced 3,119 metric tons of pig iron, to which France added 771 metric tons.³⁰ Combined output in Russia amounted to only 213 tons: Czarist-ruled Finland produced 8 tons compared to independent Sweden's 146.³¹ Concerted Russian iron purchasing programs in Belgium (which produced 285 metric tons in 1854) and the German States (390 metric tons) could not overcome such a large disparity in production.³² Russia's low coal consumption in both relative and absolute terms is another indicator of 'the absence of pressure placed by the needs of modern industry.'³³

Much of the industry the Czarist Empire did possess owed its existence to the military spending of "a vast state enterprise...with active programs in weapons research and development."³⁴ An incestuous procurement process witnessed high-ranking officers become intimately involved in every step of producing goods for the military.³⁵ Such a system did not produce optimal results. Russian weapons development and production was, on the other hand, fortunate to benefit from the services of ethnic minority groups and skilled émigrés. The contributions of Baltic German Pavel Schilling von Canstadt and Swede Immanuel Nobel to Russia's naval weapons programs, for instance, are discussed in a subsequent chapter. Contributions of non-Slavic peoples to Russian displays at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London were subject to British editorial assertions such as "almost all work of fine art or taste is in the hands or under the direction of foreigners."³⁶ Such sentiments might be excused as only reflective of British chauvinism were they not corroborated by neutral observers such as Neill Smith Brown, United States Minister to Russia from 1850 to 1853. Brown remarked that Russia "could not boast of a single invention in mechanics" and had "borrowed" everything save for its "miserable climate."³⁷ It would soon be confirmed on the battlefield and at sea that Russian technology was not competitive with that of Western Europe in either price or quality.³⁸

Emphasizing indicators of industrialization and related fields risks obscuring that agriculture was a major source of wealth in even the most heavily industrialized countries

³⁰ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 458-459.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Ellison, Herbert J. "Economic Modernization in Imperial Russia: Purposes and Achievements." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 1965), 527.

³⁴ Tolf, Robert W. *The Russian Rockefellers; the Saga of the Nobel Family and the Russian Oil Industry*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 1976), 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁶ Fisher, David C. "Russia and the Crystal Palace in 1851" in Auerbach and Hoffenberg (Eds.). *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*. (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 137.

³⁷ Shewmaker, Kenneth E. "Neill S. Brown's Mission to Russia, 1850-1853." *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2001), 91

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

throughout the 19th century.³⁹ The issue of how to treat agricultural interests was at the heart of some of the most significant debates in British politics in the century's first half. Tory (Conservative) Prime Minister Robert Peel's successful 1846 effort to repeal protectionist tariffs on selected agricultural products, known as the 'Corn Laws,' split his party⁴⁰ into the rival political factions that remained influential throughout the Crimean War and are discussed in the next chapter. The majority of French⁴¹ workers and a significant fraction of their countrymen and women⁴² were still involved in agriculture during and after the 1850s, but this paled in comparison to the proportion of Czarist subjects who lived and worked in the countryside into the 20th century. Many of the latter⁴³ were enserfed prior to the 1860s, meaning that they were bound through a feudal relationship to specific parcels of land owned either by the state or by Russian nobles.

Serfdom's impact on Russia's economic development and political system is intensely debated by scholars, but engaging with their respective arguments would not suit the purposes of this study. A discussion of some general points, however, is an absolute necessity given that 92 percent of Czarist subjects in the mid 19th century resided outside urban centers.⁴⁴ Involuntary labor obligations were not uniquely Russian during the 19th century. Agricultural slavery still legally existed around the world, including in the United States, while European colonial powers and settlers prospered due to labor relationships with indigenous peoples that were hardly market-driven. Russian serfdom had a complex relationship with industrialization: the two were not simply inimical. Serfs provided many of Russia's early industrial laborers, especially when one subtracts foreign technicians, and could acquire formidable technical skills in their own right.⁴⁵ Despite its low cost, serf labor was ultimately unable to compensate for its inefficiency in both agricultural and industrial production.⁴⁶ The Czarist Empire's large agricultural outputs in the early to mid 19th century were due to the vast size of its population, not the efficiency of its economy. The inexpensiveness of serf labor more than compensated for its relative under-

³⁹ And well into the 20th, as is indicated by statistics such as the high proportion of workers in countries such as France remaining tied to agriculture until well after the Second World War.

⁴⁰ Friedlaender, Heinrich E. and Jacob Oser. *Economic History of Modern Europe*. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1953), 110.

⁴¹ Landes, David S. *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 6.

⁴² Hoppen, Theodore K. *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886*. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 280.

⁴³ Outside of fortunate corners of the Czarist Empire including Finland and, by the mid-19th century, the Baltic.

⁴⁴ Blackwell, William L. *The Industrialization of Russia: An Historical Perspective*. (New York: Thomas Crowell and Co., 1970), 14.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the enserfed Cherepanov Family's contributions to steam propulsion during the 1830s in Gerstner, Franz Anton von and Frederick C. Ganst (Ed.) [David J. Diephous and John C. Decker, Translators]. *Early American Railroads*. (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1997), 16.

⁴⁶ Kagarlitsky, Boris [Renfrey Clarke, Translator]. *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System*. (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008), 180.

productivity when market conditions were stable, but the system quickly became unprofitable during times of war.⁴⁷ Attempts to reform or abolish the institution of serfdom, including multiple commissions appointed by Czar Nicholas I, did not effect meaningful reforms outside Russia's Baltic provinces until the 1860s. The Russian Empire was consequently at a social disadvantage as well as an industrial one compared to Britain and France during the Crimean War, and also trailed in technology and finance.

When it came to technology, Russian reformers such as Mikhail Reutern believed that:

“steam, electricity, chemistry, and engineering do not have a nationality. Their results belong, therefore, to him who wishes to use them. It is not enough that the government or educated classes, witnessing the use of instruments and inventions abroad, should introduce them among us.”⁴⁸

In the decades that preceded these sentiments, the products of these technical fields were disproportionately British, French, Belgian, or North American. The Russian Empire had attempted to import the latest military technology from Western Europe even before the notable efforts of Czar Peter I “the Great” (r. 1682-1725). The transfer of technology, though, involves more than the physical relocation of equipment, methods, and experts practiced by Peter the Great and his successors.⁴⁹ Contemporary Russian historian Mikahil Pogodin wrote after Nicholas I's death that the Czar had failed to recognize changing conditions that rendered transposing Petrine economic activities to the 1850s “an optical illusion.”⁵⁰ Nicholas I's regime tried but failed miserably at importing technology to allow Russia to keep pace with economic developments in Western Europe. Russia's capabilities in the mid 19th century thus paralleled those of Egypt under Muhammad Ali in that they sufficed to overwhelm weaker opponents such as the Ottoman Empire but could not match those of more advanced powers.

Unlike in the Russian Empire, the diversity of opinion inherent in Great Britain's competitive political system and print media afforded that state some margin of error in adopting new military technologies. Mistaken sentiments, even those of influential figures, did not necessarily block development. In 1849, for instance, head of naval gunnery Henry Chads opined: “I think iron very inferior to wood for warlike purposes.”⁵¹ Eleven years later, General Sir Howard Douglas, Chief of Ordinance, added: “the days of timber ships, whether commercial

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 180.

⁴⁸ Kipp, Jacob W. “M. Kh. Reutern on the Russian State and Economy: A Liberal Bureaucrat during the Crimean Era, 1854-60.” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), 456.

⁴⁹ Headrick, Daniel R. *The Tentacles of Progress: Technology Transfer in the Age of Imperialism, 1850-1940*. (Oxford, UK New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 9.

⁵⁰ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats, 1825-1861*. (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), 168.

⁵¹ Albion, Robert Greenhalgh. *Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy 1652-1862*. (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 404.

or warlike, are not, nor ever will be over.”⁵² Neither viewpoint prevented the advancement of Britain’s Royal Navy, which was prompted by France’s attempts to challenge British maritime supremacy through technological innovations during the 1840s. Warship technology, though, was only one area in which the Russian Empire trailed its Western adversaries. The most crippling technological disadvantage faced by Russia during the Crimean War was an absence of railways outside of a line connecting St. Petersburg with Moscow.

Length of Railway Line in 1854 ⁵³ (in kilometers)	
United States	26,908
British Isles	12,969
German States	7,517
France	4,315
British North America (Canada)	1,229
Belgium	1,072
Russian Empire	1,049

Railway construction in the Czarist Empire trailed expansion in Britain and France for multiple reasons, not all of them financial. Russia’s long-serving Minister of Finance, Count Yegor Kankrin, adamantly opposed what he perceived would be the potential social consequences of railroad construction. Foremost amongst these were the rapid spread of dissent and sedition. Kankrin added that “all the returns would go to foreigners” and that railroads would harm peasants and destroy the Empire’s forests.⁵⁴ Nicholas I did recognize the military potential of railroads, but only approved construction of tracks connecting St. Petersburg with Moscow by using a ruler to draw a straight line on a map between the two cities.⁵⁵ The Czar then balked at the high cost of constructing further lines. Furthermore, Russia’s dependence on Prussian funds to supplement British and Dutch investment precluded railway construction along the Baltic coast, which would conceivably threaten Prussian trade.⁵⁶ Even after the 1851 completion of the St. Petersburg-Moscow Line, the Russian Empire possessed only a quarter of the railway track present in the non-industrialized American South.⁵⁷ This figure, in turn, can be put in even starker terms: once relative population sizes are accounted for, the Czarist Empire possessed 3

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 673-674 and Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: The Americas 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 539.

⁵⁴ Polunov, Alexander. Thomas C. Owen and Larissa G. Zakharova (Eds.) [Marshall S Shatz, Translator]. *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814-1914*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 74.

⁵⁵ Tolf, Robert W. *The Russian Rockefellers; the Saga of the Nobel Family and the Russian Oil Industry*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 1976), 10.

⁵⁶ Kagarlitsky, Boris [Renfrey Clarke, Translator]. *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System*. (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008), 186.

⁵⁷ Goldfrank, David. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 11.

percent of the per capita railway length of the Southern United States.⁵⁸ The lack of an extensive railway network was “one of the most serious disadvantages which Russia would suffer in the Crimean War”⁵⁹ and reflected the Czarist Government’s prioritization of social and political stability at the expense of economic growth.

Individual attitudes alone, even those of Emperors, did not exclusively determine the technological capabilities of belligerent powers. Soviet historians in particular emphasized that “the technology of a particular country is always determined by its level of economic development.”⁶⁰ Although Nicholas I viewed the competitiveness of his navy as a “critical state problem” as early as the 1820s,⁶¹ expensive Russian naval construction and maintenance programs were rendered superfluous by the Anglo-French adoption of screw-propelled steam warships. The Czar’s preference for naval strength was also undermined by his practice of forcing Jewish subjects from inland areas to serve as sailors because he viewed them as cowardly and less likely to desert naval postings.⁶² At any rate, Russia did not possess a substantial merchant fleet from which able seamen could be drawn. In an era that predated the offshore registration of ships for profit in other countries, the Russian Empire’s merchant fleet amounted to only a fraction of its European neighbors’. This was especially problematic because, by the 1820s, the majority of Russia’s trade entered and exited the Empire through a few key seaports rather than the Empire’s long land frontiers.⁶³

Registered Merchant Ships in Europe, 1854 ⁶⁴	
British Isles	26,859
France	14,396
Sweden-Norway	7,047
German States	3,885
Russian Empire (no more than)	3,000

A great disparity in registered merchant ships also underscores the importance of considering economic statistics within an appropriately broad context. Some authors neglect to consider the cost of transporting large products in the ships of other countries or overland without railways when concluding that “America and Belgium were good alternative sources of supply” of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illionis: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 186.

⁶⁰ Kagarlitsky, Boris [Renfrey Clarke, Translator]. *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System*. (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008). 193.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶³ Cameron, Rondo E. *France and the Economic Development of Europe, 1800-1914*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 13.

⁶⁴ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 711-714.

militarily useful commodities for Russia.⁶⁵ The Czarist Empire's economy and financial system simply could not bear additional costs of transporting 83% of its trade in foreign vessels,⁶⁶ especially since the merchant fleet of a sympathetic United States was relatively small⁶⁷ and based far from Russian ports.

Early 19th century Russia had yet to fully exploit the mineral and petroleum windfall available to its subsequent rulers. Coal, not oil or natural gas, was a valuable commodity for consumption or export, much to the advantage of Great Britain. Russia's Imperial Government faced another crucial economic problem that it did not share with either of its Western adversaries. The Empire's inefficient agricultural and small industrial resource bases were unsupported by other revenue sources such as income from overseas investments, financial services, or even private business. During the entire first half of the 19th century, for example, there were never more than four joint-stock companies formed in any single year.⁶⁸ Russia did not even have an insurance company until 1827,⁶⁹ which stood in stark contrast to the growth of British insurance firms such as Lloyd's of London throughout the previous century.

Even after the legal end of a transatlantic slave trade that had proven a mainstay for British insurers and shippers, individual firms and international investment experienced immense growth during the early to mid 19th century. British capital financed post-Napoleonic reconstruction in Western Europe, mining in former Spanish and Portuguese colonies in South America, and railway construction in North America and France.⁷⁰ This process did not come without speculation, defaults, and recessions, but still added earnings from approximately 230 million pounds (over 1.1 billion US) to the British economy by the mid-1850s.⁷¹ Railway development in the 1830s and 1840s, even in industrializing countries, relied on British capital, iron exports, and engineering expertise. Although French capital and contractors became the dominant force in European railway development⁷² during the 1850s, this was only due to the financial intervention of the French Government.

⁶⁵ Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 250.

⁶⁶ Ellison, Herbert J. "Economic Modernization in Imperial Russia: Purposes and Achievements." *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 25, No.4 (1965), 529.

⁶⁷ Kagarlitsky, Boris [Renfrey Clarke, Translator]. *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System*. (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008), 197.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 528

⁶⁹ Dmytryshyn, Basil. "Admiral Nikolai S. Mordvinov: Russia's Forgotten Liberal." *Russian Review*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January, 1971), 54-63.

⁷⁰ Cottrell, Philip. *British Overseas Investment in the Nineteenth Century*. (London and Basingstoke, UK: The Macmillan Press, 1975), 17-25

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 23.

⁷² *Ibid*, 22.

The growth of Britain's industrial sector and the technological innovations on which it relied kept pace with London's financial service industries. Britain and its military were, by the mid 19th century, benefitting from innumerable technological advancements with industrial applications. Even a cursory survey of the accomplishments of one family, the Brunels, reveals the enormity of Britain's technological progress. During the century's first decade, Marc Isambard Brunel, an émigré French monarchist, fully mechanized pulley block production at the Portsmouth Naval Dockyards, then one of the largest industrial complexes in existence.⁷³ The elder Brunel also created a precision-engineered device, or great shield, which could be combined with previously-invented hydraulic rams in order to tunnel under rivers.

One of Marc Brunel's most ambitious designs was for a "huge" bridge that could be raised to allow the passage of tall ships on the River Neva. Tellingly, the bid was rejected for lack of funds despite Czar Alexander I's personal respect for its engineer.⁷⁴ Marc's son Isambard Kingdom initially worked alongside his father and then individually spearheaded railroad construction and accompanying engineering feats such as bridging and tunneling before moving into designing iron-hulled steamships including the *Great Western* and *Great Eastern*. The careers of both Brunels were replete with business failures and disasters such as explosions and tunnel collapses, but even setbacks such as a failed atmospheric railway⁷⁵ demonstrated that British capital, industry, and expertise were joining together in order to produce novel results. The educated British public of the 1850s was confident that the Empire's engineering expertise could solve any number of pressing problems.⁷⁶ Its outlook was envied by Louis Napoleon, who spent much of the 1840s in Britain as a political exile.

Louis Napoleon-cum-Napoleon III's exile and failed coups are only a few examples of the political instability that confronted the French economy during the first half of the 19th century. Coupled with protection of agriculture and coal mining sectors, such political turbulence delayed France's industrialization and meant that its economy remained heavily dependent on agriculture. France suffered an economic depression that began in 1847 and was exacerbated by the Revolution of 1848. Unemployment and rural discontent were actually political advantages for the future Napoleon III, especially in the aftermath of his predecessor's disastrous decision to increase direct taxation on land by almost half.⁷⁷ Napoleon believed that "prosperity would

⁷³ Hay, Peter. *Brunel: His Achievements in the Transport Revolution*. (Berkshire, UK: Osprey Publishing, 1973), 6.

⁷⁴ Clements, Paul. *Marc Isambard Brunel*. (London and Harlow, UK: Longmans Green, 1970). 64-65.

⁷⁵ Intended to propel rolling stock with gas pressure.

⁷⁶ The author is grateful to Professor Andrew Lambert of King's College London for this insight.

⁷⁷ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Essex, UK: Longman Group, 1991), 29.

provide the means of ensuring social harmony,” which was essential for the political survival of his regime.⁷⁸

Louis Napoleon, both as president and emperor, spent millions in order to emulate Britain’s economic development.⁷⁹ Economic stimulus efforts were not unique to the Second Empire, but were greatly expanded by Napoleon III. Immediately after he assumed the imperial throne, institutions such as the *Crédit Foncier* and *Crédit Mobilier* were established to provide funds for, respectively, agriculture and “large-scale” business investments.⁸⁰ Although the *Crédit Foncier* ended up financing property speculation rather than agriculture, the *Crédit Mobilier* was wildly successful and its resources financed numerous enterprises.⁸¹ France was able to invest an average of 300 million francs (\approx 60 million US) in railway construction throughout the 1850s while simultaneously funding infrastructure projects such as harbors and canals.⁸² Virtually all of the capital invested in railways by the 1850s was from private sources,⁸³ and compared favorably with the 100-200 million francs (\approx 20-40 million US) per year averages under King Louis-Philippe during the late 1840s.

Napoleon III’s *coup d’état* also expedited economic development by circumventing tedious parliamentary procedures in favor of rapid decision-making by selected groups of government officials and capitalists.⁸⁴ Although the economic depression of 1847-1851 created opportunities for French investors to acquire British stakes in France’s railway consortia at bargain prices, the Second Empire’s foreign investments in 1850 remained approximately 1/9th those of Britain and remained heavily concentrated in Belgium and the Iberian and Italian peninsulas.⁸⁵ Despite Napoleon III’s belief that economic development was “essential to the survival of France as a great power,”⁸⁶ French capital and exports still had difficulty competing with those of Britain for market share in more distant areas such as the Ottoman Empire during the early 1850s.⁸⁷

⁷⁸ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire; an Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 210.

⁷⁹ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Essex, UK: Longman Group, 1991), 50.

⁸⁰ Gooch, Brison D. *The Reign of Napoleon III*. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969), 71.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Cameron, Rondo E. *France and the Economic Development of Europe, 1800-1914*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), 69.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire; an Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 215.

⁸⁵ Goldfrank, David M. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 12.

⁸⁶ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire; an Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 210.

⁸⁷ Raccagni, Michelle. “The French Economic Interests in the Ottoman Empire”, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (May, 1980), 342.

Britain and France both enjoyed a far stronger economic position than is initially indicated by a review of their governments' respective revenues and expenditures in 1854, albeit for different reasons.

Government Revenues ⁸⁸ (in approximate millions of 1854 US dollars)				
	1850	1854	1855	1856
Britain	278.2	302.6	341.6	351.4
France	259.4	283.6	307.2	327.6
Russian Empire	161.6	170.4	167.2	185.6

The British government did not maintain a large standing army outside of India, and British troops serving in the subcontinent were not funded by taxpayers in the metropole. France's economy had experienced more moderate growth, but still outpaced Russia's while investing heavily in infrastructure and maintaining an army of 450,000 troops, up from 240,000 in 1847.⁸⁹ The Czarist government, meanwhile, had been using its monopoly on domestic banking and official secrecy to hide the true extent of its indebtedness from West European creditors and its own population. American State Department correspondence, for instance, indicated that "no two individuals could be found who would agree on the strength of the army and navy, the annual revenue, or the size of the public debt, because the (Czarist) government wanted to keep such vital statistics a mystery."⁹⁰ This allowed the Russian Empire to spend beyond its revenues⁹¹ and support a vast military establishment and protracted campaigns in the Caucasus.⁹² Lost amid admiration of Czarist military might was awareness that Russian intervention was only possible with the assistance of the London capital market.

⁸⁸ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 829, 833-834.

⁸⁹ Goldfrank, David M. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 31.

⁹⁰ Shewmaker, Kenneth E. "Neill S. Brown's Mission to Russia, 1850-1853." *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2001), 92.

⁹¹ Kipp, Jacob W. "M. Kh. Reutern on the Russian State and Economy: A Liberal Bureaucrat during the Crimean Era, 1854-60." *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), 445.

⁹² Polunov, Alexander [Thomas C. Own and Larissa G. Zakharova, Eds. Marshall S. Shatz, Translator]. *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814-1914*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 80.

Total Government Expenditures ⁹³ (in approximate millions of 1854 US dollars)				
	1850	1854	1855	1856
Britain	268.4	404	453.8	370.9
France	294.6	397.6	461.8	439.2
Russian Empire	229.6	307.2	420.8	495.2

The Czarist Empire's fiscal problems were intimately related to its limited tax base, which was unable to meet the heavy demands of military spending. Nicholas I's government relied on an "archaic" set of taxes that regressively burdened serfs rather than the wealthy.⁹⁴ These included a state monopoly on salt, a capitation tax on 'souls' and state licensing of distilled alcohol sales.⁹⁵ Revenue generated from these three taxes was supplemented by the state's income from tariffs. This structure was problematic for a multitude of reasons. The tax on spirits, which generated significantly more revenue than both the salt and 'soul' taxes combined, encouraged corruption because it was not collected directly by the state. The majority of Russia's taxes were inelastic, meaning that they did not expand even when the overall economy grew. The salt tax, for instance, generated 9.4 million rubles in 1845 and 9 million rubles in 1856 despite intervening economic growth.⁹⁶ Revenue generated by the soul tax likewise remained almost static from 1845-1857, and revenue from the spirit tax increased substantially for years prior to the Crimean War but actually fell during its course.⁹⁷ Tariff income was also drastically cut by wartime Allied maritime blockades. The extent of this decline is debated, but a consensus exists that it was more than half. The Russian Empire was thus completely unable to organically generate revenue sufficient to finance its military, especially in times of war.

Great Britain, on the other hand, financed its participation in war from a tax base about which Russian reformers could only dream. Britain collected ≈ 107 million US dollars worth of tariffs in 1854 versus Russia's ≈ 12 million, and Britain's figure grew in the following years as Russia's declined.⁹⁸ France's tariff revenues expanded even more impressively, albeit from a

⁹³ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 817-818.

⁹⁴ Kipp, Jacob W. "M. Kh. Reutern on the Russian State and Economy: A Liberal Bureaucrat during the Crimean Era, 1854-60." *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), 449.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Kipp, Jacob W. "M. Kh. Reutern on the Russian State and Economy: A Liberal Bureaucrat during the Crimean Era, 1854-60." *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), 450.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 829-834.

more modest base of \approx 30 million US dollars in 1854.⁹⁹ Britain was in such a strong financial position that there was “a widespread belief that England could impress the world by paying for a major war out of income” rather than loans.¹⁰⁰ This proposition also had moral overtones. Chancellor of the Exchequer¹⁰¹ William Gladstone, for example, believed that “the expenses of war are the moral check which it has pleased the Almighty to impose upon the ambition and lust of conquest that are inherent in so many nations.”¹⁰² Morality yielded to fiscal expediency, however, and Britain quickly financed two-thirds of its military efforts with loans.¹⁰³

The ease with which the British Government raised funds¹⁰⁴ during the Crimean War contrasted with historical experiences during the Napoleonic and Seven Years’ Wars. Both of the latter conflicts had severely strained state finances, especially due to the high cost of subsidizing European allies. Partially financing a Swedish-Norwegian offensive against Russian forces in the Baltic was proposed, but never came to fruition. Britain’s wartime financial assistance to the Ottoman Empire involved loans secured with collateral and was overseen by European appointees. France occupied an intermediate position between Britain and Russia, but comfortably obtained war financing, even joining with the British in loaning funds to the Ottoman Empire. The French government admittedly faced problems such as a poor grain harvest in 1855 as well as inflation and a drain on gold reserves.¹⁰⁵ Yet constraints on French government spending were ultimately due to Napoleon III’s extreme reluctance to create a backlash directed at his regime, which is discussed in the ensuing chapter.

The Czarist Government, unlike its French counterpart, was not as reticent to threaten the economic interests of its population. Its ministers exploited the Russian government’s monopoly on the Empire’s banks by using them to issue paper currency that could be periodically devalued. Issuing large amounts of paper money was another temporary expedient, but it came at the cost of surging inflation.¹⁰⁶ Deposits loaned to the state were guaranteed in precious metal, however, which meant that Russia’s monetary system was designed to loan its government money instead of expanding its economy.¹⁰⁷ Monetary reforms designed by commissions spearheaded by

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967), 15.

¹⁰¹ Treasury.

¹⁰² Reynolds, Neil. “Cameron Could Learn from the Grand Old Man’s Passion for the Economy.” (Toronto, Canada: The Globe and Mail,), 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Goldfrank, David M. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (New York and London, UK: Longman, 1994), 15.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, Olive. “Economic Warfare in the Crimean War.” *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 14., No. 1 (1961), 47.

¹⁰⁷ Kipp, Jacob W. “M. Kh. Reutern on the Russian State and Economy: A Liberal Bureaucrat during the Crimean Era, 1854-60. *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), 445.

Minister of Finance Count Kankrin and implemented in the early 1840s allowed the Empire's rulers to raise funds. As one future Czarist official commented: "if another state had our monetary system in our present situation a panic would result...and a terrible crisis would ensue."¹⁰⁸ These reforms, however, did nothing to solve the underlying problem of an expensive bureaucratic-military state supported by an indentured agrarian economy.

A global appraisal of the world economy of the 1850s indicates that there were many more trends at work than just the industrialization of Western Europe. Unfortunately for the Russian Empire, these developments were more favorable to the economies of Britain and France. The development of a global marketplace for raw materials meant that Britain's industrial economy could obtain substitutes for Russian goods elsewhere. Materials such as oil seeds and flax were "subject to heavy speculative fluctuations," but did not experience a significant rise in price.¹⁰⁹ Russia's most valuable export commodity, grain, was already being challenged by exports from what became Romania, Egypt, and the United States, with Australia and Canada also emerging as major export producers.¹¹⁰ Sir Charles Wood, First Lord of the Admiralty by 1855, was able to report to the House of Commons that "other sources (of supply) have been opened to us which promise to be exceedingly abundant."¹¹¹ Australian and American supplies of tallow¹¹² remained inadequate, but Britain's Royal Navy solved the problem by simply continuing to order it from Russia.¹¹³ British exports to the Czarist Empire had fallen precipitously years before the outbreak of war, and France had not yet made the substantial capital investments that would enable the Czarist Empire to finally develop its railways and large-scale industry in the later 19th century.

Main Foreign Trading Partners in 1854 ¹¹⁴ (by value of goods traded)		
<i>Britain</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Russian Empire</i>
United States	Britain	German States
German States	United States	Britain
India	Belgium	(tie) Habsburg Empire, China
Australian Colonies	Italian States	France

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 445.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, Olive. "Economic warfare in the Crimean War." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 14., No. 1 (1961), 45.

¹¹⁰ Kagarlitsky, Boris [Renfrey Clarke, Translator]. *Empire of the Periphery: Russia and the World System*. (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2008), 191.

¹¹¹ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, July 31st, 1855. *Hansard's* Vol. 139, CC 1589-604, 1.

¹¹² Processed, easily-storable beef fat.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ Mitchell, Brian R. *International Historical Statistics: Europe 1750-2000 (Fifth Edition)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 607, 644, and 661.

France	Algeria	
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Russia did experience some benefits from increasingly global markets, but it came at the expense of less powerful states in Central Asia and China. Both Russian and Anglo-French economic priorities in the Pacific Region will be explored further in a later chapter.

The balance of world trade had important consequences for how the Crimean War was fought. Britain was exceedingly reluctant to maintain an effective maritime blockade since it would antagonize neutral powers such as the United States, with whom she exchanged 51 million pounds (\approx 249 million US dollars) worth of goods in 1854. The Czarist Empire kept importing high-value goods such as sugar and silks from Prussia, but even a loose and confused Anglo-French maritime blockade presented significant difficulties for the export of bulky raw materials such as timber.¹¹⁵ This meant that the Empire's aristocracy suffered little for want of luxuries while state finances spiraled out of control. Economic pressure thus may never have created a "peace party" among the nobility,¹¹⁶ but it strongly motivated Czarist ministers in advising Alexander II to sue for peace. The economic impact of the Crimean conflict brought the Czarist state to its knees without destroying the Russian economy as a whole, but it threatened to do just that if the conflict continued.¹¹⁷

The Crimean War was a unique example of a geographically expansive yet strategically limited conflict among vast empires at different stages of economic and technological development. It is therefore especially important to consider not only the amounts of human and economic resources available to the belligerents, but also the factors that prevented them from being engrossed in massive war effort similar to those of the First and Second World Wars. The Crimean conflict is best understood as, to borrow a term from the creative arts,¹¹⁸ as one episode within a larger story arc, or series in which a plot unfolds over many episodes. Factors including geographic scale, available economic resources, patterns of trade, transportation infrastructure, and government finances mattered, but did not spontaneously take shape just prior to 1854. The danger of infinite regress notwithstanding, this chapter has thus highlighted key statistics in an effort to demonstrate that, despite its vast territory, population, and military, Russia was at a significant disadvantage to Britain and France; a disadvantage that had been growing for decades before war was declared.

¹¹⁵ Pinter, Walter M. "Inflation in Russia during the Crimean War Period." *American Slavic and East European Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (February, 1959), 84.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, Olive. "Economic warfare in the Crimean War." *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 14., No. 1 (1961), 47.

¹¹⁷ Blackwell, William L. *The Industrialization of Russia: An Historical Perspective*. (New York: Thomas Crowell and Co., 1970), 18.

¹¹⁸ And a metaphor from Gray, Colin S. *The Strategy Bridge*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 191.

Chapter Two

Political Background

Studies of the Crimean War often focus on the politics of diplomacy and relationships among Great Power diplomats. That focus comes at the price of neglecting comparative studies of political leadership and institutions, as well as public opinion and the press. Such neglect unfortunately hampers our ability to fully understand belligerent powers' actions during the Crimean conflict. The precarious position of Napoleon III's government helps account for a considerable range of French actions throughout the conflict. Likewise, Nicholas I's worldview profoundly influenced Russia's preparations for war and initial plans in the Baltic. Understanding the broader Czarist political system provides further insights related to the efforts of Czarist officials and commanders in Siberia and the Russian Arctic, with draconian censorship heavily influencing how such actions were reported to St. Petersburg. The confused division of Lord Aberdeen's weak cabinet explains how a single First Lord of the Admiralty came to play a preponderant role in Britain's initial war planning, and the considerable influence of Britain's press illustrated that the modest results initially intended by Graham were politically unacceptable. A broad, synthetic discussion of general political systems and press climates is admittedly incapable of encompassing the broad range of specific actions, participants, and issues presented in subsequent chapters. It rather outlines the general context within which they occurred, thereby subsequently allowing for more robust description and analysis.

The Second French Empire

France experienced a full spectrum of political ideologies during the 29 years separating the Congress of Vienna from the Crimean War. The restored Bourbon Dynasty was overthrown during the Revolution of 1830. A constitutional monarchy under Louis Philippe of Orléans then assumed control in July of that year with the backing of France's *haute bourgeoisie*. Louis Philippe and his supporters presented Orléanism as a compromise between the negative consequences of unchecked autocracy and the anarchy of popular revolution.¹ Regardless, support for the July Monarchy rested on "an extremely narrow political base."² Prime Minister François Guizot, for example, famously responded to complaints about extremely high property

¹ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 23.

² *Ibid.*

qualifications for voting by urging Frenchmen to “*enrichissez-vous*, ” or “get rich.”³ By the mid 1840s, a series of economic disasters including poor harvests and a financial crisis doomed Louis Philippe’s regime. It was swept from power in February of 1848, only to be briefly replaced by an equally unpopular republic. This Second Republic was too weak to resist a return to Bonapartist rule in the person of Napoleon I’s nephew, Louis Napoleon. As president-cum-emperor, Louis Napoleon’s government and political ideology were forced to account for France not being “a new country in political terms”⁴ by conciliating multiple groups connected with prior regimes.

The election of 1848 and *coup d’état* of 1851 may have been Louis Napoleon’s most successful attempts to take power in France, but they were not his first. Louis had attempted coups in 1836 and 1840: both ended in ignominious failure after appeals to “Napoleonic memories” could not rally sufficient support.⁵ These setbacks indicated that devoted Bonapartists were an endangered species in France, especially prior to 1848. They also made Louis Napoleon bide his time in London as a political exile. Napoleon’s stay in the British capital left him determined to emulate the country’s industrial and financial growth.⁶ It also left him warmly disposed towards Englishmen, except for a personal loathing of British Prime Minister (1852-1855) Lord Aberdeen.⁷ Louis Napoleon later made strenuous efforts to cultivate Anglo-French personal relationships through gestures such as sending his uncle’s illegitimate son to attend the (first) Duke of Wellington’s 1852 funeral. The French leader’s actions were thus instrumental in temporarily bridging the traditional gulf of enmity between the two major Allied powers of the Crimean War, especially when coupled with less formal ties such as personal networks and travel.⁸

Louis Napoleon’s exile was also an asset when he stood for election as President after the fall of Louis-Philippe’s government. His deliberately vague political views and non-association with punitive taxation and the repression of Parisian protesters propelled Louis Napoleon to a crushing electoral victory over republican candidates. Yet it is important to note that this initial,

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Plessis, Alain [Jonathan Mandelbaum, Translator]. *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 55.

⁵ Gooch, Brison D. *The Reign of Napoleon III*. (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1969), 11.

⁶ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 210.

⁷ Lambert, Andrew D. “Arms Races and Cooperation: the Anglo-French Crimean War Coalition 1854-1856” in Elleman and Paine (Eds.). *Naval Coalition Warfare: from the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35.

⁸ The author wishes to thank Dr. Ann Saab for this insight.

1848 election saw him ‘come to office but not to power.’⁹ France’s newly elected President still faced a number of opposing political factions without the support of a dedicated political party. Although Louis Napoleon instructed his campaign managers to abstain from even insinuating that he might restore his uncle’s empire,¹⁰ he quickly set about using the presidency to augment his own authority and popularity. By late 1851, Napoleon had ensured that the stage was set for Operation Rubicon, the code name for his coup and assumption of full power. The move was overwhelmingly endorsed by popular plebiscite, and Louis Napoleon was crowned Emperor Napoleon III in 1852.

Napoleon III’s government and its ideological underpinnings have often been described as enigmatic or sphinx-like. More appropriate adjectives include pragmatic and eclectic. Motivated by both necessity and expediency, Napoleon III and the Second French Empire co-opted adherents of all three major French political traditions; legitimism, republicanism, and Orléanism. Legitimists believed in the tradition of divinely-sanctioned monarchical rule and became increasingly associated with conservative Roman Catholicism. Orléanists, on the other hand, displayed an affinity for constitutionally-based parliamentary government by the upper middle class. Republicans were divided due to the “diverse traditions created between 1789 and 1799,”¹¹ but shared a commitment to popular sovereignty and political liberty. Bonapartism was similar to republicanism in that both relied on plebiscites¹² and had difficulty in precisely defining their aims which, in Bonapartism’s case, centered on authority and military glory.¹³ The French Emperor believed it was necessary to simultaneously conciliate workers, peasants, soldiers, and the commercial classes without the backing of a strong party apparatus. He even commented: “what a government I have! The Empress is a legitimist, Napoleon Jérôme a republican, Morny an Orleanist. I myself am a socialist. There are no Bonapartists except for Persigny, but he is insane.”¹⁴

A possible solution to the challenges Napoleon III faced emerged from his uncle’s commentaries on Julius Caesar, in which Napoleon I argued that an external war was necessary

⁹ Echard, William E. *Napoleon III and the Concert of Europe*. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana and London, UK: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 9.

¹⁰ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 32

¹¹ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 318.

¹² The author wishes to thank Dr. Ann Saab for this insight.

¹³ Plessis, Alain [Jonathan Mandelbaum, Translator]. *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 54.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

to amalgamate the remains of all the parties in the aftermath of a revolution.¹⁵ As a keen student of history, Napoleon III realized that war was a useful instrument of foreign policy. This was hardly a novel conclusion for either a French ruler or a mid-19th century European power, but it meant that Napoleon III was sufficiently emboldened to use force when his diplomatic efforts stalled. Political considerations, however, made it impossible to sustain high casualties and extraordinary military expenditures. This was often not an issue with minor colonial operations. War against the vast Russian Empire, on the other hand, threatened to become a political liability if it dragged on for too long. Pressure for a negotiated end to the Crimean War mounted after France's military honor seemed to have been satisfied, and Napoleon III's government pushed Britain to end the conflict before it escalated.

Despite its eclectic nature, the Second French Empire was undeniably personalist during the early to mid-1850s. Napoleon III insisted that “no-one must take (*sic*) policy decisions without consulting me,” which was understandable given that he ruled through men who did not share his political views.¹⁶ Napoleon did create a cabinet of ministers responsible for the different areas of state, but the institution was informal and ministers were responsible to their emperor on an individual basis. Members of the Imperial Cabinet would usually learn the outcome of their consultations with Napoleon III by reading the regime's official newspaper *Le Moniteur Universel*.¹⁷ Regardless, Napoleon was always obliged by logistics and, after 1860, declining health, to allow his ministers limited autonomy to implement his policy decisions.¹⁸ Even when healthy, he did not have the capacity or inclination to closely monitor the affairs of state in the manner of Czar Nicholas I. Thus, the roles of Ministers including Drouyn de Lhuys (Foreign Affairs) and Théodore Ducos (Navy and Colonial Affairs) also mattered when it came to French policy in distant regions during the Crimean War. This autonomy had to be exercised within limits, and Napoleon III did not hesitate in stripping Drouyn de Lhuys of his post in 1855 when the latter's preference for an alliance with Austria rather than Britain contradicted his Emperor's wishes.¹⁹

¹⁵ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 406.

¹⁶ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 55.

¹⁷ Plessis, Alain [Jonathan Mandelbaum, Translator]. *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 26.

¹⁸ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 55.

¹⁹ English, Christopher. “Napoleon III's Intervention in China, 1856-1861: A Study of Policy, Press, and Public Opinion.” (Toronto: University of Toronto PhD Dissertation, 1972), 60.

Napoleon III's domination of his ministers during the early part of his reign was especially pronounced when it came to foreign policy. His Majesty considered foreign affairs to be his personal area of expertise and felt free to circumvent both his ministers and his bureaucracy in developing and then pursuing "personal foreign policy objectives."²⁰ The foremost amongst these was the alteration of a post-Vienna European order designed to limit the influence of France and smaller nationalities in Europe. Napoleon III did not differ from previous French monarchs in attempting to alter France's position, but the extent of his personal diplomacy and secrecy did. Even Napoleon's relatively well-informed Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire and future Foreign Minister Edouard Thouvenel, for instance, once exclaimed in exasperation "What am I doing here? I am ignorant of the Emperor's political plans. I work in the dark, without objective, without plans..."²¹ Thouvenel's frustration was soon shared by France's Baltic naval commander in 1854, Admiral Alexandre Parseval-Deschenes, whose wartime correspondence is discussed in the ensuing two chapters.

Napoleon III's foreign policy calculations succeeded brilliantly during the Crimean conflict, but were not always coherent or well-executed by military leaders and civil servants. The French Emperor's domestic political acumen was significantly more refined than the foreign policy decision-making process in which he participated. Prior to the Crimean War, Napoleon III's tenure in office had primarily been spent on attaining and consolidating his political power rather than designing plans to achieve general foreign policy goals.²² Sub-ministerial officials also presented a problem for Napoleon III. Bureaucrats including Thouvenel, for instance, harbored views that contradicted those of their emperor. The former even described the Second Empire's alliance with Britain as "detestable."²³ Nevertheless, Napoleon III's efforts to maintain a close alliance with England prevailed during both the Crimean conflict and the Anglo-French intervention in China that followed closely thereafter.

Despite rumors to the contrary, Napoleon III's devoutly Catholic wife, former Spanish Countess Eugénie de Montijo, played no role in her husband's foreign policy decisions during the Crimean conflict. The Empress found the Eastern Question "boring" and wrote her sister

²⁰ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 406.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Saab, Ann P, John M. Knapp, and Francoise de Bourqueney Knapp. "A Reassessment of French Foreign Policy during the Crimean War Based on the Papers of Adolphe de Bourqueney." *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Autumn, 1986), 475.

²³ *Ibid.*, 482.

“you can be very glad indeed that I do not speak to you of the *Eastern* question!!”²⁴ Much has also been made of the petty slight delivered by Czar Nicholas I’s reference to Napoleon III as a friend (*ami*) rather than as a brother (*frère*), the customary form of address among legitimate monarchs. Napoleon III’s response that “we put up with our brothers and we choose our friends”²⁵ is less often quoted. The French Emperor was undoubtedly one of the many individuals collectively responsible for the Crimean War’s outbreak, but lost some of his enthusiasm after realizing that the conflict would not become a struggle to liberate subjugated national groups including the Poles and Finns. The French Emperor was further influenced by the arguments of his Minister of Finance, Jean Bineau, that public opinion and business conditions were not conducive to participating in a major European war. This led the British Ambassador to Paris to become alarmed that France might not fight alongside England.²⁶ Although it was ultimately ignored, Bineau’s argument was initially intriguing because it partially appealed to Napoleon III’s primary concern when formulating policy: public opinion.²⁷

In stark contrast to the situation in Great Britain, French opinion during the early 1850s did not call for a war in the East over what Napoleon III dismissed as “the foolish affair of the Holy Places.”²⁸ Traditional historical methods of examining public opinion, though, are immensely problematic in the early Second Empire’s case. This is due to its manipulation of the press, electoral results, and political debates.²⁹ These practices meant that even His Imperial French Majesty had difficulty ascertaining unvarnished opinions without the aid of regular confidential reports from procureurs généraux³⁰ and prefects³¹ throughout France.³² Luckily for Napoleon III, the Crimean conflict was initially “fairly popular” with both Catholics and

²⁴ Barker, Nancy Nichols. *Distaff diplomacy: the Empress Eugenie and the Foreign Policy of the Second Empire*. (Austin Texas and London, UK: University of Texas Press, 1967). 15.

²⁵ “On subit ses frères et on choisit ses amis.” Thompson, J.M. *Louis Napoleon and the Second Empire*. (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1954), 138.

²⁶ Case, Lynn M. *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 25.

²⁷ Henry Kissinger observed that Napoleon III’s foreign policy “fluctuated with his assessment of what was needed to sustain his popularity.” Mahin, Dean B. *One War at a Time: the International Dimensions of the American Civil War*. (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey’s Publishing, 1999), 96.

²⁸ McMillan, James F. *Napoleon III*. (Harlow, UK: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 76.

²⁹ Case, Lynn M. *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 2-3.

³⁰ Chief prosecuting attorneys.

³¹ Department heads.

³² *Ibid*, 6 and 10.

republicans, who saw it as a means of weakening the reactionary Empire of Nicholas I.³³ Even so, it is difficult to identify any specific faction within the French civilian population deeply interested in fighting an expansive war against Russia. Religious disagreements in Jerusalem, a significant issue for devout Roman Catholics, were resolved before France declared war. Furthermore, peace also brought the possibility of closer French ties with Catholic Austria. By 1856, Britain's Ambassador Cowley "found in Paris that everyone except the Emperor was prepared to make 'ANY peace'" and that it was "unavoidable."³⁴ French public opinion ultimately influenced Napoleon III's decision to negotiate an end to a limited conflict rather than to begin or expand it. In the words of one neutral ambassador to his court, "Napoleon always will permit himself to be guided by what he believes to be the opinion, the interests, and the will of his country."³⁵

Popular opinions and interests were not reflected in the French press during the early part of the Second Empire. All forms of written expression, especially newspapers, periodicals, and books, were strictly regulated by the government. Official censorship in France was nevertheless qualitatively different from censorship in the Russian Empire for multiple reasons. Napoleon III's government attributed its legitimacy to popular support, which precluded the employment of the draconian censorship policies enforced by the Imperial Russian Government. Following an especially severe crackdown in the aftermath of his 1852 coup, Napoleon III's regime characteristically settled upon, in the words of one censor, "a happy medium" designed to "prevent the excesses of newspapers in order not to have to repress them."³⁶ This involved a series of measures designed to secure favorable coverage while simultaneously ensuring that a range of nominal opposition papers continued to exist. These measures included stringent ownership requirements, including high deposits of caution money in advance of publication, both unofficial and official warnings, and prohibitions on publishing content such as detailed transcripts of parliamentary proceedings.³⁷

³³ Plessis, Alain [Jonathan Mandelbaum, Translator]. *The Rise and Fall of the Second Empire, 1852-1871*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 141.

³⁴ Southgate, Donald. *The Most English Minister: the Policies and Politics of Palmerston*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 387.

³⁵ Case, Lynn M. *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 6.

³⁶ Price, Roger. *The French Second Empire: An Anatomy of Political Power*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 172.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 171-172.

Napoleon III believed that if he were to permit “the free play of journalism, the principles of authority and direction would no longer belong to the Chief of State. Not I, but the press, would govern.”³⁸ Although France’s Imperial Government actively sought a nominal opposition press, officials ensured that positions contrary to those of the regime were neither too radical nor too stridently expressed.³⁹ Opposition publications including the Orleanist *Journal des Débats* and the scholarly periodical *Revue des Deux Mondes* thus circulated freely alongside official and avowedly pro-government publications. Restrictions on content, however, remained in force. The most detailed account of a disastrous Anglo-French assault on the Russian Pacific port of Petropavlovsk in 1854, for instance, was published under a pseudonym.⁴⁰ Apart from the inclusion of approved excerpts from the *The Times* (of London) and the aforementioned Du Hailly article, French press coverage of fighting in the Pacific and White Sea was both brief and subdued. This contrasted starkly with extensive coverage of the history, geography, and campaigns affecting the Baltic in both official and privately-owned newspapers.⁴¹ Yet neither approach really mattered in terms of French public opinion. As Adolphe Thiers, a bitter political opponent of the Second Empire commented: “when he (Napoleon III) thought that opinion was against him, he destroyed all the means of influencing it.”⁴²

An examination of social and political structures in France leads to the conclusion that Napoleon III was not under political pressure to instigate or enter the Crimean War. This remained the case even after events such as the Russian destruction of an Ottoman naval squadron at Sinope in late 1853. A Swiss minister, for instance, reported on France’s reaction to the Sinope incident that “public opinion is not very susceptible, and the newspapers are not in a position to stir it up.”⁴³ These observations were corroborated by sources such as the report of Napoleon III’s Procureur General in Toulouse:

“The vast majority of men concerned over the events in the East desire with vivacity a peaceful settlement. The current of opinion does not run towards war, but it would allow itself to be channeled in that direction. The preceding indications apply almost exclusively to the educated classes. The real war for the masses, the kind they would understand best, would be a continental war. They are even a little astonished under the present circumstances

³⁸ English, Christopher. “Napoleon III’s Intervention in China, 1856-1861: A Study of Policy, Press, and Public Opinion.” (Toronto: University of Toronto PhD Dissertation, 1972), 182.

³⁹ Isser, Natalie. *The Second Empire and the Press*. (The Hague, the Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 27.

⁴⁰ Édouard Polydore Vanéechout called himself Édouard du Hailly.

⁴¹ Paasivirta, Juhani. *Finland and Europe: International Crises in the Period of Autonomy 1808-1914*. [Anthony Upton and Sirkka Upton Translators and D.G. Kirby, Ed.]. (London, UK: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 93-94.

⁴² Case, Lynn M. *French Opinion on War and Diplomacy during the Second Empire*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1972), 19.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 18.

to see us allied to the English whom they do not distinguish much from the Russians when we speak of the enemy...It cannot be said that the war would be popular, but it might become so later.”⁴⁴

This does not mean that the French Emperor, Russian Czar, and their respective governments lacked any animosity towards one another, but rather that the sources of their disagreement had little to do with domestic political pressure. In both countries, the Crimean War was begun and conducted due to the personal views of their rulers on foreign affairs rather than public concern over controversies related to the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon III ordered his diplomats to use the occasions of minor disputes with Russia to serve his cause of increasing French influence around the world and uniting French political factions rather than pandering to their interests. The situation changed dramatically after French forces suffered heavy losses from disease and began to feel the impact of mounting expensive campaigns. Napoleon III may not have had a specific object at the start of the war,⁴⁵ but he certainly had a political object in negotiating its end. He would only benefit politically if the conflict ended while the prestige of French arms was at a high point, especially after realizing that his dream of harnessing nationalist forces to reshape Europe would not be realized through a limited conflict against Russia. The French Emperor was also aware that events such as an epidemic of cholera in Paris, poor harvests, and floods in the Loire and Rhone river valleys⁴⁶ could fuel public resentment towards the expenditures necessary to fund the conflict. French capitalists were further hopeful that France’s future relationship with the Czarist Empire would be defined by supplying investment capital to fund modernization.⁴⁷ The 1856 Treaty of Paris was a diplomatic triumph and political relief for Napoleon III, but his subsequent foreign ventures proved markedly less successful.

The Russian Empire

Russia’s political history in the early to mid 19th century was dominated by conflict with both foreign and domestic enemies. Czar Nicholas I believed that “the Emperor of Russia is a military commander and each one of his days is a day of battle”⁴⁸ and acted accordingly. His convictions were accentuated by the nature of Russia’s Great Power status, which was inordinately dependant on force of arms at the expense of other sources of power such as

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 20.

⁴⁵ Lambert, Andrew D. “Arms Races and Cooperation: the Anglo-French Crimean War Coalition 1854-1856” in Elleman and Paine (Eds.). *Naval Coalition Warfare: from the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 37.

⁴⁶ Gooch, Brison D. *The Reign of Napoleon III*. (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1969), 67.

⁴⁷ Isser, Natalie. *The Second Empire and the Press*. (The Hague, the Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 34.

⁴⁸ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 79.

economic development. Reliance on force alone actually served Russia well in the 18th century and first half of the 19th century. The Czarist Empire wrested control of the Baltic's eastern littoral from Sweden after 1710, and took advantage of the Napoleonic Wars a hundred years later to formally annex the remainder of modern Finland in 1809. Three years later, the Russian Empire survived an invasion by Napoleon I's *Grand Armée*. The impact of the struggle was so great that the intellectual Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) referred to it as "the beginning of real Russian history."⁴⁹ Problematically, however, details such as the large subsidies Russia received from Britain in order to oppose Napoleon I,⁵⁰ albeit prior to 1812,⁵¹ were overshadowed by outpourings of patriotism and religiosity that accompanied Russia's survival and eventual victory.

Campaigns against France and its allies at the beginning of the 19th century profoundly influenced Nicholas I, the man who would lead the Russian Empire into the Crimean War. Nicholas was 19 years younger than his brother and predecessor Alexander I, meaning that Alexander was raised during a period in which Enlightenment thought held sway. Nicholas, on the other hand, was born in 1796 and grew up amidst the turmoil of "a titanic struggle" between Napoleonic France and an older European order.⁵² Despite his passion for military affairs, young Grand Duke Nicholas was kept out of combat. This prevented him from witnessing the horrors of the battlefield and forming attitudes similar to those of Lord Aberdeen, Britain's first wartime Prime Minister. Unlike Nicholas, Aberdeen had been indelibly impacted by the ravages of war he witnessed on the field of Leipzig.⁵³ The British leader consequently viewed war as "the greatest proof of the depravity and corruptness of human nature."⁵⁴ This differed greatly from the victory parades witnessed by Nicholas and his brother Michael.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Polunov, Alexander. Thomas C. Owen and Larissa Zakharova (Eds.). [Marshall S. Shatz, Translator]. *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814-1914*. (London, UK and Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 27.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 73.

⁵¹ Credit is due to Dr. David Goldfrank of Georgetown University for this insight.

⁵² Presniakov, A. E. [Judith C. Zacek, Ed. and Translator]. *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia: the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1974), VIII.

⁵³ Conacher, J.B. *The Aberdeen Coalition 1852-1855: A Student in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Party Politics*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 28

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 275.

⁵⁵ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume One) From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 256-257.

Even a young Nicholas I always made sure to fortify toy or earth structures he built “for defense.”⁵⁶ Nicholas’ mother, Maria Fedorovna, admonished him to consider the “welfare of the common soldier, which is so often neglected and sacrificed to the elegance of uniforms, to useless military exercises...”⁵⁷ The boy Grand Duke did not heed her advice and instead gravitated towards military leaders who did just what she had cautioned him against. Fortunately for Russia’s international reputation, though, the results of Nicholas’ obsession with military form over function did not become fully evident for decades. This changed when Russia fought other great powers during the Crimean War.

Nicholas’ love of military pageantry was accompanied by a hatred of popular revolutions. His Scottish nurse, Jane Lyon, had been abused by Polish rebels during the Warsaw uprising of 1794 and often recounted her experiences to an emperor who referred to her as his “lioness” until her death in 1842.⁵⁸ The young Grand Duke Nicholas eagerly absorbed her views, and was raised with strict discipline.⁵⁹ The future Czar was an undistinguished student, save for his interest in military history. He found lectures on political economy sleep inducing, and described his legal instructors as “the most insupportable pedants imaginable.”⁶⁰ This makes it less surprising that, as Czar, Nicholas fundamentally misunderstood the political systems of Russia’s neighbors to the point of questioning how criminals could be arrested in states with a constitution.⁶¹ Even Nicholas’ formative travels in Great Britain became disastrously counterproductive at the beginning of the Crimean War. The Czar managed to draw incorrect conclusions from his relationship with individual British political figures, especially Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Wellington. Nicholas’ mistaken calculations haunted Russia’s diplomatic efforts during times of crisis with Great Britain, especially during the early 1850s. Before the Czar was even required to address the complexities of international relations, though, he had to face a serious challenge from a group which he would later ironically label his “friends of December 26th.”⁶²

⁵⁶ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 58.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 60 and 61.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 50 and 52.

⁵⁹ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume One) From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 256.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 256.

⁶¹ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 57.

⁶² Riasanovsky, Nicholas. *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia 1825-1855*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1969), 33.

The 1825 death of Nicholas' older brother Alexander I in the remote southern town of Taganrog bequeathed both a confusing legacy and order of succession. In spite of a secret manifesto designating Nicholas as successor, conflicting precedents seemed to favor the crowning of Nicholas' older brother Constantine Pavlovich as Czar.⁶³ Nicholas, in fact, immediately and publicly swore allegiance to Constantine after learning of Alexander I's death. Grand Duke Constantine (Pavlovich) was, however, pathologically afraid of assuming the imperial throne to the point of flying into a rage whenever he was addressed with the imperial title.⁶⁴ Constantine contented himself with ruling Poland and distanced himself from succession to the point that a *de facto* interregnum prevailed for weeks throughout the Empire. Such confusion spurred an established conspiracy of liberal aristocrats to rise against autocratic government in both St. Petersburg and Ukraine in mid-December 1825. The rising was suppressed after Nicholas I reluctantly ordered loyal artillery units to fire into the ranks of insurgents massed in St. Petersburg's Senate Square. That night, Nicholas reflected on becoming Emperor "at the price of my subjects' blood!"⁶⁵

The residual effects of the Decembrist uprising profoundly influenced the duration of Nicholas I's reign. Decembrist conspirators had correctly sensed that many of Alexander I's reformist tendencies needed to be consolidated in order for the Empire's social structure to catch up with its military strength. Limited reforms of serfdom had taken place in the Baltic provinces and were mandated by treaty in the Russian-ruled Grand Duchy of Finland, but officers who had walked the streets of Paris after defeating Napoleon I remained dissatisfied with Russia's internal condition in the 1820s. Although Nicholas I carefully studied their complaints after suppressing the movement, the Czar was determined that any reforms would emanate from his own decisions and celebrated his triumph over "the enemies of autocracy."⁶⁶ He immediately proceeded to establish or strengthen a repressive bureaucratic apparatus to implement his will throughout the Empire. Given fresh impetus in the aftermath of Europe-wide Revolutions in 1848, these institutions formed the basis of Russia's government during the Crimean War.

⁶³ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume One) From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 266.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁶⁵ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians.* (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 47.

⁶⁶ Polunov, Alexander. Thomas C. Owen and Larissa Zakharova (Eds.). [Marshall S. Shatz, Translator]. *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814-1914.* (London, UK and Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 39.

Nicholas I's outlook was critically important because the mid-19th century Russian Empire had become the 'apogee of autocracy'; or a system of government in which the ruler possesses unchecked power. Peripheral European areas of the empire, namely Poland and Finland, did enjoy some autonomy in internal affairs due to concessions made by Alexander I. These initially continued under Nicholas I, who, for all his faults, prided himself on honoring commitments and his word.⁶⁷ It took a full-fledged revolution in Poland (1830) in order for Nicholas to revoke the province's constitution. This meant that, outside of Finland, the Czar legally became "an autocratic and unlimited monarch. God Himself enjoins submission to his supreme power not only out of fear but also out of conscience."⁶⁸ Guided by this philosophy, Nicholas I thus set about building or expanding bureaucratic structures in order to implement his paternalistic view of how the Russian Empire should be ruled. By the Crimean War's outbreak in 1854, events such as the Europe-wide Revolutions of 1848 had convinced Nicholas I of the need for repression in all aspects of life.

Existing bureaucratic institutions were entirely inadequate for Nicholas' purposes even after multiple expansions. Unlike Napoleon III, the Czar attempted to oversee even minor administrative details throughout his empire. Nicholas, for instance, personally censored paintings in the Hermitage Palace's art collection and ordered a portrait of Voltaire destroyed, referring to its subject as a "simian," or monkey.⁶⁹ Despite his efforts and image to the contrary, the Czar could not be omnipresent due to the inadequacy of Russia's bureaucracy. Russia's Emperor lamented that "Russia is governed by bureau chiefs"⁷⁰ and frequently attempted to circumvent bureaucratic structures by appointing special commissions and emissaries from the ranks of a trusted cadre of military leaders. Yet even Nicholas' formidable work ethic could not overcome a staggeringly inefficient and corrupt system. The Czar's personal intervention usually devolved into micromanagement and proved counter-productive. As Countess Nesselrode, wife of Nicholas' Minister of Foreign Affairs, observed poetically rather than analytically:⁷¹ "the

⁶⁷ Shewmaker, Kenneth E. "Neill S. Brown's Mission to Russia, 1850-1853." *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2001), 81-91.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁶⁹ Presniakov, A. E. [Judith C. Zacek, Ed. and Translator]. *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia: the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1974), 42.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Credit for this insight is due to Dr. David Goldfrank of Georgetown University.

strange thing about [Nicholas] is that he ploughs his vast realm, but not a single fruit-bearing seed does he sow.”⁷²

Prior to the Crimean War, circumstances drove Russia’s Interior Minister to inform his Czar that “bureaucratic formalities have reached the point of absurdity: endless official correspondence absorbs all the attention and energies of those who execute policy.”⁷³ Every sale of land by a nobleman, for example, necessitated the production of at least 1,351 separate documents, all of which had to be copied and signed by hand.⁷⁴ Worse yet, frenetic bureaucratic activity could not be effectively monitored in the absence of a free press and even cooperation between ministries. As one government official cynically advised:

“If some irregularity turns up in departmental matters and you are asked for an explanation, never admit your guilt, but write your explanation in as long....and as confused a manner as possible. No one will read it, but seeing that you have written a great deal, they would consider you to be right.”⁷⁵

Secret committees appointed by the Czar actually exacerbated the problem, and satirical accounts advised bureaucrats to “let it be assumed that it (their work) is a secret matter. That way, people will think that you are occupied continually with important state affairs.”⁷⁶ It was simply impossible to efficiently sift through what one Russian officer described as “bureaucratic muddle”⁷⁷ Alexander II’s accession to the throne did not bring immediate relief: one quarter of decrees addressed to the Russia’s War Ministry in 1855 concerned changes in military uniforms.⁷⁸ In order to obtain the results he desired, Nicholas I thus found it necessary to implement repressive measures by establishing structures outside his government’s normal administrative framework.

Most of the six departments created by Nicholas I for his personal chancery were not repressive bodies. Their mandates instead encompassed tasks such as administering charitable institutions (the Fourth Department) or codifying Russia’s laws (the Second Department). Yet the Third Department of His Majesty’s Own Chancery played an increasingly prominent role in Russia under Nicholas. Established simultaneously with a corps of gendarmes in the late 1820s,

⁷² *Ibid*, 42.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 168.

⁷⁴ Lincoln, W. Bruce. In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia’s Enlightened Bureaucrats 1825-1861. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982), 22.

⁷⁵ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 168.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 173.

⁷⁷ HIS/39 Translation of Mikhail Borodkin’s “The War on the Finnish Coast 1854-1855” (NMM), 166.

⁷⁸ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume Two): From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 22.

the secret political police of the Third Section were given jurisdiction over “reports about all occurrences without exception” and freely “intervened in every matter in which it was possible to intervene.”⁷⁹ They succeeded in creating an atmosphere where birds “were afraid to chirp lest the police should put them in lime.”⁸⁰ This assessment is especially damning given its source; a diplomat from the neutral United States who was personally impressed with Nicholas. By the early 1850s, the Third Section felt sufficiently emboldened to place Nicholas’ second son, Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich, under surveillance without obtaining the Czar’s permission.⁸¹

The Third Section had relatively few agents, but worked in close conjunction with gendarmes and other secret censorship committees. The early decades of Nicholas’ reign saw some alternation between leniency and repression under the direction of Minister of Education Sergei Uvarov. Nicholas’ fear of Europe-wide revolutions in 1848 and Uvarov’s subsequent retirement, however, ensured that the period from 1848 to 1855 became known as the “seven dismal years.”⁸² By 1850, there were 12 different censorship agencies and arguably more censors than published books during any given year.⁸³ Censors searched music for hidden codes, pondered the possible subversive meanings of mathematical equations, and even suppressed certain works of Alexander I’s court historian Nikolai Karamazin. The system’s absurdity became apparent even to the censors themselves. Alexander Nikitenko, for instance, strongly criticized the Buturlin Censorship Committee, or the censors of censors. As he sarcastically lamented in his diary:

“I dropped in a meeting of the Censorship Committee. Fantastic things are going on there. For example, censor Mekhelin is expurgating from ancient history the names of all great people who fought for the freedom of their country or were of a republican turn of mind in the republics of Greece and Rome. The discussions aren’t being expurgated, but simply the names and facts in them... What the devil is going on here? A Christian crusade against knowledge?”⁸⁴

One of the most telling examples of the extremes reached during the 1850s involved the controversy surrounding a study “on the Significance of Russian Universities,” which was

⁷⁹ Presniakov, A. E. [Judith C. Zacek, Ed. and Translator]. *Emperor Nicholas I of Russia: the Apogee of Autocracy, 1825-1855*. (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1974), XXVI.

⁸⁰ Shewmaker, Kenneth E. “Neill S. Brown’s Mission to Russia, 1850-1853.” *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2001), 92.

⁸¹ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 89.

⁸² Polunov, Alexander. Thomas C. Owen and Larissa Zakharova (Eds.). [Marshall S. Shatz, Translator]. *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change, 1814-1914*. (London, UK and Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 67.

⁸³ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 320.

⁸⁴ Jacobson, Helen Saltz [Ed. and Translator]. *Diary of a Russian Censor: Aleksandr Nikitenko*. (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1975), 121.

personally commissioned by Minister of Education Uvarov. The Buturlin Committee forbade distribution of the study on the grounds that, although it contained nothing objectionable it possessed a possibly subversive “inner meaning.” When Uvarov objected, Nicholas I settled the matter by declaring that he “absolutely *forbid* all similar articles in journals, regardless of whether they are *for* or *against* universities.”⁸⁵

The intellectual climate in Russia, especially the literary efforts of dissenters such as Alexander Herzen and Vissarion Belinsky, has been examined in detail by other authors. It was discussed above in order to demonstrate that Russian society was deprived of virtually any public means of expressing opinions critical of the state during the early 1850s. Even proponents of government censorship believed that Nicholas I’s government had lost all perspective. Newspapers including *The Times* were available to those who could read Western languages, but venues such as coffeehouses that subscribed to such publications were infested with secret police agents, especially *agent provocateurs*.⁸⁶ Foreign residents and visitors to Russia were also subject to censorship and intimidation. In her admittedly biased travel account *The Englishwoman in Russia*, Rebecca McCoy described an incident in which two Englishmen were summoned to Count Orlov’s⁸⁷ office “for speaking disrespectfully of the Russian journals in a coffee-house, and expressing some well-founded doubts of the veracity of their contents.”⁸⁸ The offenders received a severe reprimand and “were *ordered to believe* all that was written under the government sanction.”⁸⁹

The Russian Empire’s largest newspaper during the Crimean War was the *Svernaia Pchela* (the Northern Bee), which had a circulation of approximately 10,000 by 1856.⁹⁰ *Svernaia Pchela* was the first privately owned newspaper in Russia, but lost its independence and became part of the semi-official “reptile press” denounced by dissidents.⁹¹ Russia’s Third Section was inspired by the example of Louis Fouché, Minister of Police to Napoleon Bonaparte and Louis XVIII, to subsidize the paper’s publication, and Editor Faddei Bulgarin did not disappoint his government. In Bulgarin’s words: “since it is impossible to do away with public opinion, the

⁸⁵ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians*. (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 321.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 284.

⁸⁷ Count-cum-Prince Alexey Orlov directed the Third Section during the Crimean War.

⁸⁸ “A Lady” (McCoy, Rebecca). *The Englishwoman in Russia: Impressions of the society and Manners of the Russians at Home by A Lady, Ten Years Resident in that Country*. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), 265.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

⁹⁰ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume One) From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 303.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

government would do well to assume the task of guiding it.”⁹² Such guidance produced content that included excerpts including “every hour, every minute of the valuable life of our Monarch is marked by love for Russia, led by him to the height of enlightenment, power, and glory.”⁹³ Russia’s other major publications, such as the official *Invalide Russe* and French-language *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, were in no position to disagree.

Nicholas’ second son, Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich, did argue for a type of “artificial publicity” when it came to collecting input on certain state problems. Yet in the early 1850s, the results of his efforts were limited to a structured discussion of naval regulations in the journal *Naval Collection*.⁹⁴ In fairness to Nicholas I, the early portion of his reign witnessed a flowering of Russian literature, albeit within strict limits. Even the novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky faced a firing squad before being deported to Siberia after participating in a literary and political discussion group known as the Petrashevsky Circle. Members of the intelligentsia and ministers of state, not to mention Czarist subjects with more modest backgrounds, were ultimately in no position to openly challenge their government’s sanitized and moralizing accounts of wartime events. Russian accounts indicate that the Empire’s military was similarly inclined, and Nicholas I often received less than candid assessments of conditions in the field. Reports of incidents such as one described by poet Afanasy Fet Shensin in his diary only trickled up chains of command with some difficulty. The Russian Czar would not have been pleased to learn of incidents such as Shensin’s account of passing a supply column transporting artillery from Sweaborg to Riga and travelling a few kilometers further, only to find another column hauling artillery from Riga to Sweaborg.⁹⁵

Draconian censorship and political repression aside, Russia’s press and other means of expressing opinion still reveal important points through their subject matter. Admiral Sir Charles Napier was, after Lord Palmerston, “the most represented and pilloried Englishman in Russian

⁹² Schleifman, Nurit. “A Russian Daily Newspaper and Its New Readership: Svernaia Pchela, 1825-1840.” *Cashiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* Vol. 28, No. 2 (April-June, 1987), 130.

⁹³ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume One) From Peter the Great to the Death of Nicholas I.* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 304,

⁹⁴ Lincoln, W. Bruce. *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russians.* (Dekalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 180. v

⁹⁵ HIS/39 Translation of Mikhail Borodkin’s “The War on the Finnish Coast 1854-1855” (UK National Maritime Museum), 166.

caricature.”⁹⁶ This was a reflection of considerable anxiety associated with the British naval threat to Cronstadt and St. Petersburg. As Ms. McCoy added:

“The names of Napier and Palmerston inspired the lower classes with so great a terror that the women used to frighten the children by saying that the English admiral was coming! And among the common men, after exhausting all the opprobrious terms they could think of (and the Russian language is singularly rich in that respect), one would turn to the other and say, “you are an English dog!” Then followed a few more civilities, which they would then finish by calling each other “Palmerston,” without having the remotest idea of what the word meant; but as the very climax of hatred and revenge, they would bawl out “Napier!” as if he were fifty times worse than Satan himself.”⁹⁷

In spite of the threat faced by their capital, Russian subjects and the Czarist Government were impressed by the loyalty demonstrated by the vast majority of inhabitants in the Baltic littoral, especially Finland apart from southern Pohjanmaa and the Åland Islands.⁹⁸ Russian appreciation was reflected through an outpouring of poetry presenting sympathetic accounts of a Finnish fisherman captured by a British frigate.⁹⁹ Finnish nationalism was tellingly foreshadowed when Finns objected to the identification of their nation with simple fishermen who spoke Russian poorly.¹⁰⁰ The Finns were also rewarded with relaxed censorship and increased newspaper circulation as the conflict progressed because Czarist authorities preferred that people read newspapers rather than listen to rumors.¹⁰¹ Although this approach was reinforced by a royal visit from Alexander II in 1855, it was not emulated throughout the Russian Empire.

One of the most glaring disadvantages of Nicholas’ repressive approach was that it alienated him from the honest opinions of his realm’s intelligentsia, nobility, and ministers. Worse yet, the few who dared speak candidly to their Czar often shared his mindset. Nicholas’ heir and successor, Alexander II, enjoyed a different relationship with his ministers. Alexander tended to take issues on which he had not yet formed an opinion, “toss” them up for cabinet discussion, and then let himself be swayed by the strongest arguments.¹⁰² This became especially important during deliberations on whether to continue the conflict following Nicholas I’s death and Alexander II’s assumption of the throne in March of 1855.

⁹⁶ Cross, Anthony. “The Crimean War and the Caricature War.” *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (July, 2006), 473.

⁹⁷ “A Lady” (McCoy, Rebecca). *The Englishwoman in Russia: Impressions of the society and Manners of the Russians at Home by A Lady, Ten Years Resident in that Country*. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), 267.

⁹⁸ Paasivirta, Juhani. *Finland and Europe: International Crises in the Period of Autonomy 1808-1914*. [Anthony Upton and Sirkka Upton Translators and D.G. Kirby, Ed.]. (London, UK: C. Hurst and Company, 1981), 89.

⁹⁹ Kiparsky, V. “Finland and Sweden in Russian Literature.” *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 26, No. 66 (November, 1947), 181.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Mäkinen, Ilkka. “The Widow’s Mite, or Crumbs from the Rich Man’s Table: Popular Support for Public Libraries in Finland during the Nineteenth Century.” *Libraries & Culture*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Spring, 1996), 398.

¹⁰² Rieber, Alfred J. “Alexander II: A Revisionist View.” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (March, 1971), Pg. 44.

Alexander II did not orchestrate Russia's decision to fight in the Crimean War, but he played a crucial role in accepting Allied peace terms and ending the conflict. A young Alexander received an education similar to that of his father, whom he adored. Differences between the two immediately became evident, however. The new Czar displayed his emotions openly, to the point that officers sneeringly described him as an "old woman."¹⁰³ On a related note, the role of women at the Imperial Court also changed dramatically with the accession of Alexander II. Nicholas' wife and mistresses played no role in influencing foreign policy, while Alexander's wife, Empress Maria Alexandra, was reportedly instrumental in scuttling speculative proposals for an attempted landing on the British Isles.¹⁰⁴ Empress Alexandra resolutely opposed the enterprise of embarking 20,000 troops for an amphibious assault launched from Baltic bases such as Cronstadt and Sveaborg despite its status as an "*idée fixe*" of Grand Duke Constantine. Her argument that the safety of St. Petersburg would be compromised carried the day and actually changed Alexander's mind. His reign was also a departure from Nicholas' on account of emancipation reforms and his relaxation of censorship, but differences between the two reigns should not be overstated. Modern studies often concentrate on Alexander II's abolition of serfdom and role as a reformer, but it must be emphasized that the new Czar's liberal tendencies were social rather than political.¹⁰⁵ Alexander invariably relied on a 'top-down' approach rooted in the conviction that controlled reforms from above were preferable to unmanageable popular revolutions from below. Alexander II also retained almost the entirety of his father's collection of ministers in the immediate aftermath of Nicholas I's death, although he replaced them following the Crimean conflict.

In contrast to Nicholas' lightning tours of inspection, Alexander II undertook more systematic journeys designed to mobilize popular support. These included an extended journey through Moscow to the Crimean Peninsula in September and October of 1855. The visit to Moscow was designed to mirror Alexander I's appearance after Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of Russia in 1812, and Alexander II commented on the "warm and sincere" reception he received.¹⁰⁶ Despite an outpouring of popular support, though, the sorry state of Russia's

¹⁰³ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume Two): From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 22.

¹⁰⁴ "The Internal State of Russia: Projected Invasion of England." *The Argus*. (Melbourne, Australia: February 5th, 1856), 6.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 70.

¹⁰⁶ Wortman, Richard S. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (Volume Two): From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 25.

defeated forces did not escape the new Czar's notice. Sights such as tattered military uniforms and gaunt faces made a strong impression on him. On January 1st, 1856, Alexander II summoned the most trusted members of his government and sought their advice on whether to accept an Austrian-mediated proposal for peace negotiations.

Discussions at both ministerial gatherings in January of 1856 were sobering, even for a son raised by Nicholas I. Minister of State Domains Pavel Kiselev initially informed his sovereign that the Russian Empire was vulnerable to an opposing Allied coalition in both the Black Sea and Baltic due to Russia's relative naval weakness.¹⁰⁷ Kiselev, previously one of Nicholas I's most trusted advisors, continued by demonstrating that the Czarist Empire's resources were inferior to her opponents'. He added that Alexander II's government could have no hope of winning allies to oppose the growing Anglo-French-Sardinian coalition.¹⁰⁸ Kiselev also argued that neutral powers, especially Sweden and Austria, were leaning towards entering the conflict on the Anglo-French side. Finally, the Minister mentioned that elements of the Russian population might begin to withdraw their previously dutiful support of Czarist wartime policies as the conflict dragged on. His views were seconded by several other ministers¹⁰⁹ as well as Grand Duke and Minister of the Navy Constantine (Nicolaevich), Alexander II's younger brother. Constantine asked what would happen in 1857 if Russia fought on throughout 1856,¹¹⁰ with the implication that all of Russia's resources would reach the point of exhaustion.

Kiselev's analysis soon gained additional support when Minister of Foreign Affairs Karl Nesselrode took center stage on January 15th, 1856. Nesselrode's staff had prepared a memorandum to be read loud, arguing Russia was at a serious disadvantage even in a defensive war because it had to defend a wide front flanked by two seas controlled by powerful enemy fleets. Nesselrode continued to emphasize the impact of Sweden's defensive alliance with Britain and France, possible Austrian and even Prussia intervention, and the prospect of a strong Allied blockade in the Baltic aided by cooperation from Scandinavian and German states.¹¹¹ Diplomat Peter von Meyendorff declared that Russia's continued resistance "would inevitably produce

¹⁰⁷ Mosse, W. E. "How Russia Made Peace September 1855 to April 1856." *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1955), 307.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Specifically, Count-cum-Prince Alexey Orlov, Head of the Third Section, and retired General Mikhail Vorontsov.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Mosse, W. E. "How Russia Made Peace September 1855 to April 1856." *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1955), 310.

bankruptcy” and urged his Czar to end the struggle.¹¹² Interestingly, Meyendorff’s subsequent account of his career suggested that “certain statements were excluded from the official minutes and others toned down.”¹¹³ This was hardly encouraging given the already bleak nature of the statements allowed to remain on the official record. Characteristically for imperial Russia during the period, though, a final decision was made by Alexander II after a private, “passionate discussion” with Grand Duke Constantine.¹¹⁴ Alexander subsequently directed his government to begin fresh negotiations and end the Crimean War while the Russian Empire remained intact.

The Czarist Government of the 1850s did not achieve the type of control over the entirety of their empire’s population achieved by twentieth century regimes. This was not due to a lack of effort from Czar Nicholas I. Despite his expansion of government, the ratio of civil servants in proportion to subjects in the Russian Empire of the 1850s was only a quarter of what it was in Britain and France.¹¹⁵ A third of Russia’s people never had any interaction with a government representative during any given decade,¹¹⁶ and press censorship was irrelevant to the 80% of Russian peasants who were illiterate.¹¹⁷ Ultimately, the Russian Empire’s political system had not been capable of overseeing the military and economic advances necessary to keep pace with Britain and France after the defeat of Napoleon I. The Czarist government did adapt following its defeat in 1856, but not enough to win the Russo-Japanese War of 1905-1905 or to survive the First World War.

Great Britain

Great Britain also played a major role in the effort to defeat Napoleon. Britain’s experience in the Napoleonic Wars, however, did not involve the devastation of her countryside, major urban centers, and population. That British army had fought in notable engagements such as the Peninsular Campaign and Waterloo, but was usually supported by allied forces. The country’s main war effort was instead sustained by economic strength and a powerful Royal Navy. Industrialization and related trends including urbanization undoubtedly strained Britain’s parliamentary system of government, but it endured and eventually adapted to the social pressures it faced during the 19th century. Military reforms were another matter entirely, though,

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 312.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Lincoln, W. Bruce. In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia’s Enlightened Bureaucrats 1825-1861. (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1982), 12.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Goldfrank, David. *The Origins of the Crimean War*. (London, UK and New York: Longman, 1994), 9.

and Britain was led into the Crimean War by a Cabinet that was ill-equipped to formulate grand strategy.

Early to mid-19th century Great Britain was not a democracy based on universal manhood suffrage, but was slowly moving in that direction. Nevertheless, the end of the Napoleonic Wars “revealed a sick social order and a people in large measure at war with itself.”¹¹⁸ Internal strife in Britain had, true to the assertions of later historians,¹¹⁹ been suppressed or forced into compromise by external conflict during the century’s first decade.¹²⁰ That quickly changed following the Treaty of Vienna. A House of Commons elected by a small proportion of the country’s male population through a system riddled with ‘rotten boroughs’¹²¹ and non-secret ballots remained dominated by landowning aristocrats. These members pushed through legislation such as the protectionist Corn Laws, which mandated high protective tariffs on imported cereal crops. These measures resulted in widespread popular protests, which were suppressed by the British government through what became known as the Six Acts¹²² and, in the case of the ironically named Peterloo Massacre, through armed force. Yet the growing political and economic influence of social groups which had accumulated wealth from sources other than land ownership rendered the landed aristocracy’s stranglehold on political power unsustainable. It was the influence of these new groups that led to the repeal of the Corn Laws, electoral reforms, and a split in political parties. Each development had profound implications for Britain’s participation in the Crimean War.

The Corn Laws were repealed in 1846 thanks to a political alliance of industrial and commercial, rather than landowning classes.¹²³ The political process accompanying repeal was far from smooth, and it split the ruling Conservative Party into rival factions. Approximately one-third of Conservatives supported the policies of free-trade Conservative Robert Peel, who lost his position as Prime Minister in the aftermath of the vote. These free trade Conservatives were dubbed ‘Peelites,’ and they endured even after Peel’s death in 1850. The remaining

¹¹⁸ Gleason, John Howes. *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study in the Interaction of Policy and Opinion*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), 16.

¹¹⁹ Especially the German Historian Otto Hintze.

¹²⁰ Semmel, Bernard. *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 7.

¹²¹ An electoral district with a miniscule population whose non-secret votes made them susceptible to bribery and coercion by the wealthy and influential.

¹²² Which included measures restricting public assemblies and weapons ownership, increasing taxes and duties on newspapers, and toughening penalties for seditious libel.

¹²³ Semmel, Bernard. *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 11.

Conservatives joined with their Peelite counterparts in competing for power with members of the Whig Party during the conflict with Russia.

The House of Commons and non-aristocratic middle classes did not reign supreme in Britain even after momentous political milestones such as the Reform Act of 1832¹²⁴ and the Corn Laws' post-1846 repeal. Control of the army was traditionally a royal prerogative.¹²⁵ Britain's hereditary aristocracy retained considerable influence, especially through the House of Lords. Regardless, the British political system was fundamentally different from those in France and Russia for several important reasons. British policy was formulated within the confines of fragile coalition cabinets which included bitter political rivals. Both Prime Ministers of Britain between 1854 and 1856, Lords Aberdeen and Palmerston, were forced by rival ministers to modify their positions during the War. In Aberdeen's case, the decision to join the conflict at all was also contested. When individuals such as Sir James Graham were allowed to exercise preponderant influence over fields such as naval war planning, it was by default rather than ideological or institutional design. Graham, in fact, later had to defend his treatment of Britain's initial naval commander in the Baltic, Sir Charles Napier, against attacks by none other than a newly-elected M.P. for Southwark, Sir Charles Napier. Post-1832 British politicians also faced competitive elections and were directly accountable to the sentiments of a much broader segment of the population than were rulers in France and Russia. This reality was dramatically illustrated when Britain's wartime change of leadership from Aberdeen to Palmerston came as a result of elections rather than the death of a dynastic ruler.

Lord Aberdeen's Ministry was formally inaugurated in 1852, the same year in which Louis Napoleon became Emperor of France. Aberdeen was also forced to assemble a governing team whose members did not always support his preferred foreign policy and political philosophy of free-trade Conservatism. Chancellor of the Exchequer¹²⁶ and future Prime Minister William Gladstone commented on the prospect of a coalition government: "the formation of a mixed government can only be warrantable or auspicious when its members...are agreed in principle upon all great questions of public policy immediately emergent."¹²⁷ Aberdeen's coalition cabinet/ministry exceeded expectations when it came to agreeing on domestic affairs,

¹²⁴ Officially known as "The Representation of the People Act"

¹²⁵ Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martins, Press, 1967), 11.

¹²⁶ Treasury.

¹²⁷ Conacher, J. B. *The Aberdeen Coalition, 1852-1855: a Study in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Politics*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 8.

and its future “looked not unpromising” during the Prime Minister’s first two years in office.¹²⁸

Disagreements related to the Crimean conflict quickly proved its political undoing, though.

Queen Victoria astutely discerned that, when it came to the Crimean War, it was:

“evident that Lord Aberdeen was, against his better judgement, consenting to a course of policy which he inwardly condemned, that his desire to maintain unanimity at the Cabinet led to concession which by degrees altered the whole character of the policy, while he held out no hope of being able permanently to secure agreement.”¹²⁹

Modern historians differ in their interpretations of Aberdeen’s correspondence, but it is nevertheless clear that Aberdeen was forced to enter a war he did not want by rapidly escalating diplomacy and domestic political pressure combined with Britain’s bellicose public opinion.

Nicholas I did not understand how a ruler such as Aberdeen could be subjected to political pressure or publicly criticized. Although a conservative politician for forty years, Aberdeen had always been a member of the House of Lords rather than the House of Commons. Consequently, he had “never been deeply involved in party politics.”¹³⁰ Britain’s initial wartime leader had been keenly interested in foreign affairs since the Napoleonic Wars, but did not enjoy considering popular and opposition opinions when practicing diplomacy at an elite level. When Lord Palmerston wrote Aberdeen that he was confident the British public expected Aberdeen’s Cabinet to act aggressively and that it would be supported by the Whig opposition, Aberdeen revealingly replied that:

“The Country would not look to the consequences [of a war], and the Opposition would only anticipate our speedy overthrow. In a case of this kind I dread popular support. On some occasion, when the Athenian Assembly vehemently applauded Alcibiades, he asked if he had said anything particularly foolish.”¹³¹

This attitude ultimately combined with Britain’s battlefield frustrations and led to a wartime change in Britain’s political leadership. Lord Palmerston thus became Prime Minister in February, 1855.

Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, was a career politician with a life-long passion for foreign affairs. Palmerston’s political allegiances evolved over time, but the 1850s saw him as a Whig, or Liberal opponent of the Conservative Party. The Whigs’ natural political allies were the Peelites, and Palmerston’s political influence and personal popularity forced Aberdeen to include him in the cabinet. Palmerston was appointed Home Secretary in the hope that, by

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 137.

¹²⁹ Brown, David. *Palmerston and the Politics of Foreign Policy, 1846-1855*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Palgrave for Manchester University Press, 2002), 170.

¹³⁰ Conacher, J. B. *The Aberdeen Coalition, 1852-1855: a Study in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Politics*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 5.

¹³¹ Brown, David. *Palmerston and the Politics of Foreign Policy, 1846-1855*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Palgrave for Manchester University Press, 2002), 167.

keeping Palmerston within the inner circle, the latter would not damage Aberdeen's foreign policy.¹³² However sincerely Palmerston attempted to perform his duties at home, he remained primarily interested in foreign affairs. When strikes engulfed northern England, for instance, *The Economist* asked "is Palmerston aware of such things?"¹³³ Asked by the Queen if he had any news about the strikes, he replied: "no Madam, I have heard nothing, but it seems certain *the Turks have crossed the Danube.*"¹³⁴ Alongside First Lord of the Admiralty Sir James Graham, Palmerston was the minister most directly involved in formulating defence policy.¹³⁵ Graham was reluctant to open the Admiralty to cabinet scrutiny,¹³⁶ which meant that naval policy largely remained outside of Palmerston's reach until after he became Prime Minister.

Aberdeen's Government included a number of ministers who impacted British decision-making during the Crimean War. Similar to the Russian State Council after the death of Nicholas I and accession of Alexander II, the vast majority of ministers retained their positions during the transition from Aberdeen to Palmerston. Key ministers and their offices are summarized below:

Selected Ministers in Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Cabinet, 1852-1855	
Lord Aberdeen	Prime Minister and Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Palmerston	Home Secretary
Lord John Russell	Foreign Secretary (until Feb. 1853) Minister without Portfolio (until June, 1854) Lord President of the Council
Lord Clarendon	Foreign Secretary
William Gladstone	Chancellor of the Exchequer
Lord Newcastle	Secretary of State for War ¹³⁷
Sidney Herbert	Secretary at War (administered the War Office)
Sir James Graham	First Lord of the Admiralty
Sir Charles Wood	President of the Board of Control (of the East India Company)

Palmerston's closest ally in pushing for war with Russia was Lord John Russell, but Russell saw himself as independent and simply possessing a policy "which generally, but never

¹³² *Ibid*, 154.

¹³³ *Ibid*.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*.

¹³⁵ Lambert, Andrew D. "Preparing for the Russian War: British Strategic Planning, March 1853-March 1854." *War and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (September, 1989), 17.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*.

¹³⁷ Prior to June, 1854, Secretary of State for War and Colonies.

completely,” happened to coincide with Palmerston’s.¹³⁸ Clarendon, a long-time diplomat, was well-regarded for his perceptive assessments of foreign envoys and the estimations of the situation at foreign courts.¹³⁹ Gladstone’s role in financing the conflict has already been discussed. Herbert ran the War Office and corresponded closely with Florence Nightingale in an effort to improve support services for British Army units in the Crimean Peninsula. Newcastle struggled to direct the war from his position, especially because of Sir James Graham’s secretive planning and administration of Britain’s Royal Navy. The roles of Graham and his successor at the Admiralty, Sir Charles Wood, along with the political structure of the British Admiralty, are absolutely essential to understanding the course of the Crimean conflict in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific. The political context in which they operated is outlined below, while the following chapter will address the British Admiralty’s strategic planning, or lack thereof, between 1854 and 1856.

Sir James Graham’s political life was marred by a paradoxical synthesis of arrogance with a lack of political and social self-confidence. Graham combined these qualities with sarcasm and disdain, leading one Member of Parliament to comment that he “seemed to have a love for unpopularity.”¹⁴⁰ Yet Graham was also a talented administrator commended by Lord Aberdeen as early as 1814 for his actions during a diplomatic mission to Naples. A career politician, Graham never held a sea-going command or served as a naval officer. This did not prevent him from spending terms as First Lord of the Admiralty, from 1830 to 1834 and 1852 to 1855. Both tenures were marked by a concern for fiscal economy and efficient administration.¹⁴¹ Graham was greatly aided in his efforts to maintain British naval supremacy on a tight budget by a lack of competition from other countries during his initial term of office.¹⁴² The First Lord was initially a Whig, but switched parties years prior to the Crimean War. Graham’s penchant for frugality endeared him to his fellow Peelites, Chancellor of the Exchequer William Gladstone, but his definition of efficiency involved an authoritarianism similar to Napoleon III’s. As Graham candidly testified before a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1861:

¹³⁸ Hoppen, K. Theodore. *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886*. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 172.

¹³⁹ Conacher, J. B. *The Aberdeen Coalition, 1852-1855: a Study in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Politics*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 41.

¹⁴⁰ Ward, John Trevon. *Sir James Graham*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1967), XII.

¹⁴¹ Parry, Jonathan. “Sir James Robert George Graham.” In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11204?docPos=1>>, 3.

¹⁴² Hoppen, K. Theodore. *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886*. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1998), 174.

“a Board only works well when the head of it makes it as unlike a Board as possible.”¹⁴³ Graham successfully amassed a great deal of power between 1852 and 1855 by exploiting his close political alliance with a Peelite Lord Aberdeen. The Prime Minister was in desperate need of ideological supporters to balance out his predominantly Whig coalition cabinet, and Sir James played the part well. Graham further strengthened his influence by deliberately manipulating the administrative structure of Britain’s Admiralty, which he had decisively shaped during his initial stint as its head. Unfortunately for British efforts against Russia, Graham was more skilled at amassing personal political power over Admiralty affairs than he was at designing strategies to attack the Russian Empire.

Graham augmented his position as “the most independent First Lord”¹⁴⁴ of the 19th century by dominating ill, markedly junior, and extremely deferential subordinates. He deliberately retained the Conservative Sir Hyde Parker even though the latter was seriously ill and died in May of 1854.¹⁴⁵ Another Graham subordinate, Sir Maurice Berkeley, was continually occupied with manning the Royal Navy’s ships. Berkeley fit both Graham’s and the Aberdeen Ministry’s purposes perfectly in that he was simultaneously reliable, uninspired, and narrow-minded.¹⁴⁶ Berkeley assured Sir Charles Napier, “I shall stand by you” during the Baltic campaign of 1854 before becoming one of his staunchest adversaries.¹⁴⁷ Graham happily emphasized that junior lords including Berkeley were overwhelmed with administrative duties when arguing that authority and responsibility for strategic planning should remain solely in his hands.¹⁴⁸

The junior lords Graham appointed were so “conspicuously junior” that they lacked the ability to help formulate strategy,¹⁴⁹ and their weakness further played into the First Lord’s hands. Graham intensely distrusted Lord Palmerston and Napoleon III, and was not forced to

¹⁴³ Hamilton, Charles I. “Sir James Graham, the Baltic Campaign, and War-Planning at the Admiralty in 1854.” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March, 1976), 105.

¹⁴⁴ Lambert, Andrew D. “Preparing for the Russian War: British Strategic Planning, March 1853-March 1854.” *War and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (September, 1989), 17

¹⁴⁵ Lambert, Andrew “Sir Hyde Parker.” In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21312?docPos=3>>, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Lambert, Andrew. “Sir Maurice Berkeley.” In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), < <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2219?docPos=2>>, 1.

¹⁴⁷ Hamilton, Charles I. “Sir James Graham, the Baltic Campaign, and War-Planning at the Admiralty in 1854.” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (March, 1976), 92.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 111.

¹⁴⁹ Lambert, Andrew D. “Preparing for the Russian War: British Strategic Planning, March 1853-March 1854.” *War and Society*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (September, 1989), 18.

cooperate with them in forming naval strategy.¹⁵⁰ Sir James' intense Francophobia also influenced his reluctance to finance the construction of flotilla craft to serve in the Baltic. Graham's decision regarding naval construction was undoubtedly reinforced by *ad hoc* advice from Surveyor of the Navy, Sir Baldwin Wake Walker. It is important to note that these factors, rather than the budgetary reasons emphasized by some studies, precluded the immediate launch of the type of 'Great Armament' seen by 1856. Graham's role in the Crimean conflict was unusually important for a minister, rather than head of government or head of state, because the aforementioned political dynamics allowed him to formulate policy rather than implement or administer it.¹⁵¹ Graham thus bore much of the responsibility for Britain's frustrating naval campaigns and was unable to escape the political fallout that ensued, despite his efforts to scapegoat his naval commanders in both theatres. Graham never again held a cabinet post after his wartime resignation, and had to defend his actions in Parliament after the War had ended.

Public indignation at the handling of Britain's war effort culminated in the selection of Lord Palmerston as Prime Minister in February of 1855. For all of his Russophobia, Palmerston found himself as the manager of a limited conflict with Russia rather than its architect.¹⁵² This was especially due to Graham's previous influence on strategy and the necessity of maintaining the Anglo-French alliance. Palmerston earnestly desired a 'wider war' against Russia culminating in a decisive victory. His joint planning efforts with Napoleon III and Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert, however, reaffirmed their commitment to fully supporting the French-dominated siege of Russia's Black Sea port of Sevastopol.¹⁵³ Although unable to alter Britain's existing commitment to the seige of Sevastopol, Palmerston worked to improve military recruitment, re-arm the navy with an emphasis on flotilla craft and steam power, and lower death rates while guiding the diplomacy of his Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon.¹⁵⁴ The new Prime Minister, unlike his predecessor, was keenly aware of the limits imposed on his freedom of action by both the alliance with France and public opinion. As he wrote to Queen Victoria:

Although "greater and more brilliant successes by land and sea might probably have been accomplished if the war had continued...any great and important additional security against future aggressions by Russia could only have

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martins, Press, 1967), 32.

¹⁵² Vincent, J.R. "The Parliamentary Dimension of the Crimean War. *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Series 5, Vol. 31 (1981), 39.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

been obtained by severing from Russia large portions of her frontier territory, such as Finland, Poland, and Georgia...and to have continued the war long enough for those purposes would have required greater endurance than was possessed by your Majesty's Allies, and might possibly have exhausted the good-will of your Majesty's own subjects."¹⁵⁵

Palmerston was thus no more content with the conduct of the war and its outcome than the majority of the British public, but was forced to settle for a peace that was "satisfactory for the present."¹⁵⁶

The interactions of Aberdeen, Palmerston, and their ministers with Parliament highlights one of the ways in which Britain's political system differed radically from those in the Russian and French Empires in the 1850s. Britain's bicameral Parliament, which included a House of Lords and House of Commons, was by no means a truly representative body by later twentieth century standards. This remained the case even after the electoral reforms of 1832. Yet unlike France and especially Russia, the policies of British governments were seriously and openly challenged through both debate and in the press. During the House of Lords debate on August 10th, 1854, for example, the Marquess of Clanricade employed a single question about why a blockade of the White Sea was not immediately implemented to also comment on the effectiveness of a similar blockade in the Baltic and its impact on Russia. The Marquess' question also discussed the merits of dedicated shallow-draft mortar vessels, and interpreted the correspondence received from Britain's commander in the Baltic, Admiral Sir Charles Napier.¹⁵⁷ All this was, of course, prior to Clanricade's actual request for a copy of a treaty between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. Neither France's heavily manipulated parliament nor the Russian Empire's non-existent one were capable of holding their respective governments fully accountable for their actions. As Clanricade observed during the same question, public opinion in Russia "did not act often or easily," but could ultimately do so through the revolutionary violence dreaded by the Czarist Government.¹⁵⁸

Politically literate subjects were a minority among the populations of Russia, France, and Britain. The latter empire was, however, significantly different in several important respects. Press censorship in Britain was voluntary and based on patriotic appeals to publishers and editors

¹⁵⁵ Southgate, Donald. *The Most English Minister: the Policies and Politics of Palmerston*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 388.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ House of Lords Debate. *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 135, Nos. 1510-1533 (August 10th, 1854).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

not to disclose information useful to Russian forces.¹⁵⁹ Self-censorship was possible because of the overwhelming market share enjoyed by two London-based publications: *The Times* and the *Illustrated London News*. By 1855, print orders for the daily *Times* had grown to 61,000 copies. This was a dramatic increase from nearly 16,000 copies of *The Times* printed in 1840, and it compared extremely favorably to its rivals' averages at between 3,000 and 6,000 copies.¹⁶⁰ Special editions of the weekly *Illustrated London News*, also in the year 1855, were capable of selling over 170,000 copies and included French and German-language editions.¹⁶¹ This was also very impressive during an era in which even the largest periodicals, such as the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*, averaged around 10,000 copies per issue. The influence of *The Times* has often been overstated by both contemporary figures and modern historians, and it did not entirely displace older forms of expression such as pamphlets.¹⁶² The publication nevertheless played a key role in shaping opinion amongst Britain's middle classes. As a visiting German writer commented in 1855: "the most sensible Englishmen (unless they are professional politicians and belong to a particular party) are nothing more than 100,000 echoes of *The Times*."¹⁶³

Even when viewed in conjunction with the assumption that newspapers and periodicals would be read in venues such as coffeehouses and each reach at least a dozen readers per issue, the reading public "remained a very small fraction" of Britain's population.¹⁶⁴ Importantly, though, this was the same fraction that actively participated in British politics. Press coverage thus actively shaped government policy and even the government itself. *The Times'* coverage of blunders in the Crimean peninsula and inaction in the Baltic, in particular, played a major role in forcing the resignation of Lord Aberdeen's Government and its replacement by the ministry of a more popular Lord Palmerston. In spite of all its resemblance to 20th century newspapers, it is necessary to remember that coverage in *The Times* was very different from the content of later publications. *The Times* and *The Illustrated London News* owed their influence to "Impartial,

¹⁵⁹ Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 73.

¹⁶⁰ Gleason, John Howes. *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), 278 and Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 71.

¹⁶¹ Bailey, Isabel. *Herbert Ingram Esquire: Founder of the Illustrated London News, 1842*. (Lincolnshire, UK: Richard Kay for the History of Boston Project, 1997), 92.

¹⁶² Anderson, Olive. *A Liberal State at War: English Politics and Economics during the Crimean War*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), 82.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁶⁴ Gleason, John Howes. *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), 279.

plentiful, and non-political”¹⁶⁵ content. They based their appeal on claims of representing broadly middle-class values such as efficiency rather than the more narrow interests of smaller partisan publications such as *The Morning Post*, which spoke for the land-owning aristocracy. *Punch, or the London Charivari*, was an illustrated journal free to publish the type of satire and caricatures not found in its larger peers.

The Times and other publications often included letters printed as articles. These letters were sometimes from senior military commanders or government officials, and frequently obfuscated distinctions between public and private correspondence. Such a distinction became especially important during the long-running dispute between James Graham and Charles Napier concerning the Baltic Campaign of 1854. These accounts were also important because wire services such as Reuters and the Associated Press were still in their infancy. Consequently, coverage of foreign events in France and British colonies often relied on reprinted content from *The Times*. *The Times*’ and *The Illustrated London News*’ reach even extended, after some delays, to the White Sea and Pacific. Unfortunately for British and French forces, wartime events there were largely unsatisfactory, regardless of how they were described in print.

Political factors alone did not determine the outcomes of campaigns outside the Black Sea between 1854 and 1856, even in conjunction with the historical and economic background provided by Chapter One. A comparative examination of French, British and Russian political systems, however, instead allows us to better understand the nature of campaigns in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific. It does so by outlining the environment in which military and diplomatic personnel functioned. The Czarist bureaucracy’s corruption and inefficiency, for example, helps illuminate why Russia’s supposedly formidable Baltic fleet was unprepared to meet Anglo-French forces in the Gulf of Finland, just as Governor-General of Siberia Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov’s distance from St. Petersburg allowed him to overcome political obstacles and orchestrate Russian expansion in East Asia. The divisions over foreign policy that fractured Lord Aberdeen’s coalition cabinet go a long way towards explaining how and why a handful of key civilian politicians came to dominate Britain’s military and commercial preparations for war with Russia, which resulted in much initial confusion and frustration for the Royal Navy. Napoleon III’s reasons for dispatching warships to the Baltic and White Sea without particular regard for the specific details of their mission also becomes apparent, as does the French Emperor’s desire

¹⁶⁵ Bailey, Isabel. *Herbert Ingram Esquire: Founder of the Illustrated London News, 1842*. (Lincolnshire, UK: Richard Kay for the History of Boston Project, 1997), 65.

to safeguard his domestic political position by concluding a peace agreement just as Allied forces began to decisively threaten vital Russian state interests. The dramatic evolution from minor coastal raids and blockading to striking at the political center of the Czarist Empire began as Anglo-French forces prepared to depart for the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific in the Spring of 1854.

Chapter Three

Strategy and Pre-War Planning

German statesman Otto von Bismarck envisioned a potential 1878 Anglo-Russian conflict as a duel between an elephant and a whale. Bismarck's metaphor did not include France, yet is readily applicable to war planning and strategy during the Crimean War. Early nineteenth century military theorists, on the other hand, were still focused on the Napoleonic Wars and did not anticipate the possibility of a limited conflict involving three great European powers. The most appropriate theoretical framework for understanding British, French, and Russian naval actions from 1854-1856 thus had to wait until the 1911 publication of Sir Julian Stafford Corbett's *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. Yet even this work was created only with benefit of hindsight and did not specifically focus on the conflict. Subsequent scholarship on strategy, naval or otherwise, encounters a similar problem. Ultimately, and despite the excellence of analysis by theorists including Basil Liddell Hart, Joseph Caldwell Wylie, and Colin Gray, their twentieth century works on grand strategy, naval strategy, and strategic history do not fully explain the Crimean conflict's strategic background. It is therefore necessary employ original historical sources in order to obtain a comprehensive account of maritime war planning in the 1850s. This chapter accordingly discusses selected theoretical insights in relation to how and why Britain, France, and Russia planned to fight the Crimean War outside the Black Sea and Eastern Anatolia before examining contemporary records in detail.

Geography fundamentally limited the Crimean War's extent, especially considering the contemporary diplomatic situation and communications technology. Neutral Prussia and the Habsburg Empire separated the warring states in Europe: entire oceans and vast expanses of Central Asia and China performed similar functions for the belligerent powers' colonies. The Czars' principal harbor on the Kamchatka Peninsula at Petropavlovsk, for instance, was over 6,600 kilometers from St. Petersburg, not to mention 13,350 kilometers from the British Pacific Station's base at Callao, Peru.¹ Captain Ivan Izylmetiev of the Russian frigate *Aurora*, for

¹ Lye, Keith. *Oxford Encyclopaedic World Atlas*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 190-191.

instance, referred to Petropavlovsk as “the end of the World.”² Furthermore, operational challenges posed by great distances were exacerbated by a lack of precise hydrographic information. First Lord of the Admiralty Sir Charles Wood reminded the British Parliament that Russia’s Pacific coast was “a part of the world of which very little was known,”³ and the Anglo-French naval squadron’s conspicuous lack of success in locating Russian forces emphatically illustrated his point. The Russian Empire’s principal outlets outside of the Black Sea froze during winter, and even a cursory survey of archived correspondence and news reports reveals lengthy delays in transmitting information to and from the White Sea and Pacific.

Neutral European and North American powers lessened the Crimean War’s scope by acting as more than physical buffers. This is especially true of the United States, whose preferences played a preponderant role in the formulation of Allied blockade policy and restricted British Army recruitment within its borders. Prussian interests were also a factor, especially when it came to discouraging Napoleon III’s grandiose proposals relating to empowering ‘oppressed’ national groups such as the Poles. Allied naval missions, particularly in the Pacific, were also circumscribed by their governments’ desires to simultaneously assuage the fears of existing colonial holdings, monitor domestic unrest in China and South America, protect trade routes, and, however unexpectedly, ‘open’ Japan. British and French leaders’ reluctance to antagonize neutral powers or forsake commercial and imperial interests underscores the most important limitation of all. Neither Allied naval power was willing to risk incurring sizeable expenditures or casualties in early 1854.

Napoleon III’s reluctance to sacrifice French finances during the Crimean War was especially evident in a November, 1854 memorandum circulated to the French cabinet and to Lord Cowley, Britain’s Ambassador to Paris. Throughout the document, his Imperial French Majesty emphasized costs, including the price of individual shells, when evaluating the effect of naval bombardment on coastal fortifications.⁴ Napoleon III’s overall concern lay not with winning military victories, but rather with obtaining results “comparable” to expenses.⁵ The French Emperor was also reluctant to blockade the Russian coasts, which left Lord Aberdeen in

² Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents.*” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 187.

³ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, February 8th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 140, CC. 453-61.

⁴ ADM 1/5633 1393 [November 16th-19th, 1854] (NA).

⁵ *Ibid.*

the awkward position of defending their ‘joint’ decision not to immediately blockade the White Sea port of Archangel on the floor of Britain’s House of Lords.⁶

Naval blockades raised thorny diplomatic and legal issues in Britain, but these paled in comparison to its government’s fundamental reluctance to employ more direct methods of attacking Russia. This would involve, as Admiral Horatio Nelson originally stated in 1794, “laying wood before walls”⁷ by bombarding granite coastal fortifications with wooden-hulled warships. Naval blockade and bombardment alike were also circumscribed by normative considerations. Maverick Admiral Lord Dundonald may have wanted to use sulphur to destroy enemy gunners like wasps and hornets, but concerns over the project’s “barbarous and uncivilized character”⁸ joined those related to practicality to ensure that toxic fumes were not deployed against Cronstadt. Values-based objections did not always carry the day, though, especially when it came to British shore raids in the Gulf of Bothnia. Ultimately, however, British and French commanders acted knowing that their conduct would be scrutinized as “affecting in some degree the reputation” of their respective governments,⁹ each of which had voluntarily foresworn the possibility of permanently conquering Russian territory.¹⁰

Precisely these sorts of “self-imposed limits” were contemptuously dismissed by the major strategic theorist of the early nineteenth century, Carl von Clausewitz.¹¹ A native of Prussia, Clausewitz gained his first-hand military experience during the Napoleonic Wars in massed armies of autocratic leaders and formulated his ideas accordingly. Military histories are seldom complete without a reference to or quote from Clausewitz’s seminal volumes *On War*. Both Clausewitz and Swiss-born theorist Antoine-Henri Jomini confined themselves to analyzing warfare on the European continent, which Corbett and others later argued “not the only form in which great international issues are decided.”¹² Clausewitz’s work did not address Corbett’s view of “modern conditions,” meaning worldwide imperial states in which the sea was a vital

⁶ Great Britain. House of Lords Debate, June 2nd, 1854. *Hansard’s* Vol. 133, CC. 1225-30.

⁷ Stephenson, Charles. *The Admiral’s Secret Weapon: Lord Dundonald and the Origins of Chemical Warfare*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 54.

⁸ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folios 333-336 [Multiple Dates] (BL).

⁹ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, July 20th, 1858. *Hansard’s* Vol. 151, CC 1844-62.

¹⁰ Lambert, Andrew. “Arms Races and Cooperation: The Anglo-French Crimean War Coalition, 1854-1856” in Bruce Elleman and Sarah Paine (Eds.). *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic War to Operation Iraqi Freedom*. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 37.

¹¹ Semmel, Bernard. *Liberalism and Naval Strategy: Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica*. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 11.

¹² Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. (London, UK: Longman, 1911), 42.

factor.¹³ Contrary to common belief, Clausewitz's work was available in both English and French prior to the Crimean War.¹⁴ Aside from annoying an aging Duke of Wellington,¹⁵ however, neither Clausewitz's nor Jomini's dictums had any perceptible influence on planning at the British Admiralty or the implementation of those plans at sea or ashore. Wartime decision-makers instead turned to the exploits of past Admirals including Horatio Nelson and Sir James Saumarez, the commander of British naval expeditions to the Baltic beginning in 1808. As one reviewer of Clausewitz succinctly opined: "theorizing never has been the characteristic of Englishmen."¹⁶

The interlude separating the Napoleonic and Crimean Wars was fully bridged by the lifespan of Antoine-Henri Jomini, another especially strategic theorist of note. Jomini initially served Napoleon Bonaparte, but spent most of his career in the service of Russia's Czars. Nicholas I, in fact, suggested that Jomini combine various works into his two-volume *Summary of the Art of War*, first published in 1837-1838.¹⁷ Like Clausewitz, Jomini reacted against the caution and limitations of eighteenth century conflicts. Jomini's conception of strategy involved massing superior forces against weaker enemy ones at a decisive point and then letting individual courage and boldness carry the day.¹⁸ Jomini's focus on personal heroics at the expense of logistical and political considerations were an excellent fit with contemporary Russian practices, and he served that Empire as a military advisor during the Crimean War. This conflict's nature, however, meant that the forces massed at decisive points, with the exception of Russian concentration at the Amur River's mouth in Siberia, were British and French. It also meant that subsequent historians, including Alfred Thayer Mahan, lacked historical examples of decisive fleet engagements despite the involvement of Europe's three leading naval powers. Mahan noted the potentially adverse effects of popular opinion and criticized governments for yielding,¹⁹ but otherwise shied away from considering examples from the Crimean War.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Bassford, Christopher. *Clausewitz in English: The Reception of Clausewitz in Britain and America, 1815-1945*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

¹⁷ Shy, John. "Jomini" in Peter Paret (Ed.) *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 153.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 146 and 152.

¹⁹ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK. King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 164.

Modern strategic analysis was a nineteenth century development: the word “strategy” only appeared as an entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1810²⁰ as a derivative of the French *stratégie*. Both words, in turn, had their origins in the Ancient Greek definition of the “office or command of a general”²¹ rather than those of an admiral or political leader. Countless authors examined military events prior to 1815, but the accounts that excited a young Nicholas I or influenced Sir James Graham’s war planning recounted great campaigns and personal heroics rather than critically analyzing them. The problem did not lie with this selection of pre-1815 case studies themselves, for Clausewitz acknowledged that strategic theory was meant to educate and train the judgement of a practical man “rather than to assist him directly in the performance of his duties.”²² It instead stemmed from the limited vision of decision-makers who, outside of exceptional figures including Muravyov and Palmerson, formulated plans without regard to goals with “operational, strategic, or political value.”²³ Great changes had undoubtedly occurred since the Congress of Vienna: Clausewitz and Jomini, for instance, never imagined that one side in a conflict would enjoy a decisive technological advantage.²⁴ In spite of the advantages enjoyed by Anglo-French naval forces when it came to “the best Napoleonic tradition” of maneuvering in order to fight at an advantage, though, the Crimean War was fought in “the worst Napoleonic tradition of not having a clear idea how victory would conclude a war satisfactorily.”²⁵ Not even the September, 1855 fall of Sevastopol ended the fighting, and only a turn towards what is now broadly conceptualized as ‘grand strategy’ ended the fighting by mid-1856.

Grand strategy can also be described as ‘higher strategy’ or ‘national strategy,’ and was originally developed by Sir Basil Liddell Hart in the aftermath of the First World War. Hart focused on how belligerent powers could best use all of their resources to enable their armed forces to achieve a political objective or objectives. Earlier theorists had not been oblivious to war’s broader context, but Clausewitz dismissed concerns about raising and equipping forces as

²⁰ Rodger, Nicholas Andrew Martin. “The Idea of Naval Strategy in Britain in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries” in Till, Geoffrey (Ed.) *The Development of British Naval Thinking: Essays in Memory of Bryan McLaren Ranft*. (Routledge: London and New York, 2006), 19.

²¹ Barnhart, Robert K (Ed.). *The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology*. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 765.

²² Gray, Colin S. *The Strategy Bridge*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 22.

²³ *Ibid*, 242.

²⁴ Howard, Michael. “The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 5 (Summer, 1979), 976.

²⁵ Gray, Colin S. *The Strategy Bridge*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 242.

being as relevant to fighting as a swordmaker's skills to the art of fencing.²⁶ Hart's ideas became especially pertinent during the Second World War, and have more recently been a starting point for an entire field of study.²⁷ The very definition of grand strategy and a number of related issues are currently the subject of vigorous scholarly debate, but indisputably involve the application of sources of power and influence that are more than strictly military in pursuit of specific and usually political goals. The Crimean War was only resolved once policy-makers gave serious consideration to political, economic, and diplomatic circumstances relating to military developments and launched initiatives including the Great Armament and an alliance with Sweden-Norway. This is not to imply that any of the belligerents failed to plan operations prior to 1856, but it is important to note that "whereas all strategies are plans, not all plans are strategies."²⁸ The Allies' improvised, piecemeal plans for 1854 bore little resemblance to the more systematic 1828 approach of British Lieutenant Colonel Sir George Lacy Evans. His eight point plan, for example included cutting off Russian commerce; attempting to destroy Cronstadt and Sevastopol; raiding Russia's coasts; aiding Persia; menacing the Gulf of Finland creating peasant unrest and rebellions; bombarding St. Petersburg; and re-establishing Poland.²⁹

In defense of those who failed in formulating strategy in the 1850s, they faced major challenges that recent scholarship declines to consider. The first is seemingly paradoxical, but stems from the influence of past British, French, and Russian military successes. Victories such as Trafalgar encouraged figures including Lord Dundonald to draw simplistic and often incorrect conclusions such as "never mind manoeuvres: always go at them (the enemy)."³⁰ Napoleon III's government, meanwhile, proudly recalled that defeating Napoleon Bonaparte's genius required a "world of enemies" similar to the one later arrayed against Wilhelmine and Nazi Germany rather than reflecting on the limitations of even the grandest of armies.³¹ Chapter Two likewise outlines the influence of Russia's victories during the Napoleonic Wars on an impressionable Nicholas I,

²⁶ Howard, Michael. "The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 5 (Summer, 1979), 975-976.

²⁷ See, for example: Sayle, Timothy Andrews. "Defining and Teaching Grand Strategy." Temple University Consortium on Grand Strategy's *The Telegram*, No. 4 (January, 2011).

²⁸ Gray, Colin S. *The Strategy Bridge*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 242.

²⁹ Evans, George Lacy de. *The Designs of Russia*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1828), 199-208.

³⁰ Schurman, Donald M. *Julian S. Corbett, 1854-1922: Historian of British Maritime Policy from Drake to Jellicoe*. (London, UK: Royal Historical Society, 1981), 120.

³¹ Knox, MacGregor. "Conclusion: Continuity and Revolution in the Making of Strategy" in Williamson, Murray, MacGregor Knox and Alan Bernstein (Eds.). *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 616.

who consequently embraced militarism. Thus, “official mind(s)” in all three belligerent empires were heavily encumbered by “assumptions and prejudices accumulated from past successes and failures.”³² The mindset of civilian leaders was, in turn, absolutely critical because they were charged with planning the conflict, often without the input of officers on active service. Primary documents, for instance, indicate that Napoleon III and Sir James Graham formulated pre-war plans without consulting admirals including Napier and Parseval-Deschênes and also lacked dedicated strategists who could be consulted in addition to retired naval commanders. This invalidates a fundamental assumption of some recent scholarship that strategists must translate their political masters’ voice(s) without acknowledging that the two roles were combined within the governments of both Aberdeen and Napoleon III.³³

The first step of a true strategist examining Anglo-French war plans for the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific would presumably have been to contradict the assumption that a country’s military can be so superior that it should always win, therefore obviating the need for strategy.³⁴ This remains purely speculative, however: for all of its excellent points, even the functional maritime historiography embodied by works such as Sir Julian Stafford Corbett’s 1911 *Principles of Maritime Strategy* does not provide a full understanding of the Crimean War. Firstly, and with the exception of a modest footnote, Corbett did not analyze Allied plans to transform the Baltic from a naval theatre of war to a truly maritime one.³⁵ Secondly, but on a related note, *Principles of Maritime Strategy* dealt with limited conflicts without considering their potential for becoming unlimited³⁶ through possible developments such as the British fleet attacking Cronstadt and St. Petersburg in 1856. Thus, only an examination of primary historical sources is capable of providing a full account of the belligerent powers’ planning, although several concepts from *Principles of Maritime Strategy* on limited warfare and fleet operations are worth noting.

Corbett made a point of emphasizing his agreement with Clausewitz that objects of war not involving the total destruction of opposing armed forces made a conflict limited in nature. Limited objects, which were heavily influenced by the geographic, diplomatic, and normative

³² Sayle, Timothy Andrews. “Defining and Teaching Grand Strategy.” Temple University Consortium on Grand Strategy’s *The Telegram*, No. 4 (January, 2011), 4.

³³ Gray, Colin S. *The Strategy Bridge*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 248.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 248.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 69 and Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK. King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 190.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 90.

factors mentioned previously, made the Crimean War a textbook example of the limited maritime conflict along with the Russo-Japanese War.³⁷ Both wars, however, highlight one of Corbett's most critical points, which holds that the difference between 'maritime' and 'naval' is more than semantic. Corbett argued that naval strategy concerned a fleet at sea, while maritime strategy addressed the role a fleet should play in relation to land forces.³⁸ Sir Julian thought it obvious that war could not be decided by naval action alone: the only possible exception would be a "slow" and "galling" process that alienated commercial interests and neutral powers.³⁹ Corbett's other works, including Corbett's *England in the Seven Years War*, consequently argued for a balanced approach to conflict in which naval and land forces were "used together in intelligent conjunction"⁴⁰ Corbett ultimately believed that the British traditionally did not possess an army of sufficient strength to alone allow for decisive intervention on the European continent,⁴¹ and the balance of his work consequently focused on maritime warfare.

How fleets are constituted was a major subject of discussion in *Principles of Maritime Strategy*'s chapter on the theoretical aspects of warfare at sea. These pages emphasized a tripartite method of broadly classifying warships. By the mid-nineteenth century, line-of-battle ships were those whose large size, armaments, and crews allowed them to act as fighting units in major fleet actions. Cruisers, or ships of intermediate size and armament, included types such as frigates and brigs. Finally came flotilla craft, or gunboats and mortar vessels. These distinctions are critical to understanding the Crimean War outside the Black Sea. British and French line-of-battle ships in the 1850s were almost always kept in either domestic ports or Mediterranean harbours: their Russian counterparts were moored in the Baltic and Black Sea. The squadrons maintained on distant stations by all the belligerents were modest in both numbers and armament,⁴² especially considering their large wartime responsibilities. The Allies were fortunate that Russian forces in the Pacific were even smaller,⁴³ but still struggled to locate and destroy Russian forces in the region. In the Baltic and Black Seas, meanwhile, large fleets of Britain's

³⁷ Schurman, Donald M. *Julian S. Corbett, 1854-1922: Historian of British Maritime Policy from Drake to Jellicoe*. (London, UK: Royal Historical Society, 1981), 146.

³⁸ Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. (London, UK: Longman, 1911), 11.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 11-12.

⁴⁰ Schurman, Donald M. *Julian S. Corbett, 1854-1922: Historian of British Maritime Policy from Drake to Jellicoe*. (London, UK: Royal Historical Society, 1981), 62.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 61.

⁴² BB4 682 591-592 [May 14th, 1854] (SHD).

⁴³ BB4 682 593 [May 14th, 1854] (SHD).

and France's largest and most modern warships faced an entirely different problem: how to confront Russian naval forces protected by substantial fortifications.

Both British and French planners gave every consideration to best methods of approaching and then assaulting Russia's fortified harbours.⁴⁴ Even the earliest intelligence reports, such as one made by Captain Edmund Lyons of the *HMS Miranda* regarding Reval, reinforced another one of Corbett's observations that battle cannot always be forced, especially on favourable terms. Several other factors besides Russia's coastal fortifications, especially in the White Sea and Pacific, contributed to what Corbett deemed failure to "obtain a decision,"⁴⁵ or win a decisive battle. Chief amongst these was a lack of intelligence available to both French⁴⁶ and British naval commanders. In spite of great efforts by individual consuls and the (British) Admiralty Hydrographic Office, detailed navigational information was often obtained only because of wartime efforts and could therefore not be employed to plan in advance.⁴⁷ Allied experience in the Baltic also demonstrated that intelligence reports on Sweaborg and Cronstadt were subject to conflicting interpretations and often led to serious disagreements among policymakers and military commanders.⁴⁸

British and French frustration over their inability to attack Russia's navy in fortified harbours resulted from what Corbett deemed one of the "earliest discoveries in naval strategy."⁴⁹ Unlike its land counterpart, naval warfare has a special characteristic: it is possible to remove an entire fleet from combat by withdrawing it into a defended port that cannot be taken without the assistance of an army.⁵⁰ This results in an "embarrassing dilemma" for the superior power or powers because the more likely they are to decisively win a major naval battle, the less likely they are to have the opportunity to participate in one.⁵¹ Corbett's observation held true in all the war's theatres because the Russian Navy did not challenge its British and French nemeses at sea. Instead of retaining the potential to do so through defensive fleet operations by keeping its "fleet

⁴⁴ BB4 682 190 [March 9th, 1854] (SHD), ADM 1/5624 HA28 [March 26th, 1854] (NA).

⁴⁵ Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. (London, UK: Longman, 1911), 150.

⁴⁶ BB 4 684 213 [Received: November 29th, 1854] (SHD).

⁴⁷ OD 177 [May and June, 1855] and 265 [Received: December, 1855] (AHO).

⁴⁸ ADM 1/5625 HA 725 [September and October, 1854] (NA).

⁴⁹ Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. (London, UK: Longman, 1911), 141.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 140.

⁵¹ *Ibid*.

in being,” or intact and ready for naval operations once conditions shifted,⁵² Russia instead deployed its warships to augment coastal fortifications.

Following and even preceding the Crimean War’s outbreak in March of 1854, the most urgent demand on Allied naval forces was to prevent a Russian invasion or bombardment of British and French coastlines. French warships only arrived in the Baltic in June of that year, which meant that this task fell to the British Royal Navy.⁵³ Mid-century Britain was no stranger to invasion scares, and even the most remote of possible Russian actions were a concern. The remote possibility of Russian warships from the Pacific sailing undetected to attack British coastlines, for instance, was discussed in Parliament as late as the Summer of 1855.⁵⁴ French decision-makers shared these concerns, which became evident with Drouyn de Lhuy’s request for British protection of France’s northern coastline.⁵⁵ Allied naval superiority forced all but the most optimistic of Russian commanders to conclude that such an attack, even if attempted with the utmost stealth, would be futile to the point of suicide.⁵⁶ Thus came one of Britain and France’s unambiguous naval successes in the Crimean War: the other involved transporting and supplying substantial expeditionary forces.

Supporting military expeditions was a crucial task for any imperial power. Britain and France’s ability to transport and supply substantial forces by sea defined the entire Crimean War. It also made them victorious in the conflict’s two largest theatres: the Black Sea and Baltic. These examples were sufficiently prominent for Corbett to mention the Crimean War on several occasions during his discussion of attacking, defending, and supporting expeditions.⁵⁷ His second reference, however, highlighted the difficulties in conducting operations in “imperfectly” known areas without a “joint superior Staff” of commanders from both states and branches of service.⁵⁸ Britain and France undoubtedly enjoyed the undisputed command of the sea necessary for invasions, but faced these organizational challenges in addition to logistical ones such as transporting currency to pay the troops and locating supplies of fresh water.⁵⁹ The 1854 capture

⁵² *Ibid*, 190.

⁵³ ADM 1/5624 HA 137 [June 16th, 1854] (NA).

⁵⁴ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, July 31st, 1855. *Hansard’s* Vol. 139, CC 1589-604.

⁵⁵ Lambert, Andrew. *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 30.

⁵⁶ “The Internal State of Russia: Projected Invasion of England.” *The Argus*. (Melbourne, Australia: February 5th, 1856), 6.

⁵⁷ Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*. (London, UK: Longman, 1911), 261 and 275.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ BB4 733 195 [July 31st, 1854] (SHD).

of Bomarsund, in the Aland Islands, saw British ships transport thousands of French troops to the besieged fortress:⁶⁰ so many, in fact, that General Baraguey d'Hilliers wanted to command an expedition 10 times smaller.⁶¹ Bomarsund's fall was just one indication that combined Anglo-French fleets could attain absolute command of the sea with relative ease. Allied problems instead lay with choosing how to best attack Russia with warships after available ground forces had been committed to a protracted siege of Sevastopol, on the Crimean Peninsula.

British and French leaders expected Russia, as the conflict's weaker naval power, to attack their trade through an approach known as a *guerre de course*. This entailed using naval units to destroy or capture enemy merchant ships in the hope of causing economic damage. Access to the Baltic and Black Seas was limited by their narrow access points, which were closed by Britain's Royal Navy at the conflict's beginning.⁶² Russian warships in the Pacific, on the other hand, presented more of a threat to Allied commerce.⁶³ British and French merchant ships and whaling fleets in these waters were at risk of capture by Russian forces. Isolated colonies also scrambled to make defensive preparations⁶⁴ while British parliamentarians discussed the possibility of "very high premiums" for insuring commerce in the Pacific.⁶⁵ The "extremely small" number of Russian warships in the Pacific, combined with their focus on defending the Amur River's mouth and opening Japan, however, ultimately mitigated the threat they posed to British and French commerce. The Allies' main concern was that Russia would resort to another tactic from the 'age of sail': commissioning privateers by issuing letters of marque; or official licenses to capture enemy shipping.

French consuls and naval commanders were especially troubled by the possibility of Russian privateers operating from bases in the neutral United States, especially San Francisco⁶⁶ and New York City.⁶⁷ France's Irish-born consul in San Francisco, Guillaume Patrice Dillon, repeatedly emphasized the dangers posed by Russian "corsaires," as the French called privateers.⁶⁸ Dillon may have been accused of exaggerating this threat by officials in France's

⁶⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP G37 [July 13th, 1854] (NA).

⁶¹ BB4 733 199 [August 6th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶² ADM 1/5624 HA28 [March 26th, 1854] (NA).

⁶³ ADM 1/5656 185 Y15 [November 13th, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁴ CO 305/5 6358 27 [May 16th, 1854] (NA) and Stone, Ian R. "The Falkland Islands and the Crimean War. *The War Correspondent: the Journal of the Crimean War Research Society*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (April, 2001), 41-42.

⁶⁵ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, May 18th, 1854. *Hansard's* Vol. 133, CC 536-37.

⁶⁶ BB3 683 23 [March 2nd, 1854] (SHD).

⁶⁷ BB4 682 217 [March 19th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶⁸ BB4 682 759 [July 31st, 1854] (SHD).

Ministry of the Marine and Colonies,⁶⁹ but Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys felt it “important” to conduct “rigorous surveillance” of Pacific trade routes.⁷⁰ Likewise, British commanders emphasized the potential for even the smallest Russian vessels to do “much mischief to British shipping and trade” on the high seas.⁷¹ These fears justified threatening to intercept the Russian schooner *Rogneda* if it attempted to leave the harbour of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and use its 8 “small” guns against British shipping.⁷² Interestingly, these threats were recounted by Britain’s commander at Rio⁷³ in a letter of March 28th, 1854, in which he explicitly acknowledged menacing the *Rogneda* prior to having received a formal declaration of war.⁷⁴ Once war had been declared, Britain and France were free to coordinate a blockade; traditionally the method of attacking commerce employed by stronger naval powers.

The Anglo-French blockades of Russia during the Crimean War were extremely complex for several reasons. Firstly, blockades were forced to conform to detailed requirements established by obscure and conflicting legal precedents. Secondly, Britain and France were eager to avoid antagonizing neutral United States and Prussia and to grant special exemptions for areas such as Finmark.⁷⁵ Even a year into the conflict, it was evident to both British and French leaders that their combined blockade policy had resulted in considerable confusion and, as Drouyn de Lhuys put it, “difficulties.”⁷⁶ The British Admiralty further “had occasion to observe that...misconception exists among officers of H M Ships respecting the precautions which are necessary to the legal establishment of blockades and the attention due to the rights of neutral vessels.”⁷⁷ Subsequent chapters of this study address the Allied blockades in more detail, but it is important to note that British and French war planning was substantially impacted by difficulties in formulating and implementing a joint blockade policy. As a British Admiralty memorandum intended to outline blockade procedure noted: “the Instructions to French Naval Officers, and the principles of French Prize Law, are in some important particulars very different from this memorandum. This must be very carefully born in mind, particularly in conjoint operations.”⁷⁸

⁶⁹ BB4 682 791 [October 24th, 1854] (SHD).

⁷⁰ BB4 682 217 [March 19th, 1854] (SHD).

⁷¹ ADM 1/5623 QA78 [March, 26th, 1854] (NA).

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Rear-Admiral William Henderson.

⁷⁴ ADM 1/5623 QA78 [March, 26th, 1854] (NA).

⁷⁵ BB4 710 192 [Received: May 6th, 1855] (SHD).

⁷⁶ BB4 710 160 [May 6th, 1855] (SHD).

⁷⁷ ADM 1/5624 HA51 [August 13th, 1854] (NA).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Happily for the Allies, French leaders such as Drouyn de Lhuys took their cues from Napoleon III and were at pains to coordinate their efforts.⁷⁹ Difficulties undoubtedly emerged in the White Sea, but ended with an exasperated de Lhuys underlining multiple words for emphasis while scolding Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos for acting without the joint consent of both governments.⁸⁰

Formulating commercial policy also involved coordination among British cabinet members rather than exclusively between the British and French governments. Lord Aberdeen's cabinet was unsurprisingly divided over the best procedure for blockading Russian commerce, and no member of Aberdeen's Ministry alone enjoyed the type of power that allowed Napoleon III to quickly resolve such disputes. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Lord Clarendon, for instance, believed that a blockade would choke off Russian exports and pressure the Czarist government to sue for peace, while Lord John Russell held that only a military effort would succeed.⁸¹ British policy became clearer, however, when Clarendon and First Lord of the Admiralty Sir James Graham began to take the lead in designing Britain's wartime commercial policy before war was even declared. Their approach involved forgoing tradition by prohibiting the privateering and letters of marque that so worried Napoleon III's government. Graham's confidential communication to Clarendon contained extensive condemnation of privateering on moral grounds, but also conveniently emphasized the advantages that would accrue to Britain if the practice were to be abolished during a conflict with Russia.⁸² Prohibiting privateering proved so beneficial to British interests that, by April 1856, Clarendon was able to convince Lord Palmerston and Queen Victoria that the proposal should be adopted by all European powers at the expense of the United States.⁸³

Privateering was only one aspect of the Allies' wartime commercial policy. Edward Cardwell, the pragmatic head of Britain's Board of Trade until 1855, observed that British directives were based "on the supposition that the trade of Russia could not be wholly checked" by even the most stringent of measures.⁸⁴ He supported this point by circumspectly using the

⁷⁹ BB4 733 270 [July 25th, 1855] (SHD).

⁸⁰ BB4 733 376 [November 26th, 1855] (SHD).

⁸¹ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 75.

⁸² FO 83/487 [March 3rd, 1854] (NA).

⁸³ FO 83/487 [April 6th, 1856, minute by Palmerston on April 7th] (NA).

⁸⁴ PRO 30/29/23/4/181-188 [October 31st, 1854] (NA).

example of Prussia manufacturing stearin⁸⁵ from Russian animal fat and then legally exporting the product to Britain despite the latter power's prohibition on the import of Russian animal products.⁸⁶ Cardwell acknowledged that any Russian trade able to "bear the cost of transport" would evade an Anglo-French blockade, but argued that even a partially effective naval effort was sufficient "to inflict commercial pressure on Russia."⁸⁷ Cardwell identified annihilating the Czarist merchant fleet, diminishing Russian trade, and driving up prices due to the cost of land transportation through Prussia as three major accomplishments⁸⁸ during the initial months of the conflict. Although some of these economic accomplishments were due to the efforts Britain's Royal Navy, it was much more difficult to celebrate the initial military accomplishments of those same fleets during the War, which were overseen by Sir James Graham.

As First Lord of the Admiralty, Graham exercised a preponderant influence over Britain's maritime war planning on account of the political circumstances discussed in Chapter Two. "Great differences of opinion"⁸⁹ existed in the Cabinet as to the wisdom of Graham's nomination of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier to command Britain's Baltic Fleet in 1854, but the decision was made by default. 73-year-old Admiral Sir William Parker declined the appointment on account of age and exhaustion, and even Lord Dundonald's admirers were concerned by his 79 years of age and affinity for attacking ports with toxic gas fumes.⁹⁰ Unlike his choice of commanders, Graham's pre-war plans were subjected to less scrutiny, especially due to his affinity for secrecy. The impact of Graham's ideas was magnified by Napoleon III's unwillingness to issue specific instructions to Napier's French counterpart in 1854, Vice-Admiral Alexandre Parseval-Deschênes. By his own admission, this lack of direction and his fleet's numerical inferiority forced France's Baltic contingent to depend on Napier's British fleet for their combined course of action.⁹¹

Parseval-Deschênes' forced deference was especially natural considering that Britain, France, and Russia all lacked large centralized staffs and war planning organizations in the mid-

⁸⁵ Fatty acid used in candle and soap manufacturing.

⁸⁶ PRO 30/29/23/4/181-188 [October 31st, 1854] (NA).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Greville, Charles C. F. *The Greville Memoirs, Third Part* (Volume I). (London, UK: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1887), 136.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ BB4 733 168 [July 11th, 1854] (SHD). The precise French wording is "ses mouvements."

nineteenth century and earlier.⁹² This led decision-makers to improvise as best they could given the circumstances of individual conflict: Sir James Graham's efforts at the beginning of the Crimean War were no exception. The First Lord turned to Britain's last experiences in the Baltic and against another major European power, as described by three sources. The first was a biography; *The Life of Nelson*; written by the Romantic man of letters Robert Southey. Southey's work recounted Lord Horatio Nelson's 1801 exploits in the Baltic from a narrative rather than an analytical perspective. This proved problematic when attempting to formulate operational plans. Nelson was reported to have anticipated "laurels" at Reval and attacking Russian ships there after ice had thawed,⁹³ but Southey did not provide further details relating to how Nelson's plan would have been implemented. This is hardly surprising given the contemporary relationship between History and naval war planning. The concept of a "usable past," or historical lessons in the form of fundamental principles, was only developed later in the century at institutions such as the United States Naval War College.⁹⁴ Even the journals of Vice-Admiral Sir James Saumarez, Britain's commander during a later Baltic expedition (1808-1812), were insufficient operational guides. That fleet's activities in 1808 and 1809, for instance, were the subject of a tense exchange between Graham's Admiralty and Sir Charles Napier over the benefits of steam power versus the enduring hazard of collisions and groundings in heavy fog.⁹⁵

Saumarez was long dead by the Crimean War's outbreak in 1854, but his subordinate Admiral Sir Thomas Byam Martin lived until October of that year. This was long enough for him to provide Graham and the Admiralty with a memorandum on Russian positions in the Baltic and chair a committee tasked with evaluating Lord Dundonald's proposals for chemical warfare.⁹⁶ Martin originally wrote his memorandum in 1835, but updated it with a covering note before dispatching it to Graham in June of 1853.⁹⁷ He called for a steam-powered, line-of-battle fleet accompanied by flotilla craft capable of undertaking coastal bombardment operations against

⁹² Lambert, Andrew D. "The Development of Education in The Royal Navy: 1854-1914" in Geoffrey Till (Ed.). *The Development of British Naval Thinking: Essays in Memory of Bryan McLaren Ranft*. (New York and London, UK: Routledge, 2006), 37.

⁹³ Southey, Robert. *The Life of Nelson* (Volume II). (London, UK: John Murray, 1813), 155-156.

⁹⁴ Crowl, Philip A. "Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian" in Peter Paret (Ed.) *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986),

⁹⁵ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943). 51-52.

⁹⁶ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folio 300 [August 1st, 1854] (BL).

⁹⁷ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folio 210 [June 11th, 1853] (BL).

targets outside of Sweaborg and Cronstadt, which he considered too strong to be attacked.⁹⁸

More recent information was needed, however, and Graham turned to the venerable Hydrographer of the Navy, Sir Francis Beaufort, to obtain intelligence.

Beaufort conveyed Graham's wishes to Captain John Washington of the Admiralty Hydrographic Department, which normally produced maps and charts to assist with maritime navigation. Washington had been scheduled to visit Denmark, Sweden, and Russia on a mission to establish "an improved form of lifeboat," which provided an excellent pretext for an intelligence-gathering mission.⁹⁹ Consequently, Washington was instructed to avail himself "of every opportunity of obtaining information respecting the Baltic fleet and present state and condition of the defences at Kronstadt, Reval, etc."¹⁰⁰ His resulting report also included comments on the defences and fleets of Norway, Sweden, the Åland Islands, Åbo (Turku, Finland), and Helsingfors (Helsinki) in addition to Reval and Cronstadt. The most detail was devoted to Cronstadt, which Washington found "very imposing" after visiting it on four different occasions.¹⁰¹ The British Captain was given a substantial degree of access to both Sweaborg and Cronstadt. His report mentions being "allowed to land and walk round the ramparts" of Sweaborg and having been given several tours of Cronstadt in the company of senior Russian officers.¹⁰² Washington acknowledged that "being so civilly treated... has thrown a certain amount of dust in my eyes and may have blinded me to some defects," but did not consider that Russia had gone to great lengths to keep him from realizing that the Russian Baltic Fleet was in poor condition.¹⁰³ Washington's favourable assessment of Cronstadt strengthened the impression already formed by Admiral Thomas Byam Martin's memorandum and Graham's natural pessimism. The Admiralty's First Lord did not plan on immediately assaulting Cronstadt. Reval, on the other hand, seemed a promising venue for initially inflicting a major setback on Russia, and Washington's report tellingly included historical data on precisely when Baltic ice dissipated in a note just below the section devoted to "Reval."¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* and *Intrigue, Influence, and Power in Nineteenth Century British Politics: The Papers of Sir James Graham*. (Sussex, UK: Harvester Press Microform Publications, 1984), Reel Nineteen [January 22nd, 1854].

⁹⁹ RUSI/NM/86/28 [October 1st, 1853] (NMM), 1.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 4-6.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

Unbeknownst to Graham until April 3rd, 1854, Russia had withdrawn its warships from Reval and nearby Port Baltic (also Rogervick, now Paldiski) months before the Allied declaration of war.¹⁰⁵ This only became apparent after Captain Edmund Moubray Lyons and the *HMS Miranda* forced their way through ice in order to reconnoitre both anchorages. Lyons' report reached an advanced squadron of the British Baltic fleet just days prior to the conflict's formal beginning, and its news rendered Graham's initial plan for Baltic operations superfluous. Worse still for its cause, the British fleet's arrival in the Baltic also allowed it to concretely ascertain that Sweden-Norway would not immediately join the struggle against Russia. That kingdom's monarch, Oscar I, linked Sweden-Norway's participation in the war to more concessions and assurances than the Allies were willing to grant in the Spring and Summer of 1854.¹⁰⁶ Not even the capture of Bomarsund, Russia's stronghold in the Åland Islands, in August of the same year could persuade Oscar to reconsider his demands and provide Britain and France with troops and gunboats. The British Baltic Fleet could thus anticipate major difficulties assaulting or capturing major Russian positions in the Baltic, and could not expect the situation to improve with Swedish intervention. The question of how to win a major victory against Russia in the Baltic was thus left unanswered by Britain's pre-war planning. French leaders were not able to immediately relieve the confusion that resulted, although they did join in attempting to attract Sweden to the Allied cause.¹⁰⁷

France's pre-war planning for the Baltic Theatre contrasted with Britain's due to a lack of central direction. At first glance, French naval archives feature plans of attack on Rogervick-Port Baltic (Paldiski), Riga, Reval, and St. Petersburg, accompanied by color-coordinated maps and plans of attack.¹⁰⁸ Further inspection, however, reveals that they are the unsolicited byproducts of Lieutenant de Vaisseau Georgette du Buisson's efforts to obtain a commission from Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos, who had not ordered the plans in advance of their unsolicited submission.¹⁰⁹ Du Buisson's sanguine assessment of prospective Allied assaults was relatively brief. Yet it did provide specific details highlighting navigational difficulties including shallow rocks and difficult approaches to ports and confirm that the French also believed that a Russian

¹⁰⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA28 [Written: March 26th, Received in London: April 3rd, 1854] (NA).

¹⁰⁶ Hallendorff, Carl. *Oskar I och Karl XV* (Volume 12) in Emil Hildebrand and Ludvig Stavenow (Eds.) *Sveriges Historia Till Våra Daga*. (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt and Sons, 1923), 124.

¹⁰⁷ BB4 733 148 [June 21st, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁰⁸ BB4 708 Not Numbered [January 20th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

fleet division was still anchored at Reval.¹¹⁰ The Lieutenant assumed that the French fleet would operate in conjunction with that of its ally in attacks on Russian ports,¹¹¹ while the reverse was not always the case in British pre-war planning. This was fortunate because the French Navy's best ships had already been dispatched to the Mediterranean and Black Sea. French vessels only arrived in the Baltic in mid-June of 1854,¹¹² and were still woefully unprepared for deployment, much less combat.

France's Baltic commander in 1854, Vice-Admiral Parseval-Deschênes, candidly reported that his ships were unready to see combat for multiple reasons. These included a lack of officers and winter clothing, not to mention over-hasty armament.¹¹³ Parseval-Deschênes blamed Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier and British public opinion for rashly forcing the dispatch of Allied fleets. A note in the margin by Ducos, however, emphasized that it would have hurt French patriotism to leave the French fleet to prepare at Brest.¹¹⁴ Ducos, de Lhuys, and Napoleon III were aware of British intentions in the Baltic thanks to forwarded documents from British politicians, especially Secretary of State for War Lord Newcastle.¹¹⁵ These documents revealed the fundamental difficulties faced by British and French leaders throughout the remainder of their conflict with Russia, including what the Allies should do after preventing the Russian fleet from exiting the Baltic and blockading the Czar's Baltic ports. Coastal raids and the capture of Bomarsund's 2,255 man garrison¹¹⁶ paled in comparison to the potential destruction or capture of Sweaborg and Cronstadt, and Allied planning for the remainder of the conflict focused on how or if this should be accomplished.

Sweaborg and Cronstadt assumed even greater importance at the Crimean War's outbreak, when the impetus for attacking Reval was discovered to have left along with the Russian warships formerly moored there. Even after the British and French fleets obtained more detailed intelligence on both fortress complexes, opinions on how to best proceed differed greatly. Bomarsund's considerably less formidable defenses, coupled with the Allies' ability to isolate the Åland Islands, made the British and French decision to besiege the fortress much less

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² ADM 1/5624 HA137 [June 16th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹³ BB4 733 54 [April 28th, 1854] (SHD).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ BB4 733 118 [Undated] (SHD).

¹¹⁶ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *History of The Baltic Campaign Of 1854, From Documents And Other Materials Furnished By Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 381.

complex. Yet even this relatively simple decision was not taken easily. Parseval-Deschênes convinced Napier to postpone the eventual assault and to instead reconnoiter Cronstadt. This argument was made because, as the French Vice-Admiral recounted in English and underlined for emphasis, the Swedes were “not sure” about their participation in the conflict.¹¹⁷ Consensus regarding the larger fortresses was more difficult to come by, and the ensuing chapter’s discussion of the Allies’ 1854 Baltic campaign outlines a multitude of conflicting opinions involved in contemplating assaults on Sweaborg and Cronstadt. It took a change of year and of Prime Minister in Britain, though, before the Anglo-French fleet would bombard Sweaborg and begin constructing a flotilla to threaten Cronstadt. Britain’s new wartime leader, after all, thought that to only expel Russia from Wallachia and Moldavia during the Crimean War “would be only like turning a Burglar out of your house, to break in again at a more fitting opportunity.”¹¹⁸

Lord Palmerston’s February 1855 elevation to the Prime Ministership also impacted strategy north of the Baltic, in the White Sea. Three hundred years after three British vessels had first entered these waters in a futile search for a Northeast Passage to India and China, the same number of warships arrived with a different mandate.¹¹⁹ They were not sent to “discover strange countries,”¹²⁰ but rather to blockade Russian ports including Archangel and Onega.¹²¹ The Russian Empire’s trade and territory had changed dramatically since the mid to late sixteenth century. Although the White Sea’s ports were no longer the Czar’s only maritime outlet, the region’s economic interaction with Britain had remained constant. British merchants and capital were as instrumental in exploiting forest and animal products in 1854 as they had been three centuries earlier. Russia’s Northern possessions also carried on a brisk trade with Norway’s portion of Finmark, with the former polity still personally united with Sweden’s ruling dynasty. Anglo-French diplomatic efforts to win Swedish favor prompted Britain’s Foreign Secretary, Clarendon, to assure Sweden’s King Oscar I months prior to the war’s outbreak that such commerce would be exempted from any wartime blockade.¹²² Clarendon’s assurance was

¹¹⁷ BB4 733 109 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

¹¹⁸ PRO 30/22/11D [May 26th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁹ Milner, Thomas. *The Baltic: Its Gates, Shores, and Cities*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), 387.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 29.

¹²² ADM 1/5634 48 [January 24th, 1854] (NA).

reluctantly seconded by Napoleon III's Government, which was more intent on maintaining cordial relations with Britain than controlling minor operational details in distant polar waters. The British Foreign Secretary's French counterpart Count Walewski, for example, was held to be "perfectly correct in deferring to the wishes of Lord Clarendon" when arranging the belated dispatch of two French warships to join the three British ones already on station.¹²³ France's commander, Capitaine de Vaisseau Pierre-Édouard Guilbert, complained that the Finmark easement was being flagrantly abused,¹²⁴ but was nevertheless repeatedly instructed to always cooperate with British blockade policy.¹²⁵

The British White Sea strategy to which France deferred in 1854 was straightforward. Sir James Graham instructed experienced naval officer and polar explorer Captain (later Admiral Sir) Erasmus Ommanney to blockade Archangel and Onega while cooperating with the French and allowing Russian trade with Finmark.¹²⁶ Graham also floated the possibility of attacking both major ports, especially Archangel, by characteristically directing his commander to "ascertain...the operations which it may be desirable to undertake" against them.¹²⁷ These potential operations, unlike those in the Pacific, benefitted enormously from detailed navigational information furnished by Sir Francis Beaufort and Captain John Washington at the Admiralty Hydrographic Office.¹²⁸ These documents, compiled with the assistance of Britain's Royal Geographical Society, revealed that the approach to Archangel was protected by a naturally-occurring submerged ridge, or bar. This was confirmed through reconnaissance conducted by small ship's boats in early July, 1854.¹²⁹

Ommanney's intelligence-gathering efforts had already indicated that Archangel was garrisoned by 6,000 troops, new artillery batteries, 15 gunboats, and several small steamers and a guard vessel.¹³⁰ Given the strength of this garrison compared to a British squadron of 3 ships and 540 men,¹³¹ an amphibious landing of the type undertaken at Petropavlovsk was out of the

¹²³ BB2 332 3 [July 1st, 1854] (SHD).

¹²⁴ BB2 332 177 [October 6th, 1854] (SHD).

¹²⁵ BB4 710 23 [January 16th, 1855] (SHD).

¹²⁶ EO/2/2 [May 15th, 1854] (RGS).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Charts 2269-1172 [Undated] (AHO).

¹²⁹ LBK/14 [July 4th, 1854] (NMM).

¹³⁰ LBK/14 [June 23rd, 1854] (NMM).

¹³¹ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 31.

question. The shallow bar also meant that only a warship's small boats could safely pass over it, and their limited armament was "far too insignificant to attempt anything against the Enemy's gunboats and batteries."¹³² Even after the French ships' arrival, Ommanney and his squadron were relegated to spend the remainder of their campaign fighting frustrating engagements against less appealing targets such as the Solovetsky Monastery Complex. Although the Allied presence in the White Sea during the Summer and Fall of 1854 ultimately fulfilled Graham's desire to use the minimum number of warships necessary to blockade Russian ports, it faced the same challenges as its matching efforts in the Baltic and Pacific during the conflict's first year. General operations against trade and minor successes, such as the destruction of Kola on the nearby Murman Coast, did not seem satisfactory given the technological advantages enjoyed by the British and French navies. By late 1855, however, the efforts of John Rice Crowe, Britain's Consul-General in Norway, and Lord Palmerston dramatically altered the White Sea's strategic importance.

The Finmark Region of Northern Norway was a part of blockade planning and diplomatic efforts by Clarendon and Graham, but the latter was already out of office by the time Finmark became an issue capable of impacting the war's entire course. Little had Graham planned that Palmerston, informed by Crowe, would succeed in converting their long-standing fear of Russian aggression in the region into a November, 1855 defensive alliance with the Kingdom of Sweden-Norway. Crowe was correct in supposing that he had "reason to believe the importance of the subject (Finmark) did not escape his Lordship's (Palmerston's) notice" as early as 1836.¹³³ The Palmerston Government's success in exploiting the Finmark situation, combined with the "Great Armament" for an 1856 campaign in the Baltic, illustrates that events in these theatres could assume different and far more important roles than those initially envisioned by planners including Graham, Clarendon, and Napoleon III, whose previous efforts to woo Sweden-Norway had proved unsuccessful.

Even the best-laid antebellum plans hatched in London and Paris afforded considerable discretion to naval commanders on distant stations. One-way delays in communication between London and the White Sea could reach two months, leaving Ommanney to campaign largely on

¹³² LBK/14 [July 4th, 1854] (NMM).

¹³³ FO 881/494 [May 23rd, 1855] (NA).

the basis of his original orders.¹³⁴ Delays in communication were even more pronounced in the Pacific Theatre, where the instructions received by British and French commanders were strikingly vague. Rear-Admiral David Price and the British Royal Navy's Pacific Station were furnished with a general circular addressed to "the several naval commanders-in-chief on foreign stations" commanding them to cooperate with French forces in protecting "the interests of the subjects and commerce" of both states.¹³⁵ Price's French counterpart in the Western Pacific, Rear-Admiral Febvrier Despointes, also received instructions that, although "*assez vagues*" (quite vague), ordered him to protect commerce while leaving to his discretion the possibility of joint action with Anglo-French forces assigned to Chinese and East Indian waters.¹³⁶ The commander of France's "Division of Réunion and Indochina," Rear-Admiral Adolphe Laguerre, was eager to assist by engaging Russian forces, but was unable to quickly concentrate his widely scattered warships and simultaneously monitor unrest in China.¹³⁷ Rear-Admiral James Stirling of Britain's East Indies and China Station, meanwhile, had taken a controversial interest in negotiating with Tokugawa Japan. It was thus left to the combined squadrons of Price and Despointes to employ notably general orders in order to formulate plans for attacking Russia's Pacific forces during the conflict's first season.

Allied war planning for the Pacific was a collection of responses to widely dispersed imperatives. British forces were ordered to defend an expansive array of imperial and commercial interests, but were given few specific instructions concerning how this should be accomplished. Aside from the aforementioned circular requiring him to protect the interest of British subjects and commerce, cooperate with French forces, and exercise caution when approaching Russian warships,¹³⁸ the communications that Price received in early 1854 from Britain's Admiralty were task-oriented. Price's journal indicates he was compelled to track specific Russian warships en route to the Pacific, deliver supplies to an arctic expedition, discourage an American annexation of Hawai'i (the Sandwich Islands), suppress possible

¹³⁴ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 31.

¹³⁵ ADM 2/1611 [February 24th, 1854] (NA).

¹³⁶ Erulin, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. "Les Opérations dans le Pacifique pendant la Guerre de Crimée 1854-1856." (Unspecified Thesis/Dissertation, L'École Navale (à Brest), 1933-1934), 11.

¹³⁷ BB4 684 213 [Received: November 29th, 1854] (SHD).

¹³⁸ ADM 2/1611 [February 24th, 1854] (NA).

Russian privateering off California, and monitor serious domestic unrest in Chile and Peru.¹³⁹ Despointes, meanwhile, was also required to attend to matters in Peru.¹⁴⁰ The French Rear-Admiral, even more so than Price, continually received alarming reports of Russian “corsaires” off San Francisco, Hawai’i, and even Chile.¹⁴¹ Acting in consultation but with Price as the senior officer, the British and French Rear-Admirals thus formulated a plan to wage war in the Pacific Region. Their combined squadrons would rendezvous in Honolulu, Hawaii after detaching warships to cruise off South America and California. The rendezvous, in turn, would be followed by an assault on Petropavlovsk designed to destroy Russian ships sheltering there and secure Anglo-French whaling operations in the Northern Pacific.¹⁴²

The assault on Petropavlovsk was hampered by a lack of reinforcements from Chinese waters, where Rear-Admirals Laguerre’s and Stirling’s plans quickly diverged. Laguerre preferred to concentrate his scattered forces in order to defend French concessions in Shanghai, which Stirling had left defenceless against what Laguerre assumed to be nearby Russian warships.¹⁴³ Stirling, on the other hand, confidentially reported to Sir James Graham that the Crimean War was an attractive opportunity to approach an isolationist Tokugawa Japan.¹⁴⁴ Instead of deferring to Britain’s East Asian plenipotentiary and Hong Kong Governor Sir John Bowring, Stirling ordered his squadron to enter into what became a complex series of negotiations with Japanese officials. The British Rear-Admiral sought to convince the Japanese to prohibit Russian warships from accessing Japanese ports, but instead obtained a full-fledged diplomatic convention ‘opening’ Nagasaki and Hakodate to Royal Navy warships.¹⁴⁵ French warships were not mentioned in the Convention, and French Minister to China Alphonse de Bourboulon felt it would be degrading to accept passage on a British ship and thus appear “as the humble protégé of a great foreign Power.”¹⁴⁶ At any rate, Bourboulon, Sir John Bowring, and Rear-Admiral Laguerre were fully occupied with the Taiping Rebellion raging in China, not to

¹³⁹ ADM 50/260 [Multiple Dates] (NA).

¹⁴⁰ BB2 332 133 [September 29th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴¹ BB4 682: 224, 671, and 759 respectively [Multiple Dates] (SHD).

¹⁴² Erulin, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. “Les Opérations dans le Pacifique pendant la Guerre de Crimée 1854-1856.” (Unspecified Thesis/Dissertation, L’École Navale (à Brest), 1933-1934), 12.

¹⁴³ BB4 684 174 and 193 [June 14th, 1854 and November 3rd, 1854, respectively] (SHD).

¹⁴⁴ ADM 1/5657 [October 27th, 1854] (NA) and Fox, Grace. “The Anglo-Japanese Convention of 1854.” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1941), 413.

¹⁴⁵ FO 881/541 [October 5th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁴⁶ Sims, Richard. *French Policy Towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan, 1854-1895*. (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998), 15.

mention other concerns such as suppressing piracy, defending Hong Kong, and repairing the grounded French frigate *Jeanne d'Arc*.¹⁴⁷ Coordinated war planning involving Allied vessels in Chinese waters would thus have to wait.

Hong Kong was not the only British possession to undertake frantic preparations against Russian assault in early 1854. The Falkland Islands, Vancouver Island, and New South Wales and Victoria in modern Australia also strengthened their defences and appealed to London for additional protection.¹⁴⁸ British possessions in the Indian Subcontinent administered by the East India Company, however, hoped for exactly the opposite outcome. India's Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, hoped that British Indian forces would not be committed to the Crimean War and would instead be held in reserve for "our [British India's] own fights."¹⁴⁹ Dalhousie found a ready ally in Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control until March, 1855. Wood seconded Dalhousie's March, 1854 opinion that "there is no ground left for believing that Russia separated by enormous tracts and by many wild tribes from the sources of her military power, could by (any) possibility succeed against the British power in the East."¹⁵⁰ Wood did concede that it was possible for Russia to attempt to indirectly cause "annoyance" from afar, but described himself as "an infidel" when it came to widely-held fears that Russian forces were marching towards British India.¹⁵¹ When Dalhousie asked Wood for guidance on January 18th, 1854 on whether "to keep the sword in the scabbard and the anchors down" or prepare for war, Wood reiterated that he could not believe Russia was capable of invading India.¹⁵² The Board of Control's President did advise his Governor-General to seek closer ties with Afghan tribes, but only in view of securing India's Northwest Frontier from the indirect effects of long-distance harassment rather than invasion.¹⁵³

Wood and Dalhousie were continually pressed to defend their views from opposing diplomats and cabinet members, including Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon and Lord John

¹⁴⁷ BB4 684 193 [Received: November 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴⁸ Stone, Ian R. "The Falkland Islands and the Crimean War." *The War Correspondent (The Journal of the Crimean War Research Society)*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (April, 2001), 43; CO 305/5 [May 16th, 1854] (NA); and Lack, Clem *Russian Ambitions in the Pacific: Australian War Scares of the Nineteenth Century*. (Brisbane, Australia: Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1969), 438.

¹⁴⁹ Alder, Garry J. "India and the Crimean War." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1973), 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 16.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 22.

¹⁵² *Ibid*.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 23.

Russell, Minister Without Portfolio. Sir Hamilton Seymour, Britain's Ambassador to St. Petersburg, was concerned about possible Russian wartime threats to India a year prior to the Crimean War.¹⁵⁴ a more public outcry was raised by works such as John McNeill's *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*, an 1836 pamphlet republished as a book in 1854.¹⁵⁵ Dalhousie was sensitive to his colleagues' Russophobia, especially when it came to acting on Wood's proposals for diplomatic outreach to Afghan rulers. Although the Governor-General did not believe that British India would enjoy friendly relations with the Afghans or their rulers "for generations to come," he was "sensible that in Europe great value and weight would be attached to the establishment of full relations" and promised to "heartily endeavour to establish them."¹⁵⁶ Dalhousie assembled a team of Central Asia experts in February and March of 1854 in order to examine British policy in the region and potential Russian threats. They agreed that any Russian invasion would flounder in 'deserts, mountains, and vast spaces' of Afghanistan and Central Asia,¹⁵⁷ thus providing the Governor-General with further ammunition in his fight to separate India from Britain's war effort.

Preserving India's non-involvement also required the neutrality of Qajar Persia, which Lords Clarendon and Russell came to believe should participate in the struggle against Russia. Wood, however, succeeded in convincing Clarendon that "we shall fight Russia much more easily" in Afghanistan.¹⁵⁸ Clarendon, in turn, defeated Russell's proposals for involving Persia.¹⁵⁹ Wood and Dalhousie's 1854 efforts ultimately ensured that British India's contribution to the Crimean War was limited to three regiments. This pleased even Russell, who had argued that "we ought certainly to bring our Indian resources to bear, but not our material resources" because "transport of men and horses to the scene of action would be very expensive."¹⁶⁰ The British Cabinet also discussed intervening in Circassia and elsewhere in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia, but failed to heed Russell's admonition that "whatever efforts it may be determined to make, let us by all means make them at once."¹⁶¹ Ottoman Turkish forces

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ McNeill, John. *Progress and Present Position of Russia in the East*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1854).

¹⁵⁶ Alder, Garry J. "India and the Crimean War." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1973), 23.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵⁹ PRO 30/22/11C [April 27th, 1854] (NA)

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

and Muslim rebels there faced Russian armies alone, resulting in defeats including the fall of the Kars Fortress in November, 1855.¹⁶²

Campaigns in the Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia added to the Czarist Empire's difficult task of planning for war on a continental, if not global, scale. Nicholas I's Government was forced to take a very different approach than that of Britain and France because the latter powers' maritime superiority allowed them to choose, albeit not always wisely, when and how to engage Russian forces. In a striking reversal of the conditions that saw the failure of Napoleon Bonaparte's 1812 invasion, Russia's vast territorial holdings constrained its war efforts despite the large armies at its disposal. Czar Nicholas lamented in a June, 1854 letter: "God alone knows" what enemy fleets intend to do—"we are thereby prevented from deploying our troops as we ourselves would wish...caution invites us to be prepared for everything."¹⁶³ These preparations began in earnest as the outbreak of hostilities became imminent, but had to overcome decades of bureaucratic incompetence in the span of a few months. As the Czar added in May, 1854, he "could not help regretting that time has gone by to no purpose, since all of this should have been foreseen earlier, and more reliable measures could then have been taken."¹⁶⁴

The Imperial Russian Army's troop strength in 1854 dwarfed even the combined total of Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶⁵ Much like Allied naval forces in the Pacific, however, Russia's military was obligated to deploy much of its strength far from theatres of actual combat and plan accordingly. Half a million Russian troops were needed to maintain order in the Empire's countryside, and another 200,000 controlled Poland while watching Austria and Prussia.¹⁶⁶ Subtracting the 150,000 soldiers deployed in the Caucasus, this left 270,000 to defend St. Petersburg and the Baltic and only 60,000 to do the same in the Crimean Peninsula.¹⁶⁷ Only one of the Russian Navy's 46 "battalions" was allocated to the Pacific, compared to 27 in the Baltic,¹⁶⁸ and local authorities in both the Pacific and White Sea scrambled to strengthen their

¹⁶² Badem, Candan. *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)*. (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 326.

¹⁶³ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 20.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Baumgart, Winfried. *The Crimean War, 1853-1856*. (London, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 63, 69, and 78.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid* and Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "Crimean War (Volume II)." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 1.

¹⁶⁸ Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 54.

few regular troops with whomever and whatever was available. This meant that Russia's Navy played a mixed role: moored warships, naval cannon, and seamen were instrumental in defending ports such as Petropavlovsk, but such defence was necessary because no fleets or squadrons were "in readiness" to engage Allied warships at sea.¹⁶⁹

Russian leaders exhibited tremendously varied responses to the threat of Allied maritime assaults outside the Black Sea. Finland's Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief after March of 1855, Friedrich Wilhelm Berg, was described by Russia's War Minister in May, 1854 as 'waiting day and night for Napier' while 'jumping back and forth like a squirrel.'¹⁷⁰ Governor-General of Eastern Siberia Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov, in contrast, enthusiastically embraced the conflict as a pretext for securing and expanding Russian possessions and influence in East Asia, especially at the expense of a faltering Chinese Empire. Berg's nominal predecessor throughout 1854, Prince Alexander Sergeyevich Menshikov, was geographically removed from the responsibilities of these offices; he instead held a command in the Crimean Peninsula and undertook an infamous diplomatic mission to Constantinople (Istanbul). Menshikov's deputies were therefore responsible for preparing to withstand an Anglo-French assault along the Russian Empire's lengthy Baltic coastline.¹⁷¹

The first inclination of Russia's most aggressive commanders was to position divisions of sailing battleships in the two largest entrances to the Baltic: the Great Belt and Sound (Öresund). A plan developed by Prince Eugene Golitsyn then called for concentrating all of Russia's steamships at the Swedish port of Gothenburg in order to tow whichever division was not directly engaged to the rear of an attacking Allied fleet.¹⁷² Prince Menshikov reviewed this plan and objected to it for three reasons. Menshikov argued that dividing the Russian fleet would weaken it and that historical precedent from Battles such as Aboukir Bay (the Nile) and Trafalgar indicated that flanking warships did not arrive in time to aid the remainder of fleets.¹⁷³ His highness also wrote that "we cannot rely on Denmark and Sweden" because "in all

¹⁶⁹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 6.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 126.

¹⁷¹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 6.

¹⁷² Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. "Eastern War 1853-1856." (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 1.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

likelihood the enemy will hide in their ports and receive supplies from them.”¹⁷⁴ These views led Menshikov to conclude that Russia should concentrate on defending the Gulf of Finland and building coastal telegraph lines.¹⁷⁵

In December, 1853, Menshikov was directed by Grand Prince Konstantin Nikolaevich to review another memorandum, this one written by the Czar. Nicholas I began by outlining the goals of a “possible appearance of England and France’s united fleets in the Baltic,” which he believed “could be” to entice the Russian fleet into battle at sea and destroy it; to attack Revel, Sweaborg, and Cronstadt; or to undertake a landing in Finland or the Baltic provinces.¹⁷⁶ His Imperial Russian Majesty wanted to know whether and where the Allied fleet could be met or if it was more reasonable not to send the Russian fleet into battle “until the enemy suffers losses in attacks on our parts.”¹⁷⁷ Realizing that “the advantage of steamships will deprive us from hoping to win with sail ships, not to mention the greater numbers of the enemy,” Czar Nicholas debated the merits of stationing different divisions at Cronstadt and Sweaborg and supposed that the Russian fleet should be placed between Cronstadt and Cape Lisily Nos to the North in anticipation of an unsuccessful Allied assault on Cronstadt.¹⁷⁸ In response to his Emperor’s thoughts, Menshikov sent a special note indicating that Nicholas’ suggested placement of the Russian fleet outside Cronstadt “impossible due to the lack of depth” and that “the goal of the Baltic fleet must be to shelter its ports” or “defeat the enemy if he divides his forces or is weaker.”¹⁷⁹

Grand Prince Konstantin Nikolaevich, this time acting on his own initiative at the beginning of 1854, sought the counsel of two trusted imperial confidants, then-General Adjutants Frederick Maurice von Heyden and Fyodor (Fedor) Petrovich Litke. Both men held important commands in the Baltic, and agreed that the Russian fleet should entirely concentrated at Sweaborg. Von Heyden perceptively argued that “at present neither Revel nor the Baltic Port (Port Baltic, now Paldiski) nor Hango offer a safe haven to our fleet” and emphasized naval disasters including Copenhagen, Navarino, and Sinope, in which an anchored fleet offered battle

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856.*” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 2.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856.*” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 2.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

while not completely protected by fortifications on shore.¹⁸⁰ Litke began by categorically stating that “the superiority of the enemy’s forces will limit us to defense,” adding that “good chances of success” came only when Russian warships outnumbered Anglo-French ones by at least 150 percent.¹⁸¹ Litke favored compensating for naval weakness by reinforcing Cronstadt, opining in February, 1854, that:

“Having prepared for a reinforced defense at Kronstadt we have nothing to fear for on this point. If the enemy attempts to attack Kronstadt, he will likely be repelled with losses on his side. At that time the enemy will be in disorder and our fleet will attack. If, despite everything, the Kronstadt divisions’ path to Sveaborg is cut off by the Allied fleet, our role will be come even more passive. At such a time we should turn our attention exclusively to the defense of Kronstadt. The fleet should be placed within the forts’ shelter in a position where it would be protected by the shallow waters. What remains is to take measures against an attack to our left flank by the enemy’s small and flat-bottomed vessels, equipped with machines for throwing Congreve rockets.”¹⁸²

The sorry state of Russia’s oceangoing navy meant that flotilla craft, especially small gunboats, seemed a natural choice for defensive operations in the Baltic. They were greatly feared by Britain’s commander in the Gulf of Bothnia, James Hanway Plumridge, due to his experience during the Napoleonic Wars as a junior officer on the frigate *Melpomene*. Aptly named for the Ancient Greek Muse of Tragedy, the *Melpomene* was shot to pieces by Danish gunboats after being rendered motionless by a lack of wind.¹⁸³ As Sir James Graham had icily pointed out to Sir Charles Napier, however, steam propulsion had freed British warships from their dependence on wind propulsion,¹⁸⁴ while the same was not true for wind-dependent Russian vessels. Manoeuvres led Nicholas I to conclude that the “uselessness (of his Cronstadt flotilla) was obvious,”¹⁸⁵ and the Czar was especially furious at “nonsense” pre-war assurances that Russia’s Baltic gunboat fleet was “excellent.”¹⁸⁶ Proposals for converting merchant vessels to gunships were also made, but rejected on the grounds that this would merely afford the enemy an

¹⁸⁰ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856*.” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 4.

¹⁸¹ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856*.” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 5.

¹⁸² *Ibid*.

¹⁸³ Laughton, Sir John Knox and Andrew Lambert. “Sir James Hanway Plumridge” in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22408>>, 1.

¹⁸⁴ ADM 1/5625 HA714 [May 20th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁸⁵ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 7.

¹⁸⁶ Zaionchokovsky, A. [Russian-Language]. “From the Memoirs of Adjutant-General N.A. Arkas.” *The Historical Messenger*, Vol. 84 (April, 1901), 130.

opportunity to easily appropriate Russian cannon.¹⁸⁷ Russia's Baltic gunboats instead performed useful tasks such as laying mines and removing navigational beacons, both of which succeeded in bothering Allied fleets in the region.

Many coastal fortifications in the Baltic had initially been constructed by Sweden when it ruled Finland, meaning they were designed to operate in conjunction with fleets of gunboats or, in the case of Sweaborg, to resist the landward attack of a large army. Imperial Russian authorities initially planned to reconstruct and augment these coastal batteries and fortresses, but later changed course and abandoned outlying positions in favour of concentrating their forces around major cities and fortress complexes, especially Sweaborg and Cronstadt. The results of this shift in policy were dramatically illustrated in late August, 1854, when Swedish-built fortresses at Hangö (Hanko) were destroyed by their own defenders.¹⁸⁸ Russia's incomplete fortress complex at Bomarsund in the Åland Islands postdated Swedish occupation and presented a different strategic problem in the absence of naval support. Czarist scholarship concludes that Russian officials, including Emperor Nicholas, realized that it would only be a question of how many days the fortress could hold out¹⁸⁹ in spite of the Czar's earnest desire to rescue Bomarsund with gunboats.¹⁹⁰

The defenses of Helsinki and St. Petersburg were in far better shape, especially because natural features such as shallow, rocky, and narrow approaches worked in their favor. Despite its formidable surroundings and reputation, though, Sweaborg was not immune from the problems facing Russia's other fortresses outside Cronstadt. "Materially," wrote one Russian Rear-Admiral, Sweaborg "belong(s) to the last century."¹⁹¹ The opinion was seconded by another Russian flag officer, who added that "it is difficult to repair a fortress that was left unattended for over 40 years...and bring it to a state in which our fleet (could be) safe from the enemy."¹⁹² Frantic reconstruction of and additions to Sweaborg's defenses in early 1854 may not have

¹⁸⁷ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 9.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 30-31 and Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 202.

¹⁸⁹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 72.

¹⁹⁰ Zaionchokovsky, A. [Russian-Language]. "From the Memoirs of Adjutant-General N.A. Arkas." *The Historical Messenger*, Vol. 84 (April, 1901), 128.

¹⁹¹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 159.

¹⁹² Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "Crimean War (Volume II)." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 4.

succeeded in transforming the island fortresses into a ‘Gibraltar of the North,’ but did suffice to discourage both British and French commanders from advocating its immediate assault with the means at their disposal in 1854.¹⁹³ This came much to the relief of Czar Nicholas and Grand Duke Constantine alike, who received anonymous reports that the British could take both Sweaborg and Helsingfors in 24 hours if they so desired.¹⁹⁴ Sweaborg’s defenses, along with those of Cronstadt and Reval, were also augmented by underwater mines¹⁹⁵ and gradually linked by electric and optical telegraph systems.¹⁹⁶ Although the military situations of these three major harbors are extensively discussed in the following chapters, it is important to remember that the Russians considered 21 out of 32 Finnish cities and towns to be open to attack by Allied squadrons.¹⁹⁷

The entire course of the Allies’ 1854 campaign demonstrated that small Finnish coastal towns would bear the brunt of British efforts in the Baltic. Admittedly, Bomarsund had been taken, Sweaborg bombarded, and Cronstadt threatened by war’s end in March, 1856. Yet the most intense destruction of property, a “disastrous failure,”¹⁹⁸ and ‘massacre’ all occurred in small towns far from major cities, fortresses, and senior commanders. The same dynamic, albeit on a much smaller scale, characterized the Crimean War in the White Sea. The province’s capital and principal port, Archangel (Arkhangelsk), by all accounts possessed a substantial garrison numbering in the thousands along with multiple artillery batteries. Other northern towns and monastery complexes were not as militarily fortunate. Archangel’s Governor, Roman Platonovich Boyle, could do little to prepare for naval assaults beyond implementing a declaration of martial law and deploying reinforcements that were modest at best and nonexistent at worst. Kola, Russian Lapland’s regional capital on the Barents Sea, for instance, was informed that it was “impossible” for the garrison at Archangel to send troops and cannon as reinforcements.¹⁹⁹ The Governor did promise to deliver rifles, gunpowder, and other supplies in order to arm the “few hundred volunteers” and seventy retired soldiers that formed Kola’s

¹⁹³ ADM 1/5645 HA275 [September 13th, 1854] (NA) and BB4 733 258 [September 1st, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁹⁴ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 4.

¹⁹⁵ PRO 22/68/4 [June 25th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁹⁶ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 11.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 20.

¹⁹⁸ BB4 733 109 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁹⁹ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Pages 2-3

garrison.²⁰⁰ In a scene repeated all along the White Sea coast in early 1854, Kola's inhabitants were instructed in March of that year to "think for themselves what ships may visit them and what could prevent them from repelling the unwelcome visitors."²⁰¹ Just as its city provost and inhabitants had feared, Kola did not escape British notice and was burned to the ground in August, 1854.²⁰²

Russian authorities in the White Sea did enjoy one substantial advantage in the form of a considerable network of clergy and fortified monasteries with centuries-old ties to the region. The Russian Orthodox Bishop of Archangel, Varlaam Uspenski, received intelligence reports from outlying ecclesiastical establishments detailing the movements of Allied warships.²⁰³ The most notable contribution to war planning and defense, however, came from Archimandrite Alexander, head of the Solovetsky (i/o) Island Monastery. Alexander received news that martial law had been declared in April, 1854, and immediately took it upon himself to organize his Monastery's defenses.²⁰⁴ This process was not quite as incongruous as it sounds, given the institution's long history of defending Russian power in the area from earlier Czarist enemies, including Swedes and Germanic orders of crusading knights. This history was actually reflected in the weaponry at the monks' disposal, which included 16th century pole axes and spears covered with "layers of rust" in addition to more modern firearms and artillery.²⁰⁵ In conjunction with the Monastery's "massive" stone walls and a tiny battery of field artillery, these preparations and Alexander's leadership sufficed to withstand a July bombardment by *HMS Miranda* and *Eurydice* under Erasmus Ommanney. The British captain later recalled that, during negotiations preceding the bombardment, "the Archimandrite acknowledge himself to be the sole director of military operations."²⁰⁶ Even in his subsequent attempts to emphasize the Monastery's military character, Ommanney could only point to the former British Consul at Archangel's assurances that 80 soldiers and 8 cannon had been dispatched from Archangel prior

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 3 and Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 5.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*.

²⁰² ADM 1/5639 CAP O20 [September 1st, 1854] (NA) and Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 7.

²⁰³ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 1, Page 1.

²⁰⁴ XHIS/3 English Translation (Translator Unknown) of a Russian account of events on [July 6th, 1854] (NMM), 1.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 3 and Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. "*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*," No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854].

²⁰⁶ Additional Manuscript 41349, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

to the bombardment.²⁰⁷ Such figures instead made the Russian prelate's achievements appear even more impressive and, within a matter of months, they were matched by events much further to the East.

The Crimean War in East Asia occurred at a moment when the Russian Empire was squarely in the midst of establishing and then consolidating its control of key areas in the region. Russians annexation of the Amur River Valley in the 1850s has traditionally been presented by Czarist, Soviet, and older Western scholarship as the inevitable culmination of Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov's tireless individual efforts.²⁰⁸ The reality of this process is considerably more complex. Muravyov (v'ev, etc.) was undoubtedly instrumental when it came to orchestrating Russian success in the region, but only because he was able to maneuver within Russia's Byzantine political system and exploit circumstances to maximum advantage. Muravyov owed the Governor-Generalship of Eastern Siberia to Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, who was convinced by the then-Minister of the Interior to use her influence with Nicholas I to arrange Muravyov's 1847 appointment.²⁰⁹ The Czar's choice elicited immediate reactions, not all of them related to Muravyov's relatively young age of 38. One of Muravyov's political rivals remarked "well, we will have a war with China," and attributed its absence to the "apathy and stagnation of the Chinese Empire."²¹⁰ Britain joined China in the new, committedly Anglophobic Governor-General's sights, and his policies were also directed against the "threatening and selfish English,"²¹¹ to whom he derisively referred as "the islanders."²¹² In keeping with Alexander Herzen's aphorism that a Governor's power 'increases in geometric progression in provinces like...Siberia,'²¹³ Muravyov sought to firmly establish Russian control in Eastern Siberia and the Pacific before the British Empire did.

Muravyov's Anglophobia and initiatives predated the Crimean War, but they immediately took center stage in a political struggle that was already raging in St. Petersburg. Foreign Minister Count Karl Nesselrode, along with Finance Minister Fedor Vronchenko and

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3-4.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

²¹⁰ Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. "Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky." (Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1955), 114.

²¹¹ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume II)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 122-124.

²¹² Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 118.

²¹³ Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. "Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky." (Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1955), 126.

the latter's predecessor Yegor Kankrin, joined other influential politicians in opposing any moves that could conceivably threaten the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk.²¹⁴ China's first treaty with a European state, the Nerchinsk agreement denied Russia access to the Amur River and its northern basin. This was especially unfavourable to the Czarist Empire because, as Muravyov emphasized to Nicholas I, the Amur was "the only river flowing from Siberia into the Pacific Ocean."²¹⁵ Nesselrode and his like-minded colleagues, on the other hand, deployed several arguments against potentially disturbing the region's *status quo*. Finance Minister Kankrin was reluctant to "damage" Russo-Chinese relations and the cross-border trade that accompanied them.²¹⁶ Nesselrode, meanwhile, employed the metaphor of untying a net to describe the possibility of convicts and exiles escaping to the Pacific via the Amur.²¹⁷ Muravyov and his outnumbered supporters, including (pre-1852) Minister of the Interior Count Lev Alekseevich Perovsky and the previously-mentioned Count Menshikov, countered with their own economic and geopolitical arguments while playing on Nicholas' fear of Siberian separatism. Yet these efforts were only one component of a larger effort to reverse Nicholas I's December, 1846 characterization of the Amur as an unnavigable and therefore "useless" river.²¹⁸ The main advantage enjoyed by the expansionist camp was a geographical factor mentioned earlier: distance. Muravyov and his subordinate, naval officer and explorer Grennady (i/ii) Ivanovich Nevelskoy, were free to act aggressively and interpret vague mandates such as the Czar's directive that "*a bon entendeur, peu de paroles*," or 'to a good listener there are few words.'²¹⁹

Establishing and then maintaining control over distant Pacific territories during the early 1850s was a four-step process for Russia, and the products of first and fourth steps proved immensely helpful during the Crimean War. The first step was exploration. This was accomplished through Nevelskoy's voyages, which revealed critical geographical details relating

²¹⁴ Paine, Sarah C. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 36 and Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121.

²¹⁵ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 211.

²¹⁶ Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 34.

²¹⁷ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 122.

²¹⁸ Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 105.

²¹⁹ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 171.

to the Amur's mouth, Sakhalin Island, and the Strait of Tartary that eluded Anglo-French forces in 1854 and beyond. The second step involved convincing Nicholas I that such efforts were worth supporting. During Muravyov's 1853 interview, the Russian Emperor pointed to a map of the Amur and remarked "very good, but to protect this territory, I would have to send military forces from here," shifting his gaze to Cronstadt.²²⁰ That same interview, however, ended with Nicholas laughing and instructing his Governor-General to "go on" with a planned expedition after Muravyov convinced him that it was possible to defend the area with local Siberian forces.²²¹ The Czar's personal approval of the third step, in turn, shielded Nevelskoy and Muravyov from their political opponents in St. Petersburg by legitimizing their initiatives, often after the fact. The fourth and last step entailed supplying and defending posts once they were established. Although its staple trade in furs had been declining for some time,²²² the Russian America company was of great assistance in both tasks during the Crimean conflict. Provisioning reinforced garrisons at distant posts such as Petropavlovsk was hardly a triumphal success, as is evident in an excerpt from a letter by Kamchatka Governor and Rear-Admiral Vasily Zavoyko in which he refers to "facing death from hunger and other things."²²³ Yet even a fragile supply line provided for a Russian force sufficient to repel an Allied amphibious assault in August and September of that year.

Preparations for the Crimean War in East Asia fit seamlessly with proposals that Muravyov had been articulating since his appointment in 1847. These included strengthening fortifications at Petropavlovsk, placing Kamchatka under the military governorship of a rear-admiral,²²⁴ and concentrating Russia's available forces near the Amur's mouth. Despite the objections of Nevelskoy, the latter objective also entailed withdrawing from more exposed posts on Sakhalin Island. The withdrawal was supported by Russia's overall naval commander in the Pacific, Vice-Admiral Efimy (ii) Putyatin, who had left Cronstadt with a small squadron in January, 1853.²²⁵

²²⁰ Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. "Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky." (Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1955), 223.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Gibson, James R. *Feeding the Russian Fur Trade: Provisionment of the Okhotsk Seaboard and the Kamchatka Peninsula, 1639-1856*. (Madison, Wisconsin: the University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 224.

²²³ Letter of Rear-Admiral Vasily Zavoiko to N.E. Lozhechnikov [1854] (Private Collection).

²²⁴ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 218-222.

²²⁵ Hiroshi, Mitani. (David Noble, Translator and Nihon Rekishi Gakkai, Ed.). *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokoyo: International House of Japan for the International Library Trust, 2006), 157.

Putyatin was charged with “establishing political and trade relations” with Japan,²²⁶ and had been engaged in complex rounds of negotiations with the decentralized Tokugawa bureaucracy since August of 1853. The Russian mission did not immediately attain its objective, but led Japanese decision makers to consider that “the Russians are likely to be every bit as persistent as they have been polite.”²²⁷ Putyatin opposed Muravyov’s designs on the Amur and Sakhalin Island, and the Crimean War provided a convenient pretext for the Vice-Admiral to order the latter’s evacuation in order to curry favor with the Japanese and conserve thinly-spread Russian forces.²²⁸ Putyatin could not interfere with Muravyov’s efforts on the Siberian mainland, however, despite the Governor-General’s angry reflection that “Putiatin is really not a bad man, but it is a pity that he has meddled in the Amur affairs, which he may damage.”²²⁹ Russo-Japanese negotiations continued into 1855 as the bulk of Russia’s half-dozen frigates, armed transports, and smaller warships left Japanese waters in order to ferry reinforcements to Petropavlovsk, and assist in the defense of that port. Ships not performing these services took shelter at the port of Nikolaevsk, founded at by Nevelskoy in 1850 in fulfillment of Muravyov’s 1849 wish that “at the mouth of the Amur, instead of a (potential) British fortress, (there) stood a Russian fortress, just like the ones at the port of Petropavlovsk.”²³⁰ Russian planning for the Crimean War in East Asia and the Pacific was thus complete, and results were left to await the arrival of Anglo-French warships.

The initial plans of all the belligerents in the Crimean War varied tremendously, from large-scale assaults on fortified cities to the improvised preparations of a monastery on a remote White Sea island. When it came to the war plans of Anglo-French naval forces in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific, a few succeeded brilliantly, more failed miserably, and most were frustratingly indecisive. None sufficed to dispel Alfred Thayer Mahan’s contention that the British were accustomed “to meeting difficulties as they arise, instead of by foresight” and to

²²⁶ Franz, Edgar. *Philipp Franz von Siebold and Russian Policy and Action on Opening Japan to the West in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. (Munich, Germany: Iudicium Verlag, 2005), 59.

²²⁷ Hiroshi, Mitani. (David Noble, Translator and Nihon Rekishi Gakkai, Ed.). *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokoyo: International House of Japan for the International Library Trust, 2006), 159.

²²⁸ Lensen, George A. *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations 1697-1875*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 306.

²²⁹ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. “*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*.” (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 349-350.

²³⁰ Paine, Sarah C. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 37.

learning “by hard experience rather than by reflection or premeditation.”²³¹ Even if these assessments overstated the case, complex wartime imperatives required more than plans hatched by select politicians or even extraordinary exertions by officers and their crews. They required precisely the type of strategic thinking that was conspicuously absent from the instructions of French Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos and Sir James Graham to their naval commanders. Allied political leaders and their advisors, not to mention their Russian adversaries, were challenged to overcome a lack of strategic planning institutions and useful literature on naval strategy and historical operations. As an anonymous author wrote under the pseudonym T124:

“There were plenty of naval histories, but they were mainly narratives. They told of the glorious exploits of the Royal Navy and of how they happened. What they did not tell was why they happened, and whether they policy that brought them about was well or ill-conceived.”²³²

British planning, in particular, improved as the Crimean War progressed. Yet these improvements ultimately came to late to halt Russian expansion in East Asia or allow the fleets dispatched to the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific to achieve decisive successes in 1854.

²³¹ Till, Geoffrey “Introduction: British Naval Thinking: a Contradiction in Terms?” in Till, Geoffrey (Ed.) *The Development of British Naval Thinking: Essays in Memory of Bryan McLaren Ranft*. (Routledge: London and New York, 2006), 1.

²³² *Ibid*, 8.

Chapter Four

War in the Baltic, 1854

Several months prior to the Crimean War's outbreak, British Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, reached a straightforward conclusion: "in the event of war between this Country and Russia, the Baltic must become a theatre of active operations."¹ The entire Crimean conflict, in fact, was precisely timed by British leaders eager to cripple the Russian warships they thought were still anchored off Revel (Tallinn), Estonia.² The Allied attack on the Russia's Black Sea stronghold at Sevastopol, on the other hand, was designed as a grand raid and not a protracted siege: in the Clarendon's words, 'one blow in the Baltic was worth two in the Black Sea.'³ Planning for that blow commenced long before the war's outbreak,⁴ and fused with concerns that Russian warships would slip undetected into the North Sea and attack British and French coastlines.⁵ Both sides were disappointed that, with the exception of the siege of Bomarsund in the Aland Islands, decisive engagements proved elusive. Allied plans for assaulting Russia's principal fortifications and cities, however imaginative or even eccentric, never came to fruition. Neither did Czar Nicholas I's fervent desire to destroy the British and French warships cruising within site of his capital. An increasingly impatient British public and press were instead left to watch the most powerful fleet ever assembled conduct a frustrating series of coastal raids and contentious blockade captures until December, 1854, when ice and weather conditions ended a campaign season that began in April.

Ultimately, to quote one contemporary publication, "despite all appearances, (Admiral and Baltic commander Sir Charles) Napier really did accomplish something."⁶ British intervention in the region, combined with Russian diplomatic pressure, forced Denmark and Sweden-Norway to adopt a neutral position that yielded to an alliance with Britain and France by late 1855. The importance of coherent strategic planning and careful navigation became apparent to Allied decision-makers, as did the necessity of gunboats and mortar vessels designed to assault

¹ FO 73/259 [February 9th, 1854] (NA).

² Lambert, Andrew. *The Crimean War: British Grand Strategy, 1853-56*. (Manchester, UK and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 74.

³ NAP/2 [April 5th, 1854] (NMM).

⁴ See Chapter Three of this work.

⁵ Halicz, Emanuel [Jane Cave, Translator]. *Danish Neutrality During the Crimean War: Denmark Between the Hammer and the Anvil*. (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1977), 49.

⁶ "The Baltic Fleet and Swedish Co-Operation," *Littell's Living Age*, Vol. 8, No. 559 (February, 1855), 372.

coastal fortifications. Russian leaders, on the other hand, were forced to confront the impotence of their technologically backward fleet and frantically prepare their major fortresses to face the bombardments that would inevitably come once the Allies deployed specialized assault craft in 1855 and, especially, in 1856. Realizing that its exhausted Empire could not keep pace with the preparations of a growing European alliance for expanded fighting in the Baltic and elsewhere, Russia sued for a peace that France was glad to accept. For a conflict ostensibly revolving around great power relations with the Ottoman Empire, the Baltic was an especially important factor in Russian, British, and Swedish-Norwegian decision-making.

Dispatching fleets to the Baltic necessitated locating serviceable warships. The process was delayed in both Britain and France, albeit for different reasons. Napoleon III only approved the formation of a Baltic squadron under Vice-Admiral Alexandre Parseval-Deschênes on February 25th, 1854,⁷ scarcely a month prior to the British and French declarations of war on Russia. French authorities were left scrambling to provide suitable ships, trained crews, adequate winter clothing, sufficient numbers of officers, and replacement ammunition while fretting over consequences of over-hasty armament.⁸ The French Emperor's gift of the Virgin Mary's image to boost morale⁹ could hardly compensate in a military sense for France's inability to dispatch more than one steam-propelled battleship, the 100-gun *Austerlitz*, to the Baltic, along with seven sail of the line, six sailing frigates, and five smaller steam-propelled vessels.¹⁰ Britain experienced similar problems with the combat-readiness of its warships, but possessed a far larger pool of maritime resources than did France or Russia. The Baltic was not a permanent British naval station, and Admiralty head Sir James Graham, was reluctant to take the expensive step of assembling a fleet for deployment there until war with Russia became inevitable.¹¹ Graham nevertheless managed to assemble over a dozen screw propeller driven battleships and coastal defense vessels along with a squadron of sailing battleships and supporting craft, but declined to add gunboats and mortar vessels.¹² Popular hyperbole aside, the high number of propeller-driven steam warships made this battle group the most powerful ever assembled. The

⁷ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L'expédition de Crimée*. (Paris: Librairie D'Amyot, 1858), 231-232.

⁸ BB4 733 54 [April 28th, 1854] (SHD).

⁹ BB4 710 43 [April 19th, 1854] and Battesti, Michèle. "La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 92.

¹⁰ BB4 733 85 [May 20th, 1854] (SHD) and ADM 1/5624 HA137 [June 16th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK. King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 65.

¹² *Ibid*, 360-361.

vulnerable wooden hulls that enclosed these warships' engines and guns, however, did not bode well for their capacity to withstand engagements against shore fortifications firing red-hot projectiles. Debates related to operations involving any type of warship, however, were unlikely to be resolved given the mutual antipathy between Graham and Britain's newly-appointed Baltic Fleet commander, Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier.

Napier's appointment was controversial even though it came by default, and it foreshadowed the poisonous acrimony that characterized the Vice-Admiral's professional relationships throughout the 1854 campaign. The mid-19th century British Navy faced a serious problem: the ranks of its senior officers were clogged with aged veterans of the Napoleonic Wars who had not even been constantly employed, much less seen combat, in decades. In the period spanning Napoleon Bonaparte's 1815 surrender and the 1854 outbreak of the Crimean War, a captain in the Royal Navy consistently faced more than an 80% chance of being unemployed during any given year.¹³ This meant that seniority and 'interest,' or political patronage, too often determined which captains and commanders were selected to lead ships into battle. Sir Charles Napier, for example, had enlisted in 1799 and commanded the rocket bombardment during the Anglo-American War of 1812 that later furnished the American national anthem.¹⁴ By 1854, Napier had successfully overseen an impressive variety of actions against French, Danish, American, Portuguese, and Egyptian forces while advocating in favor of steam propulsion and performing other tasks such as combating piracy. The same lack of respect for authority and civility contributed to his military successes during incidents such as the bombardment of Acre, Syria. However, this also left an extensive trail of political and military enemies in Napier's wake, which soon came to haunt his efforts during the Crimean War.

Sir Charles' penchant for conducting bitter public feuds with politicians and fellow officers had to be overlooked given the lack of other suitable candidates to command a large fleet in 1854. Lord Dundonald was then 79 years old, but was passed over for command because of his perceived lack of restraint rather than his age. As Graham wrote to Queen Victoria, "there is reason to apprehend that he (Dundonald) might deeply commit the force under his command in some desperate enterprise, where the chances of success would not counteract the risk of failure

¹³ Lewis, Michael. *The Navy in Transition 1814-1864: A Social History*. (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965), 48.

¹⁴ Andrew Lambert. "Sir Charles Napier" in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19747>>, 1 and 3.

and of the fatal consequences which might ensue.”¹⁵ Dundonald’s forceful advocacy of chemical warfare attacks on Cronstadt, discussed later in this chapter, did little to dispel this assessment. Graham instead hoped to offer the Baltic command to 72-year-old Sir William Parker, but that Admiral’s failing health frustrated this design.¹⁶ With Sir George Seymour “absent in North America...the choice would seem to fall on Sir Charles Napier,...though this appointment may be open to some objections.”¹⁷ Napier’s appointment was announced on February 25th, 1854, which was too late for him to have any input in selecting the captains he would command. Many of these men already bore an intense personal dislike of Napier from their service with him off Syria in the early 1840s, and were not reticent to share their opinions through correspondence that reached politically-influential figures throughout Britain. Even Napier’s French counterpart, 64-year-old Trafalgar veteran Alexandre Parseval-Deschênes,¹⁸ remarked before meeting Napier that “the dominating character of this Admiral is well-known as well as his desire to be spoken of.”¹⁹ Given what was spoken about him in 1854 and after by the press, politicians, and fellow naval commanders, Napier lived to regret this desire.

Relations between the British Vice-Admiral and his subordinate captains were so strained that observers began to record evidence of serious tension. Parseval-Deschênes wrote approximately a month and a half after joining Napier’s squadron that the British Admiral “has the most indecisive and irresolute character that it is possible to encounter and is only acting for his own benefit. This opinion...is so widely accepted in all of his (Napier’s) squadron that I think it is my duty to speak of this.”²⁰ Noted diarist and socialite Charles Greville also recognized that, towards the end of the Baltic campaign in 1854, Napier was “detested by his officers and they one and all complain that he has been so little adventurous, and maintain that more might have been done. The justness and correctness of this, time will show.”²¹ Greville’s assessment proved oversimplified, and Napier’s legacy remains controversial. Although Napier tenaciously defended

¹⁵ Parker, Charles Stuart. *Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1907), 228.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Taillemite, Etienne. *Dictionnaire des Marins Français*. (Paris, France: Editions Maritimes et d’Outre-Mer, 1982), 260-261.

¹⁹ BB4 733 40 [April 17th, 1854] (SHD).

²⁰ BB4 733 178 [July 21st, 1854] (SHD).

²¹ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 20.

his reputation in the press and Parliament by using both official and private correspondence from the Baltic Campaign of 1854,²² his reputation as a commander suffered irreparable damage. This resulted less from Napier's command decisions and more from inflammatory lack of discretion and penchant for expressing it in writing and public venues such as speeches. Contemporary politicians and more recent historians often quoted captains' criticisms of Napier verbatim rather than critically analyzing their merits.²³ This did little to improve strategic planning during the campaign or the subsequent quality of its related historiography.

The fleets that the British and French dispatched to the Baltic in 1854 suffered additional problems with personnel, namely a lack of trained crews. Although Napier's reluctance to immediately undertake large-scale combat meant that these issues were not obvious to most outside observers, they were glaringly obvious to better informed figures. Aside from a small core of technical specialists, mid-century British warships were not continuously manned when in-between deployments. This had not been a problem in earlier centuries, when unwilling recruits could be forcibly impressed or offered bounties to join the Royal Navy. By the 1850s, however, both options were politically and fiscally inexpedient. Sir James Graham ignored Napier's pleas for offering a bounty to new recruits, which meant that initial reports on the fleet's proceedings contained ominous sub-headings such as "certain ships insufficiently manned and officered."²⁴ Graham was hardly alone in making human resources decisions: his immediate subordinate, First Sea Lord Sir Maurice Berkeley, was also responsible for some of the problems with manning the Baltic fleet. As one retired naval commander indignantly commented after noting Berkeley's requirement that volunteers be taller than five feet eight inches: "Nero fiddled whilst Rome was burning, and by Sir Maurice Berkeley's own statement we learn that he was engaged in measuring the respective heights of our seamen, whilst thousands of his countrymen were dying from overwork."²⁵ French warships confronted a similar lack of officers and men,²⁶ but received reinforcements and did not have to pin their hopes on Graham's unrealistic suggestions that Napier obtain crews and pilots in Sweden-Norway or even Denmark. Drills at

²² See, for example: Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857) and Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, March 13th, 1856. *Hansard's* Vol. 141, CC48-119.

²³ See, for example: Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), Chapter Nine.

²⁴ ADM 1/5624 HA 71 [April 24th, 1854] (NA).

²⁵ Hoseason, John Cochrane. *Remarks on the Late War with Russia: together with Plans for the Attack on Cronstadt, Sweaborg, and Helsingfors*. (London, UK: Edward Stanford, 1857), 58.

²⁶ BB4 733 89 [May 24th, 1854] (SHD).

sea and the rapid attrition of older men drawn from a recently established reserve coast guard system eventually sufficed to create a British fleet capable of navigating with only minor collisions, but, in the words of one contemporary author, “this desultory system, or rather want of a system, became a cause of much embarrassment and expense.”²⁷

The limitations on what even the most powerful warships could achieve without the support of troops and gunboats proved even more embarrassing for a British public accustomed to large-scale naval victories. The most recent British ambassador to St. Petersburg, Sir George Hamilton Seymour, for one, recognized that expectations in Britain ran too high. Seymour did everything he could to persuade his “that the fleet cannot sail on ice and take Cronstadt,” but to no avail.²⁸ The British Cabinet’s determination to limit military expenditures, even during wartime, combined with Sevastopol’s unexpectedly durable resistance meant that a large army and gunboat flotilla could materialize in 1854 only through the intervention of Sweden-Norway. The Swedish government had anticipated a war in the Baltic since February 1853, and its diplomats had been busily negotiating the details of Sweden-Norway and neighboring Denmark’s neutrality during a potential conflict.²⁹ King Oscar I personally assumed control of foreign affairs in July of that year and immediately ordered secret overtures to Denmark concerning a joint declaration of neutrality,³⁰ although negotiations broke down in late 1853 and only came to fruition closer to the Crimean War’s outbreak in 1854. This came just in time for both countries, which were each placed in extremely vulnerable positions by geography and circumstances.

The French, British, and Russian Empires all had historically-based reasons to hope that Sweden-Norway would join their respective war efforts in 1854. The Western Allies could point to Sweden’s centuries-long struggle with Russia for control of the Baltic, which had resulted in Sweden’s 1809 loss of Finland along with Ingria, Estonia, and Livonia a century earlier. Norway, personally united with the Swedish Monarchy in compensation for the latter’s loss of Finland, was still in the midst of a festering dispute with Russia over territory and the rights of indigenous people in the extreme northern region of Finmark (Finnmark). Russia, on the other hand, counted

²⁷ Dodd, George. *Pictorial History of the Russian War, 1854-5-6, with Maps, Plans, and Wood Engravings*. (Edinburgh and London, UK: W. and R. Chambers, 1856), 156.

²⁸ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 10.

²⁹ Jonasson, Axel E. “Swedish Neutrality during the Crimean War.” (San Jose, California. California State College, now University Master’s Thesis, 1970), 21.

³⁰ Cullberg, Albin. *La Politique du Roi Oscar I pendant la Guerre de Crimée: Études Diplomatiques sur les Négociations Secrètes entre les Cabinets de Stockholm, Paris, Saint Pétersbourg et Londres, Les Années 1853-1856*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Författarens Förlag, 1913), 32.

on a tradition of close cooperation in foreign policy between Nicholas I, Oscar I, and the latter's father, Charles XIV.³¹ More ominously for Sweden, though, its close proximity to Finland led the Czarist Government to press for a complete closure of all Swedish ports to any belligerent warships.³² Sweden-Norway's Foreign Minister responded to this demand by emphasizing that it was difficult to lock the doors of a house when one did not have the keys and adding that the British would never respect a defense "based on words."³³ Even a strict declaration of neutrality thus favored Britain and France over Russia, whose fleet could not hope to benefit from replenishment in Swedish ports without having to offer battle to the Allies' steam-propelled warships. Oscar I accordingly attempted to obtain the most favorable concessions possible from Britain and France in return for Swedish assistance against Russia while placating the latter power for the next year and a half.

King Oscar's Fabian approach to diplomacy in 1854 failed to win Sweden-Norway any spoils at the Peace of Paris in 1856, but succeeded in keeping his realms from fighting a solitary struggle against Russia. Oscar may have misjudged Napoleon III's commitment to the struggle against Russia in 1855,³⁴ but correctly perceived the Allies' reluctance to commit to an unlimited war against Russia in the Baltic³⁵ and wisely demanded substantial commitments from Britain, France, and Austria before acting. This approach was acceptable to British politicians including Lord Aberdeen, who feared that an Anglo-Swedish alliance would greatly complicate any peace negotiations with Russia,³⁶ but did not satisfy the Swedish and British publics' desire for action. Sweden-Norway's neutrality throughout 1854 greatly complicated Allied efforts against Russia in the Baltic and limited the results that British and French warships could achieve. Sir Charles Napier realized that Swedish and Danish neutrality precluded Sir James Graham's suggested

³¹ Known in Norway as Charles III.

³² Palmstierna, Carl Fredrik. *Sverige, Ryssland, och England 1833-1855*. (Stockholm, Sweden: P.A. Norstedt and Sons, 1932), 52.

³³ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 20

³⁴ Hallendorff, Carl. *Oscar I, Napoleon, och Nikolaus*. (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag 1918), 63.

³⁵ Britain's Ambassador in Stockholm, for instance, reported in April 1854 that Sweden's Crown Prince "desired to impress upon (Clarendon) that without a land force it would be difficult to inflict vital injury upon Russia in the North." Baumgart, Winfried (Ed). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs (AGKK): Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 2 [11. Dezember 1853 bis 1. Dezember 1854] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), No. 217, Pg. 364.

³⁶ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 149.

recruitment of Scandinavian crews and pilots,³⁷ much less the assistance of Swedish ground forces and gunboats. Karl Marx, then residing in London, detected a “vicious circle” in the Anglo-French relationship with Sweden.³⁸ As he observed in a letter: “How can you expect the Swedes to join you unless you show them, by taking a land force and taking part of Finland, that you are in earnest? And, on the other hand, how can you send that force thither without having made sure of Sweden as a base of operations?”³⁹ Not even an offer of the Swedish-speaking Åland Islands could convince Oscar I’s Government to join Britain and France, contrary to Sir James Graham’s assessment that Sweden “must become our suitor when we hold Åland, and we shall be enabled to command her future assistance on our terms.”⁴⁰ Unbeknownst to the British public, Sweden-Norway’s neutrality coupled with the impossibility of Graham’s design for a crushing attack on Russian warships off Revel fundamentally limited the possible achievements of an Allied Baltic campaign in 1854. Even the most imaginative schemes for assaulting Russia could not fully compensate for the difficulty faced by British and French warships in conducting more basic operations, such as successfully navigating and blockading unfamiliar Baltic coastlines.

The initial task of Napier’s squadron was to reach the three possible entrances to the Baltic, the Great Belt, the Little Belt, and Oresund Strait (Øresund or Öresund), all of which ran through waters claimed by the Kingdom of Denmark. Influential members of Danish King Frederick VII’s Court, including his heir and the Prime Minister, openly admired Nicholas I’s Empire.⁴¹ The same was true for many of their colleagues in the Ministries of War and Foreign Affairs.⁴² Danish attitudes towards Britain had been hardened by the Royal Navy’s 1807 bombardment of Copenhagen. Regardless of its historical antipathy towards Great Britain, however, Denmark was in an especially vulnerable position in 1854 because of its location and circumstances. Its armed forces were relatively weak and its southern possessions, Schleswig and Holstein, were coveted by Prussia and other German powers. As Denmark’s envoy to Paris put it

³⁷ NAP/7 [April 10th, 1854] (NMM).

³⁸ Marx, Karl and Eleanor and Edward Aveling (Eds.). *The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters written 1853-1856 dealing with the events of the Crimean War*. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 363.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 11.

⁴¹ Halicz, Emanuel [Jane Cave, Translator]. *Danish Neutrality During the Crimean War: Denmark Between the Hammer and the Anvil*. (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1977), 19.

⁴² *Ibid.*

in October, 1853, Anglo-French disagreements were unlikely to remain confined to the Black Sea and could expand to the Baltic. Here, Denmark's geographical position would place it 'between a hammer and an anvil.'⁴³ In spite of deep-seeded domestic political divisions, the Royal Danish Government unanimously agreed that forcibly opposing a British fleet was impossible and that the integrity of Denmark's territory and ruling dynasty demanded strict neutrality.⁴⁴ Accordingly, Vice-Admiral Napier received no more than a polite reception in Copenhagen as his fleet entered the Baltic in early April.

British warships first left for the Baltic on March 10th, 1854 and arrived at Wingo Sound (modern Vinga) a week and a half later.⁴⁵ Controversy immediately flared when Napier interpreted a dispatch from Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon as a directive to take his squadron through the Great Belt into the Baltic. This action conflicted with the Graham-led Admiralty's orders to await further instructions at Wingo Sound, but Napier justified himself to the Admiralty by enclosing Clarendon's dispatch along with an explanation that the Russians might have passed out through the Oresund Strait while British warships were sailing and steaming into the Baltic through the Great Belt.⁴⁶ Clarendon's order was dated March 9th, 1854, meaning that it had been issued several weeks prior to Britain and France's formal declaration of war against Russia. It reflected the Foreign Secretary's fears that Russian warships would escape the Baltic and become "a serious inconvenience to the commerce of this country (Britain)" if British warships demonstrated "any overstrained forbearance by not stopping Russian warships by force."⁴⁷ Graham and the Admiralty Lords quickly bestowed their retroactive approval on Napier's actions, but a precedent had already been set for strained relations between Britain's Admiralty and its Baltic commander.

The British fleet's hurried departure forced Russia to begin energetically preparing for a war in the Baltic. Nicholas I immediately dispatched aides to inspect warships and defenses at Sweaborg and Cronstadt, and Russian forces continued to reinforce shore defenses with underwater mines. Russia's Committee on Underwater Mine Warfare was the first such permanent body to enjoy official recognition by a government, but bureaucratic incompetence

⁴³ *Ibid*, 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 22.

⁴⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA21 [March 18th, 1854] (NA).

⁴⁶ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 48.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 43.

and inter-service rivalries delayed the initiatives of Swedish émigré Immanuel Nobel and his German-born counterpart Moritz Hermann Jacobi.⁴⁸ The Crimean War's impending outbreak necessitated a crash development and manufacturing program spearheaded by Immanuel Nobel, who made such progress that Nicholas I never learned that previous designs and prototypes had been lost.⁴⁹ Nobel's mines relied on a chemical reaction triggered by contact with a sliding mechanism on the mine's interior, unlike Jacobi's electromagnetic models, and were dangerous but underpowered due to the smallness of their explosive charges.⁵⁰ In 1855, for example, British Rear-Admiral Michael Seymour lost an eye rather than his life after mounting an unintentionally successful demonstration of how a Russian mine could be induced to explode.⁵¹ The British were fortunate that safety features were often not removed by Russian mine installers intent on completing their tasks alive, and did not lose any Royal Navy vessels to undersea explosions in the Baltic. They likewise avoided any unhappy experiences with German inventor Wilhelm Bauer's 52-foot iron submarine, which made over 130 successful dives in Czarist service between 1856 and 1858.⁵² Mines and other submerged defenses, such as piles, were only some of a daunting series of obstacles protecting Russian coastal installations in the Baltic. Yet underwater warfare featured more prominently in the subsequent American Civil War. As the American 'Military Commission to the Theater of War in Europe' reported to then-Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, Russian underwater warfare "recommends itself to our attention."⁵³

Nicholas I had already turned his attention to destroying the British warships that had initially entered the Baltic and the French ones that would follow. His Imperial Russian Majesty ordered a meeting in Cronstadt Harbor on the 110-gun flagship *Imperator Pyotr I* (Emperor Peter I). Accompanied by his heirs, ministers, and senior admirals, the Czar communicated his desire to simultaneously attack the British fleet entering the Gulf of Finland with the two Russian fleet

⁴⁸ Roland, Alex. *Underwater Warfare in the Age of Sail*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), 129 and Tolf, Robert W. *The Russian Rockefellers: the Saga of the Nobel Family and the Russian Oil Industry*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 1976), 17.

⁴⁹ Tolf, Robert W. *The Russian Rockefellers: the Saga of the Nobel Family and the Russian Oil Industry*. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press of Stanford University, 1976), 17.

⁵⁰ Soviet historian Yevgeny Tarle, on the other hand, blamed the Czarist Government for favoring "the commercial and speculative interests of a foreign factory owner (Nobel)." Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 1.

⁵¹ PRO 22/68/4 [June 25th, 1855] (NA).

⁵² Roland, Alex. *Underwater Warfare in the Age of Sail*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978), 130.

⁵³ Delafield, Richard and the United States Military Commission to Europe. *Report on the Art of War in Europe in 1854, 1855, and 1856*. (Washington, D.C.: G.W. Bowman, 1860), 109.

divisions at Cronstadt and the one at Sweaborg.⁵⁴ Russia's Baltic admirals, however, responded that the plan was "positively impossible" due to the strength of the British squadron, the Russian fleet's lack of steam propulsion, and the "very weak" abilities of Russian crews.⁵⁵ This answer greatly angered the Russian Emperor, but the chaos surrounding the training maneuvers immediately ordered for the Cronstadt Division enraged him even more. Nicholas' Adjutant-General and personal aide recalled the Czar's reaction to disorganization on the *Imperatritsa Aleksandra* (Empress Alexandra), which prevented his commands from being heard: "I never saw in this awful state of anger not only the Emperor, but a single person in the world...he could not speak for a while."⁵⁶ Russian preparations thus shifted back to reinforcing shore fortifications and deploying troops along the Baltic coastline while removing navigational beacons in order to force hostile warships to engage in time-consuming survey work and coastal reconnaissance.⁵⁷

The timeliness and accuracy of intelligence obtained through such reconnaissance and a variety of other sources were points of contention throughout all of the Crimean War's naval campaigns. This immediately became apparent when it came to Sir James Graham's proposal for attacking Revel. Sweden-Norway had been aware of the Russian fleet's withdrawal from Revel and Port Baltic since October 26th, 1853,⁵⁸ but this news did not reach the British fleet and Admiralty until March 26th and April 3rd, 1854, respectively.⁵⁹ This did not escape Napier's post-campaign criticism of Graham and the Admiralty in Parliament, and Charles Napier MP took the opportunity of a March, 1856 debate to lament the necessity of Captain Edmund Moubray Lyons' early reconnaissance mission of Revel and Port Baltic. The former Vice-Admiral pointed out that the British fleet initially "did not know where the Russian fleet was...though we had a Minister at Copenhagen, a Minister at Sweden, one at St. Petersburg, and one at Hamburg, and Consuls all over the Baltic."⁶⁰ Worse yet for the British, subsequent reconnaissance by handpicked fleet surveyor Captain Bartholomew James Sullivan revealed that Revel was "a very strong place, and

⁵⁴ Zaionchokovsky, A. [Russian-Language]. "From the Memoirs of Adjutant-General N.A. Arkas." *The Historical Messenger*, Vol. 84 (April, 1901), 122.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 125-126.

⁵⁷ OD 102 [April, 1854] (AHO).

⁵⁸ Jonasson, Axel E. "Swedish Neutrality during the Crimean War." (San Jose, California. California State College, now University Master's Thesis, 1970), 32.

⁵⁹ ADM 1/5624 HA24 [Written: March 26th. Received in London: April 3rd, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁰ House of Commons Debate, March 13th, 1856. *Hansard's* Vol. 141, CC48-119.

(that) it would be folly to attack it with ships.”⁶¹ Graham’s Revel plan was well in keeping with historical precedent from Nelson’s Baltic campaign against Napoleon and with correspondence from the 1830s,⁶² but had not been appropriately updated. Napier personally blamed Captain John Washington and his 1853 intelligence-gathering mission for gossiping about and ‘playing Boswell’ to Russia’s Grand Duke Constantine, which, in Napier’s opinion, “was hardly what Capt. Washington was sent to Russia for.”⁶³

Practical evaluation further eliminated a number of other proposals for attacking Russia in the Baltic, especially those of Thomas Cochrane, the 10th Earl of Dundonald. This notoriously eccentric naval officer’s checkered career had commenced in 1793 and was marked by the same bitter personal and professional feuds as Sir Charles Napier’s. Dundonald’s adventures during the Napoleonic Wars allowed him to witness the toxic byproducts of sulphur manufacturing in Sicily.⁶⁴ His “mind being awake to impressions of a professional nature,” Dundonald began planning to introduce toxic fumes to British naval warfare.⁶⁵ Sir Thomas repeatedly emphasized that his intended targets were French naval bases including Cherbourg, but eagerly adapted his schemes for use against Cronstadt and other Russian strongholds.⁶⁶ Graham decided to refer Dundonald’s plan to a committee of high-ranking officers qualified to evaluate its feasibility. After acquainting themselves with Dundonald’s proposal to outfit iron colliers, or coal-carrying vessels as either smoke or sulphur producing vessels, members asked Dundonald and the eminent scientist Michael Faraday a series of pointed questions that literally and figuratively underlined their desire to see “proof.”⁶⁷ Dundonald’s reply was breathtakingly optimistic,⁶⁸ while Professor Faraday was skeptical about whether the proposals were “practicable on the scale proposed and required.”⁶⁹ Faraday’s observations were complemented by the openly hostile ones of Sir John Burgoyne, Britain’s Inspector-General of Fortifications. Burgoyne concluded that, “as regards the

⁶¹ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 259.

⁶² FO 65/223 44 [March 30th, 1836] (NA).

⁶³ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 270.

⁶⁴ Cochrane, Thomas Earl Dundonald. *The Autobiography of a Seamen* (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1860), 171.

⁶⁵ Stephenson, Charles. *The Admiral’s Secret Weapon: Lord Dundonald and the Origins of Chemical Warfare*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 18. See also: Lloyd, Christopher. “Dundonald’s Crimean War Plans.” *Mariner’s Mirror*. Vol. 32, No. 3 (1946), 147-154.

⁶⁶ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folios 291-292 [July 22nd, 1854] (BL).

⁶⁷ Stephenson, Charles. *The Admiral’s Secret Weapon: Lord Dundonald and the Origins of Chemical Warfare*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2006), 63.

⁶⁸ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folio 331 [August 5th] (BL).

⁶⁹ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folio 334 [August 7th] (BL).

application of the sulphurous vapour, independent of the barbarous and uncivilized character that would be given it, there are very great doubts of its efficacy which are itemized by Mr. Faraday.”⁷⁰ The committee reported to Graham that Dundonald’s plan should be rejected and that it considered Burgoyne’s assessment as one “in which everything is said that can be said on the subject.”⁷¹ Europe was thus spared this early form of chemical warfare for another few decades on the grounds of impracticality rather than moral repugnance.⁷²

Dundonald was not alone in proposing to attack Cronstadt by unconventional means. Suggestions poured into Admiralty offices, including an imaginative plan to dam the River Neva and thereby flood Northern Russia from St. Petersburg to the White Sea.⁷³ Inspired by Swedish schemes from 1809, the author emphasized that it would “reduce the war to the capture of Cronstadt and spare thousands of lives and millions of money.”⁷⁴ This unsolicited proposal appealed to the economizing instincts of Graham and other cabinet members, not to mention Napoleon III, by contextualizing the dams’ inflation-adjusted costs as “about half the cost of the Crystal Palace”⁷⁵ centerpiece of the 1851 Great Exhibition. This document resulted in the British Government’s formal evaluation of proposals to dam waters surrounding Cronstadt and Sweaborg in June, 1854.⁷⁶ Further consideration, though, revealed that even the most detailed plans for dam construction were highly problematic to the point that “it remains to be considered which country would be the greater sufferer if this project were carried out.”⁷⁷ Critics noted that 1,500 out of the 2,000 vessels that entered Cronstadt in 1853 were English, and considered that after the War’s end any remaining dam would present a considerable inconvenience to British commerce.⁷⁸ It was also necessary to consider that damming operations at both Cronstadt and Sweaborg “would be carried out within range of the principal batteries, and this would risk great loss of life.”⁷⁹ Both projects were thus abandoned as debate shifted towards how best to assault Russia’s major coastal forces using more conventional methods, though this did not preclude

⁷⁰ Additional Manuscript 41370, Folio 333-338 [Multiple Dates] (BL).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Additional Manuscript 49556, Folio 13 [Undated] (BL).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Additional Manuscript 79742, Folios 65 and 67 [June 20th and 21st, 1854] (BL).

⁷⁷ Additional Manuscript 79742, Folio 67 [21st, 1854] (BL).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

even more outlandish suggestions including dredges shielded with supposedly shotproof buffalo-hide armor.

After entering the Baltic and attempting to establish a blockade, Sir Charles Napier paraphrased one of his eventual opponents⁸⁰ by presenting Sir James Graham with three options. The first involved blockading the Gulf of Finland and other areas such as the Gulf of Bothnia, which Napier knew would not “please the people of England.”⁸¹ The second option was “to go to Cronstadt, offer battle to the Russian fleet, which they won’t accept, or attempt the harbour; I look on the latter to be impossible.”⁸² Sir Charles elaborated on the difficulties facing a successful assault of Cronstadt, and emphasized that the channels approaching and passing the fortress were narrow, dangerously shallow, and covered by powerful batteries.⁸³ Napier’s third option involved conquering the Åland Islands and besieging Bomarsund, and the Vice-Admiral declared that he “lean(ed) to this” operation,⁸⁴ which was carried out a month and a half later. The possibility that excited the British public and politicians not including Graham, however, was an attack on Cronstadt. Yet even proponents of the idea had to agree with the tragically understated conclusion that “a certain sacrifice, not only of men, but also of ships” would be “unavoidable” in any attack.⁸⁵

Better-informed Allied figures dreaded the possibility of an attack on Cronstadt that used only ships of the line and not gunboats and other specialized assault craft. Sir James Graham made a point of counseling Napier to ignore Parseval-Deschênes’ “high-sounding instructions” of attacking Cronstadt “if it be within the power of man” by reminding the British Vice-Admiral that his duty did “not extend to the impossible.”⁸⁶ Graham’s judgment was unfair to Parseval-Deschênes, who strongly advocated bombarding Cronstadt only with mortars and long-range artillery.⁸⁷ Yet the First Lord’s assessment represented the unanimous conclusions of naval experts acquainted with the respective capabilities of the Allied Baltic Fleet and Cronstadt in 1854. Debates over attacking Cronstadt, Sveaborg, and even Revel continued to rage throughout

⁸⁰ Former Prime Minister and founder of the London Metropolitan Police Force, or ‘Bobbies.’

⁸¹ NAP/23 [June 20th, 1854] (NMM).

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Marx, Karl and Eleanor and Edward Aveling (Eds.). *The Eastern Question: A Reprint of Letters written 1853-1856 dealing with the events of the Crimean War*. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 218.

⁸⁶ Parker, Charles Stuart. *Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1907), 231.

⁸⁷ BB4 710 151 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD).

the year, but always saw the most analytical and experienced parties conclude that engaging those positions using only large warships would be a grave error. Bellicosity aside, it was simply impossible to empirically refute the points raised by *Fraser's Magazine's* systematic discussion of how and why a seaborne assault on Cronstadt by unarmored battleships alone would fail miserably.⁸⁸

Despite the emphasis they received in Admiralty decision-making and the popular presses of Britain and France, assaults on major Russian harbor fortifications were not the most immediate demands on Allied warships in the Baltic. Napier initially anchored his fleet in Kiøge Bay (modern Køge Bugt) near Copenhagen and the entrance to the Sound before proceeding to Hango (Hanko), at the Gulf of Finland's entrance across from Port Baltic (Paldiski).⁸⁹ His fleet's smaller vessels, meanwhile, separated from the main squadron and took up positions to enforce a confused blockade of the Estonian coast and the Gulfs of Riga and Bothnia. Napier's largest warships proceeded cautiously due to heavy fog mixed with the exhaust from coal-burning steam engines, which exacerbated an already trying navigational process involving untrained crews and unfamiliar waters. On that same day, May 20th, a French fleet departed for the Baltic and almost five months before Allied troops landed on the Crimean Peninsula, a British raid along the Finnish coast produced the first shots of the Crimean War in the Baltic. Captain Hastings Reginald Yelverton of the *Arrogant*, a relatively shallow-draught screw vessel mounting 46 guns, and Captain William Hutcheon Hall with the 6-gun paddle-steamer *Hecla* fought their way through eight miles of narrow channel to capture a Russian merchant vessel at Ekness (or Ekenäs, now Tammisaari).⁹⁰ The British saw the operation as a great success and reported it as such, while Russian authorities and subsequent historians countered that it was a "minor incident...inflated in the European press into a darling achievement by the British."⁹¹

Regardless of outcomes at Ekness or Hango (Hanko) two days later, the most important task facing British warships in the campaign's early stages was enforcing a complicated blockade. The political implications of this tactic had evolved considerably from the freewheeling days of privateering in previous centuries. The first problem, from an Allied perspective, was that technology had evolved dramatically since the initial formulation of international maritime law

⁸⁸ "Cronstadt and the Russian Fleet." *Fraser's Magazine* (May, 1854).

⁸⁹ ADM 1/5624 HA95 [May 16th, 1854] (NA).

⁹⁰ ADM 1/5625 HA556 [May 20th, 1854] (NA).

⁹¹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 26.

by figures including the 17th century Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius. This especially pertained to what became known as dual-use technology, which then included industrial chemicals as well as coal, machinery, and certain metals.⁹² Naval construction materials had traditionally presented the same problem of ambiguity in final usage. Yet, by 1854, European industrialization and its impact on warfare made the legal issue of dual-use goods and technologies' wartime classification especially important. So too was formulating and then legally enforcing policies designed not to harm the economic interests of Britain and neutral powers and persuading France to abandon its "diametrically opposite" views on the rights of neutral goods and vessels during wartime.⁹³

British politicians and jurists took the lead over their French counterparts in formulating wartime commercial policy by virtue of their fleets' earlier arrivals and larger sizes. As Parseval-Deschênes wrote on June 19th, 1854, for example, he had not declared a blockade because Napier had arrived first and already declared one.⁹⁴ British and therefore Allied blockade policy was designed "with a view to avoid disputes with the vessels of neutral powers," especially the United States and Prussia.⁹⁵ This entailed a tripartite policy that also included not only a blockade of Russian coasts, but also export controls on items with military applications and generous allowances for both neutral goods and ships. As Chapter Two discussed, British ministers were divided on the subject of blockades and other forms of economic warfare. Ultimately, however, Sir James Graham and Lord Clarendon took the lead in articulating that blockading and seizing Russian contraband were "claws" that compensated for concessions to neutral powers.⁹⁶ British and then French cruisers were thus left to oversee the problematically litigious enforcement of a naval blockade in the Baltic.

Records indicate that Allied commanders encountered difficulties in the blockade process long before Napier's furious post-campaign denunciation of the "quibbles" and "law harpies" at Britain's Admiralty Courts.⁹⁷ This was not for lack of information on the Russian merchant marine. The French Government, for instance, possessed a list of virtually every Russian merchant vessel along with details including their masters, rig, tonnage, drafts, homeports, and

⁹² Atherley-Jones, Llewellyn Archer. *Commerce in War*. (London, UK: Methuen, 1907), 14-15.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 160.

⁹⁴ BB4 733 117 [June 19th, 1854] (SHD).

⁹⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA51 [July 18th, 1854] (NA).

⁹⁶ Anderson, Olive. *English Politics and Economics During the Crimean War*. (London, UK: Macmillan, 1967), 259.

⁹⁷ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 85.

owners.⁹⁸ By July 18th, 1854, though, Graham found it necessary to supplement this information with a memorandum to British naval officers in the Baltic reminding them of the different steps necessary to render any capture legal. These included the “actual presence of an adequate naval force,” with a “mere declaration” being “invalid.”⁹⁹

More complicated for early blockade efforts was the Anglo-French decision to allow a grace period to Russian vessels that had begun voyages before both governments’ declarations of war in late March.¹⁰⁰ The situation was further exacerbated by a lack of communication between Queen’s Advocate Sir John Harding¹⁰¹ and Sir James Graham at the Admiralty. Napier bitterly recognized that the days of captains winning substantial prize money from the sale of captured enemy vessels and cargos had passed, and reported that captains were discouraged from engaging in the capture process by “various minute circumstances” and the prospects of having to pay the costs of unsuccessfully defending themselves in Admiralty Courts.¹⁰² The Vice-Admiral’s opinions were supported by the complexity of legal correspondence and proceedings related to such seizures,¹⁰³ but Napier never realized that his Government and its French allies had significantly farther-reaching concerns than the seizure of Russian merchant vessels or Prussia’s complicity in assisting Russian imports of contraband. The Allied Baltic Fleet of 1854 was forced to restrict its efforts against Russian commerce that year in deference to larger British economic and diplomatic interests, although the correspondingly limited results further added dissatisfaction stemming from the lack of large-scale assaults on Russia’s most important positions in the Baltic.

Attacking Russia in the Baltic required a precise understanding of that sea’s hydrography, or physical characteristics, as well as the specifications of Russian shore fortifications. The Allied fleets were thus especially fortunate to have the assistance of Captain Bartholomew James Sullivan. Sir James Graham had initially passed over Sullivan’s candidacy for a combat command, but Chief Hydrographer of the Navy Sir Francis Beaufort ensured that he received a special appointment as a surveyor in the paddle steamer *Lightning*. Sullivan had previously served on the *Beagle* during Charles Darwin’s voyage, and continued his friendship and correspondence with

⁹⁸ BB4 721 167-177 [Undated, 1854] (SHD).

⁹⁹ ADM 1/5624 HA51 [July 18th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁰⁰ BB4 721 56 [May 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁰¹ Then the British Government’s chief advisor on international law.

¹⁰² Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 85.

¹⁰³ TS 18/335 [Multiple Dates] (NA).

the biologist while surveying the Falkland Islands.¹⁰⁴ This experience became especially important because the Baltic fleet lacked the services of local pilots, or advisors who were normally hired to assist foreign vessels in navigating narrow or other difficult waters. Graham hoped that Swedish-Norwegian or Danish pilots would assist the Baltic Fleet, but both groups were unavailable due to their respective governments' precarious diplomatic positions. Worse yet for the British, pilots dispatched from London were only familiar with major commercial shipping lanes rather than important routes for military operations.¹⁰⁵ Captain Sullivan succinctly deemed them "quite useless" because they "did nothing but learn the pilotage they were supposed to have learnt before."¹⁰⁶ Sir Charles Napier was initially skeptical of navigation not assisted by pilots, and greeted Sullivan by publicly remarking that the only use of survey vessels was as fire-ships,¹⁰⁷ or vessels that were deliberately burned in the hope that they would ignite enemy ships as well. Napier eventually modified his views on the subject in response to Sullivan's efforts, but not before valuable time and opportunities had been wasted. Accumulating hydrographic information was a progressive process, and even a cursory comparison of the navigational information available in 1854 and 1855 reveals that British commanders in the latter year benefitted from a significantly more extensive amount of information when attempting to execute operations.¹⁰⁸

A lack of intelligence did not always prevent British officers from initiating hostilities, but their early efforts produced uneven results and were always conducted on a small scale. Several days after the successful May 20th raid on Ekness, Captain James Wilcox of the frigate *Dragon* convinced Napier to allow his ship to ascertain the range of its guns on one of the two small forts protecting Hango (Hanko). Situated at the Gulf of Finland, Hango Harbor had been an important Russian gunboat base rendered strategically irrelevant by Russia's decision not to employ those craft against the British, later Allied, Fleet. Master of the Fleet George Biddlecombe, ostensibly the fleet's chief navigational officer and Bartholomew Sullivan's main rival, endorsed Wilcox's request, but Fort Gustavsvärn's defenders returned fire more effectively

¹⁰⁴ Laughton, John Knox and Andrew Lambert. "Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan" in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26769>>, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Keppel, Sir Henry. *A Sailor's Life under Four Sovereigns* (Volume II). (London, UK: Macmillan, 1899), 260.

¹⁰⁶ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 134.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 128.

¹⁰⁸ OD 102 [Multiple Dates] (AHO).

than either Biddlecombe or Wilcox anticipated. Consequently, Napier had to restrain captains, including Henry Keppel, from conducting an aimless bombardment in response to their regret that “there is little or no excitement especially for we big ships.”¹⁰⁹ Napier was happy to conclude that authorities back home shared his opinion that “Hango was not worth caring about,” but was disturbed by his captains’ impulsiveness.¹¹⁰ Maintaining a blockade, however, demanded that these same captains be given considerable discretion when acting in squadrons detached from the main fleet to the Gulfs of Bothnia and Riga. This allowed successes such as the seizure of merchant vessels at Libau (Liepaja) on the coast of modern Latvia,¹¹¹ but also gave free reign to the destructive impulses of a British paddle-steamer squadron in northern Finland. Although confirmed as legal by a divided House of Commons in 1858,¹¹² the large-scale burning of property by forces under Rear-Admiral Sir James Hanway Plumridge and captains including George Giffard outraged everyone from King Oscar I to Vice-Admiral Parseval-Deschênes, who thought them beneath the standards of his fleet.¹¹³

Plumridge and four paddle-steamers were ordered by Napier on May 5th to reconnoiter the Aland Islands and Åbo (Turku) before proceeding to blockade the Gulf of Bothnia. The squadron quickly found its reconnaissance mission to Aland “hazardous:” a lack of hydrographic information combined with underwater obstacles ensured that even the compact 6-gun *Vulture* found herself “several times on the rocks.”¹¹⁴ “From thence,” Plumridge pushed far past Åbo into the Gulf of Bothnia’s still-icy waters without reporting on the former city’s defenses. The Rear-Admiral began employing his ships’ small boats to destroy vast amounts of Finnish timber, tar, and shipbuilding materials, and thereby opened the most morally controversial operations of the Baltic campaign. Plumridge and his captains readily cited figures of destroyed vessels, tar barrels, timber, and naval stores as evidence “of the large amounts of mischief done to the enemy,”¹¹⁵ while Finns, Russians, and certain later historians¹¹⁶ presented British sailors as petty arsonists who preyed on mostly defenseless civilians. The truth lies somewhere closest to *The* (London)

¹⁰⁹ HTN 52/A [May 23rd, 1854] (NMM).

¹¹⁰ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 153.

¹¹¹ ADM 1/5625 HA554 [May 18th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹² House of Commons Debate, July 20th, 1858. *Hansard’s* Vol. 151, CC1844-62.

¹¹³ BB4 733 109 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

¹¹⁴ ADM 1/5624 HA156 and HA171 [June 18th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA156 [June 18th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁶ See Chapter 11, “Take, Burn, or Destroy,” in Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988).

Times' dispassionate assessment that "in short, the injury inflicted by such attacks on the Russian Empire and its Government is not commensurate with the losses to private interests and the risk of our own seamen."¹¹⁷ Such risks were not immediately apparent during early operations at Brahestad (Raahe) and Uleåborg (Oulu), but were driven home by a disastrous raid on Gamla Carelby (Kokkola) a week later.

British paddle-frigates arrived off of Brahestad, a small Finnish coastal town high up the Gulf of Bothnia, at the end of May. On the 30th of that month, 14 boats from *Leopard*, *Vulture*, and *Odin* carrying 304 men and 6 guns entered the harbor and set fire to all the Finnish merchant vessels they could find, both afloat and on shore.¹¹⁸ This effort was led by the *Leopard's* senior Lieutenant, Benjamin Priest, and not Captain George Giffard. Priest's official report explicitly mentioned his tangible efforts to spare "private" property or even flour caches he "had reason for supposing...to be private property," and even reported that his subordinates assisted with "preventing unnecessary alarm to the inhabitants."¹¹⁹ This stood in stark contrast to the anger of Finns and some subsequent historians, who believed that the British "burned everything indiscriminately without the slightest cause and without there being any need whatsoever to do so."¹²⁰ The issue is further complicated by Priest's lack of specificity concerning whether "the Imperial Crown" marking "a large number" of barrels holding tar was a customs stamp or mark of ownership.¹²¹ Ultimately, however, multiple accounts corroborate the senior Lieutenant's post-script claiming that his boats had destroyed 14 vessels and about 25,000 barrels of pitch, tar, and oil along with a large quantity of timber and shipbuilding materials and several shipyards.¹²² *Odin's* naval surgeon and skilled amateur watercolorist Dr. Edward Hodges Cree, observed the "great destruction of property" while adding that "it was in order to assist in crippling the enemy."¹²³ It is thus interesting to note that even a physician who clearly empathized with the "unfortunate" Finns and deemed the blaze "an awful and cruel sight" took the time to justify his

¹¹⁷ "The Operations of Admiral Plumridge's Flying Squadron." *The Times*, (June 24th, 1854), 9.

¹¹⁸ Lambert, Andrew. "Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855." *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004). <www.jmr.nmm.ac.uk>, 2.

¹¹⁹ ADM 1/5624 HA156 [May 30th, 1854] (NA).

¹²⁰ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905),

¹²¹ Lambert, Andrew. "Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855." *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004). <www.jmr.nmm.ac.uk>, 2.

¹²² ADM 1/5624 HA156 [May 30th, 1854] (NA).

¹²³ CRJ/17 [May 30th, 1854] (NMM).

shipmates' actions in a private journal.¹²⁴ Cree's work literally and figuratively illustrates that there were numerous other sources besides Captain George Giffard's insightful 1892 memoir, *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*.¹²⁵ This work's callousness and lack of critical analysis compared unfavorably with the reminiscences of figures including Sir Bartholomew James Sullivan, and outraged subsequent historians such as Basil Greenhill. It also validated Napier's suspicions that his captains, if left to their own devices, would vent their frustrations through "wanton destruction" of property and targets "not worth going after" at the expense of performing essential if unglamorous tasks such as blockading and gathering intelligence.¹²⁶

A similarly destructive encounter occurred two days later at Uleåborg, approximately 60 kilometers north of Brahestad. A slightly larger force of 8 boats and 328 sailors and marines discovered numerous scuttled merchant vessels along with storehouses that "were for the most part cleared out."¹²⁷ According to Cree, a nighttime raid "soon made such a blaze as illuminated the country for many miles round, destroying many thousand pounds' worth of the Russian Emperor's property and crippling his shipbuilding in the Baltic."¹²⁸ "A more destructive fire than at Brahestad"¹²⁹ nevertheless did not destroy Uleåborg itself because Lieutenant Priest decided not to burn an empty Cossack barracks "as its destruction by fire would have involved the burning of a large number of private houses, if not the whole town."¹³⁰ The Lieutenant's magnanimity was not shared by Captain George Giffard, however. Giffard proudly recounted threatening to "lay the town in ashes" and "send a 10 inch shell into the church" to prove that his frigates could cover the approach of small boats, deeming the gesture a potential "mark of our regard."¹³¹ Dr. Cree was thus overly optimistic when recounting that a shipment of fresh provisions "showed that the Finlanders had no ill feeling against us."¹³² British concessions such as sparing small boats and some storehouses hardly compensated for the mass destruction that accompanied Plumridge's squadron in the Gulf. The only casualties of both raids were ice damage to the *Valorous*' paddlewheels and the loss of one crewman, who had fallen into a

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Giffard, George. *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*. (Exeter, UK: Private Printing, 1892).

¹²⁶ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 209.

¹²⁷ ADM 1/5624 HA156 [June 2nd, 1854] (NA).

¹²⁸ CRJ/17 [June 1st, 1854] (NMM).

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ ADM 1/5624 HA156 [June 2nd, 1854] (NA).

¹³¹ Giffard, George. *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*. (Exeter and Devon, UK: William Pollard, 1892), 123.

¹³² CRJ/17 [June 2nd, 1854] (NMM).

drunken sleep inside a Uleåborg warehouse burned by his countrymen.¹³³ Similar landings at Torneå (Tornio) and the Kemi River's mouth, both at the extreme North of the Gulf near the Finno-Swedish border, also proceeded smoothly for the British. This changed dramatically less than a week later, on June 7th, when small boats entered the difficult-to-approach harbor of Gamla Carleby (or Gamla Karleby, now Kokkola) beyond the cover normally provided by the larger frigates that launched them.

A week and a half after British forces first arrived off Gamla Carleby, Sir Charles Napier informed Vice-Admiral Alexandre Ferdinand Parseval-Deschênes that Plumridge's squadron had suffered a "disastrous failure" along the Finnish Coast.¹³⁴ Acting on reports that "a small screw steamer" was moored in the vicinity, Plumridge dispatched the *Vulture and Odin* to 'operate on' Gamla Carleby, a coastal town south of Brahestad and Uleåborg.¹³⁵ The British ships delayed active operations for a day due to inclement weather, which proved a fatal mistake: alerted by telegraph, Russian commanders rushed infantry companies and artillery to the assistance of local Finnish marksmen.¹³⁶ Oblivious to this development, Captain Frederick Glasse of the *Vulture*, anchored four miles out to sea and dispatched small boats¹³⁷ after his spyglass revealed "no Castle, Fort, or defences" protecting the town.¹³⁸ 252 British officers and men initially stayed offshore, while Lieutenant Charles Arthur Wise landed under a flag of truce to parlay with a delegation of merchants, interpreters, and the town's deputy mayor. British demands were refused, and Russian and Finnish troops opened fire with muskets and artillery from concealed positions in storehouses and woods.¹³⁹

Lieutenant Wise's notation that he "deemed it expedient to with draw,"¹⁴⁰ failed to adequately describe a defeat that saw the British lose the *Vulture's* paddle box boat¹⁴¹ along with

¹³³ Contre Lambert, Andrew. "Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855." *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004), 2, Cree reports that the incident occurred at Uleåborg and not Brahestad: CRJ/17 [June 2nd, 1854] (NMM).

¹³⁴ BB4 733 111 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

¹³⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 10th, 1854] (NA).

¹³⁶ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 187-188 and Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. "*Eastern War 1853-1856*." (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 6.

¹³⁷ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 10th, 1854] (NA).

¹³⁸ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 10th, 1854] (NA).

¹³⁹ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 187-188 and Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. "*Eastern War 1853-1856*." (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 6.

¹⁴⁰ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 8th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁴¹ A boat stored on top of the structure enclosing a larger vessel's side-mounted paddlewheels.

56 casualties, including prisoners.¹⁴² The *Odin* and *Vulture* were unable to cross a shallow bar at the mouth of Gamla Carleby's harbor, and Captain Glasse wisely judged further operations "impracticable" after Wise detected two whole regiments of infantry taking positions and building protective earthworks.¹⁴³ Plumridge was left to conclude from a distance "that this serious catastrophe has resulted from surprise, and a subsequent want of suitable management"¹⁴⁴ while rejecting Captain George Giffard's conclusion that the British should return and "punish" the town as "inadvisable".¹⁴⁵

The Russo-Finnish victory at Gamla Carleby was undeniably a result of a tactical error by Captain Glasse, which was acknowledged by Plumridge, Napier, and even Parseval-Deschênes. Yet the French Vice-Admiral raised several analytical points in his initial meeting with Napier on June 18th. Parseval-Deschênes wondered why the British were occupying themselves with "*petites affaires*" rather than using their forces to strike "*grands coups*," or great blows, against targets such as Cronstadt.¹⁴⁶ The French commander attributed Napier's persistence in his opinion to the "well known" English tradition of destroying commerce and mentioned that it would be advantageous to spare the Finnish people's interests so that they would make common cause with the Allied fleets.¹⁴⁷ Napier was also dissatisfied with Plumridge's efforts, because they distracted from "the principal part" of the Rear-Admiral's mission, which was to provide "concrete information on the navigation and defences of Åland and Åbo."¹⁴⁸ This allowed Parseval-Deschênes to realize that Napier had more important concerns than coastal raids on small towns. The French Vice-Admiral found it easy to deduce from Napier's instructions and frequent British Admiralty letters that the British Government was principally interested in Bomarsund and the Åland Islands.¹⁴⁹ The meeting's focus accordingly shifted to resolving personal and professional differences, including which major Russian position to first reconnoiter in preparation for an attack. Debates over the morality of British actions in the Gulf of Bothnia

¹⁴² Lambert, Andrew. "Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855." *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004), 5.

¹⁴³ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 10th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁴⁴ ADM 1/5624 HA153 [June 14th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁴⁵ Giffard, George. *Reminiscences of a Naval Officer*. (Exeter and Devon, UK: William Pollard, 1892), 125.

¹⁴⁶ BB4 733 111 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Lambert, Andrew. "Looking for gunboats: British Naval operations in the Gulf of Bothnia, 1854-1855." *Journal for Maritime Research* (June, 2004), 6.

¹⁴⁹ BB4 733 111 [June 18th, 1854] (SHD).

were thus left to politicians, subsequent historians, and the press, much to the disadvantage of the Royal Navy's reputation at home and in Scandinavia.¹⁵⁰

Reputations were also important factors in the joint decision-making of Allied naval commanders. Parseval-Deschênes disliked Sir Charles Napier prior to ever meeting him,¹⁵¹ while Napier, blithely thought Parseval-Deschênes a "pleasant man" who elicited "no doubt that we will act well together."¹⁵² The French Vice-Admiral hardly relished his dependence on Napier for strategy and, ironically, ended up criticizing Napier for indecisiveness rather than any reported aggressiveness or abrasive interpersonal style. Despite their personal differences, however, both men made overcoming "petty national rivalries" a priority.¹⁵³ Parseval-Deschênes accepted Napier's assessment of Sweaborg's strength sight-unseen, but convinced Sir Charles to reconnoiter Cronstadt rather than Bomarsund.¹⁵⁴ The two nations' warships accordingly departed together on June 21st,¹⁵⁵ though the French line-of-battle ships were heavily outnumbered by their British counterparts and were not propelled by steam.¹⁵⁶ This set the tone for the rest of the campaign. Parseval-Deschênes lamented that his squadron's numerical inferiority, coupled with lack of instructions from Paris, left him completely dependent on an indecisive Napier for strategy, which was humiliatingly reported by both English and French newspapers.¹⁵⁷ Regardless of his feelings, though, the French Vice-Admiral did get to play an important role in the debates over the vulnerability of Cronstadt and Sweaborg to attack by sea. Both issues remained major points of contention until the Baltic began to freeze and the Allied fleet withdrew.

Close reconnaissance revealed that Cronstadt's fortifications were every bit as daunting as Captain John Washington and others had reported. Royal Engineers' translations of Prussian maps, reports, and diagrams from the mid-1820s graphically depicted not only Cronstadt's fortresses and the ranges of their guns, but also placed these details in context by showing how

¹⁵⁰ See, for example: House of Commons Debate, June 29th, 1854. *Hansard's* Vol. 134, CC909-21 and Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 171, and 190-192.

¹⁵¹ BB4 733 40 [April 17th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵² ADM 1/5624 HA137 [June 16th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁵³ BB4 733 178 [July 21st, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵⁴ BB4 733 117 [June 19th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵⁵ ADM 1/5624 HA124 [June 20th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁵⁶ BB4 149 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵⁷ BB4 162 [July 5th, 1854] (SHD).

they covered the two channels through which Allied warships would have to pass.¹⁵⁸ More recent depictions of the same details illustrated the interlocking fields of large-caliber shellfire that blanketed the deeper South Channel and the obstructions barring access to the North Channel.¹⁵⁹ The British and, by extension, French did have the advantage of a detailed series of watercolors and observations relating to each individual Russian fortress. These were written and drawn by officers on the *Odin* in 1851, when their ship carried Ambassador Sir Hamilton Seymour to St. Petersburg.¹⁶⁰ Sir James Graham did not require additional evidence in support of his already pessimistic view of attacking Cronstadt with the resources available in mid-1854, but the Admiralty forwarded copies to Napier anyway.¹⁶¹ These “agree(d) so well with”¹⁶² the on-site assessments of both the British and French Vice-Admirals and Captain Bartholomew Sullivan, who took note not only of Cronstadt’s fortifications, but also the Russian battleships moored in supportive positions behind them.¹⁶³

The issue of attacking Cronstadt was twofold. The first consideration involved the strength of Russian positions and supporting fleet units themselves. The second and equally important consideration necessitated evaluating the strength of Russian defences against the means available to attack them. Parseval-Deschênes informed his superiors in Paris that taking Cronstadt required a land operation and a fleet of steam-powered gunboats and mortar-vessels capable of operating in shallow waters.¹⁶⁴ These vessels were not forthcoming in 1854, which did not escape the notice of Conservative politician and former Governor-General of India Lord Ellenborough. A week prior to the Allied Fleet’s departure for Cronstadt, his Lordship, a close friend of Napier, delivered a scathing denunciation of the Aberdeen Government’s expenditures on “trifling or ornamental articles.”¹⁶⁵ These included increases for the British Museum and facilities (Burlington House) to support Learned Societies such as the Royal Astronomical Society and Geological Society of London.¹⁶⁶ The Earl calculated that these sums would have purchased 98

¹⁵⁸ MPHH 11/309 [Multiple Dates] (NA).

¹⁵⁹ FO 925/3507 [Undated] (NA).

¹⁶⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP W207 [January 18th, 1854] (NA) and MFQ 1/110 [January 28th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁶¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP W207 [January 18th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁶² Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 85.

¹⁶³ BB4 149 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD) and Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 190.

¹⁶⁴ BB4 149 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁶⁵ House of Lords Debate, July 16th, 1854. *Hansard’s* Vol. 134, CC232-54.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

shallow-draught steam gunboats that “might have taken Sweaborg and destroyed Cronstadt” if sent to the Baltic.¹⁶⁷ The balance of Ellenborough’s speech revealed his remarkably perceptive assessment of factors that eluded Sir James Graham and other members of Aberdeen’s Cabinet while haunting Allied efforts in the Baltic and elsewhere. It cited “statesmens’ objects in the war” that “were not objects visible to the people,” and rhetorically wondered “if the contest should not be characterized by brilliant and decisive successes from time to time to animate the people, can we expect that their constancy will be maintained?”¹⁶⁸ Sure enough, British public impatience at the lack of success against Cronstadt and Sweaborg proved Ellenborough’s point within a few months.

Unlike the Allied fleet’s initial assessment of Cronstadt, early reconnaissance of Sweaborg was revisited in earnest towards the end of the 1854 Baltic campaign. Controversy began soon after British warships entered the Baltic in April, but was confined to a small circle of high-ranking British officers. (British) Foreign Office intelligence reports¹⁶⁹ and early reconnaissance raised the possibility that the Russian Fleet’s Sweaborg Division had been frozen outside of Helsinki Harbor, and Napier’s discontented battleship captains lost no time in blaming their chief for not rushing to destroy these warships while they were outside the range of Russian shore batteries. The arguments of even Napier’s most ardent detractors, however, were markedly ambivalent, as were the corresponding conclusions of some historians.¹⁷⁰ Lord Clarence Paget of the *HMS Princess Royal* concluded that “it has never yet been positive ascertained... whether the Russian squadron were out or inside of Helsingfors.”¹⁷¹ His fellow Captain Henry Codrington added in a letter to his sister that he did not “wish it mentioned” because he had “hear(d) on the other tack that they have never been outside Sveaborg at all.”¹⁷² Historian Andrew Lambert’s thorough presentation of available evidence, though, goes a long way towards resolving any historiographical uncertainty by citing Rear-Admiral Plumridge’s note there was no ice in the

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 92.

¹⁷⁰ Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 142.

¹⁷¹ Otway, Sir Arthur (Ed.). *Autobiography and Journals of Admiral Lord Clarence E Paget, GCB.* (London, UK: Chapman and Hall, 1896), 92.

¹⁷² Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 142.

vicinity of where the Russian Division was supposedly trapped.¹⁷³ At any rate, the issue had not become a public dispute in 1854 because, in Captain Paget's words, "the Press were not made acquainted with the details."¹⁷⁴ This limited controversy merely foreshadowed the significantly more serious debate over assaulting Sweaborg that marred the closing months of 1854 for both the British and French fleets.

Completing Parseval-Deschênes' request to reconnoiter Cronstadt freed Napier to turn his Fleet's attention to Bomarsund, a Russian fortress in the Åland Islands. The French fleet in particular had been encouraged to leave Cronstadt by an outbreak of cholera,¹⁷⁵ an infectious disease related to contaminated food or drinking water. France's naval commanders were also forced to defer to their British counterparts both by numerical inferiority and a lack of instructions from Napoleon III.¹⁷⁶ Parseval-Deschênes wanted to visit Revel next, but instead resigned himself to follow the British to the Åland Islands. This Swedish-speaking archipelago of hundreds of mostly uninhabited islands between Finland and Sweden had been conquered by Russia in 1808 and afterwards fortified in direct violation of the 1809 Russo-Swedish Treaty of Fredrikshamn (Hamina). By late June of 1854, the British Cabinet and Prince Consort Albert, Queen Victoria's husband, had decided over the objections of Sir James Graham that the Åland Islands should be re-conquered by Allied forces, even if that meant requesting French troops.¹⁷⁷ Together with heavy artillery and fleet gunfire support, these troops would be capable of conducting a proper siege of Bomarsund.

Russia's stronghold in the Åland Islands, Bomarsund was designed to control the principal approach to Lumpar Bay, which sat in the heart of the archipelago and was consequently difficult to approach with large ships. Construction had begun in 1830, but only a casemated main fort of granite-faced brick and three outlying towers had been completed by 1854.¹⁷⁸ The final result was a far cry from the massive fortress complex initially envisioned by Russian planners, and even Nicholas I realized that its garrison was "small in numbers and could

¹⁷³ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 92.

¹⁷⁴ Otway, Sir Arthur (Ed.). *Autobiography and Journals of Admiral Lord Clarence E Paget, GCB*. (London, UK: Chapman and Hall, 1896), 92.

¹⁷⁵ BB4 733 159 [July 1st, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁷⁶ BB4 733 168 [July 11th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁷⁷ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 129.

¹⁷⁸ Robins, Graham. *Bomarsund: Outpost of Empire*. (Mariehamn, Åland Islands: Åland Board of Antiquities, Government of the Åland Islands, 2004).

be put in a difficult situation” if cut off from the Finnish mainland.¹⁷⁹ The Russian Emperor’s assessment came to fruition in mid-August, 1854 and not on June 22nd of that year, when Captain William Hutcheon Hall had led three vessels into Lumpar Bay and opened fire on the Bomarsund’s main fort.

Although this was not the first time that an officer under Rear-Admiral James Hanway Plumridge’s command had acted rashly, such an impulsive bombardment wasted more in ammunition than it did in lives. Captain Hall won fame in command of British East India Company’s steamship *Nemesis* in action during the First Anglo-Chinese (First Opium) War of 1839-1842.¹⁸⁰ Yet this made him overqualified for his role as commander of the *Hecla*, a modest paddle-steamer mounting a tiny fraction of the guns carried by a ship-of-the-line. Following his squadron’s aforementioned voyages in the Gulf of Bothnia, Plumridge ventured off Cronstadt to meet with Napier and the main Allied Fleet. This left Hall as the senior officer in command of *Odin* and *Valorous* in addition to the *Hecla*. The Captain accordingly took full advantage by exceeding his orders and opening fire on Russian positions as soon as his squadron came within range on the afternoon of June 22nd. The British ships’ supply of explosive shells and solid shot¹⁸¹ bounced harmlessly off Bomarsund’s granite-faced brick walls while setting fire to minor wooden outbuildings and a wooden roof designed to shield the masonry from snow. The squadron then withdrew a few hours later, and Hall began composing pretentious dispatches including lines such as “if that success was taken advantage of immediately, the result would be the capitulation of the Island of Aland.”¹⁸² They continued with the argument that “the forts must have suffered greatly...if we may judge from the awfully grand appearance of the flames when the squadron left.”¹⁸³ Hall’s commentary differed greatly from more circumspect observers’, with Bartholomew Sullivan accurately deducing that “one might as well have thrown peas at the fort” and pointing out that the Russians had derisively painted black marks near each hit on the fortress

¹⁷⁹ Zaionchokovsky, A. [Russian-Language]. “From the Memoirs of Adjutant-General N.A. Arkas.” *The Historical Messenger*, Vol. 84 (April, 1901), 128.

¹⁸⁰ Laughton, John Knox and Roger T. Stearn. “Sir William Hutcheon Hall” in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11998>>, 1 and 2.

¹⁸¹ MS 507 [June 21st, 1854] (WSRO).

¹⁸² Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 84-85.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 85.

because the damage was otherwise difficult to observe.¹⁸⁴ Napier took the incident as a frustrating waste of ammunition and further confirmation that captains such as Hall could not be trusted to act independently in squadrons detached from the main fleet. The Vice-Admiral did, however, praise the bravery of Mate Charles Lucas in throwing a live Russian shell overboard. This action won Lucas the first Victoria Cross ever awarded,¹⁸⁵ and the incident in general was exploited for political gain by Sir James Graham. An embittered Napier subsequently observed that the bombardment was a “godsend to the Government at the moment: as, provided something is done, the public is not over particular in inquiring how or where, or whether by order or not, though this is of the first importance in the conduct of a fleet.”¹⁸⁶

Bomarsund’s fate was sealed within a month, though, as Napoleon III responded to the Aberdeen Government’s request to dispatch a French expeditionary force to the Baltic. The embarkation of 10,000 French troops under Major-General, or *Général de Division*, Achille Baraguey (Baraguay) d’Hilliers, was originally scheduled for July 13th, yet was delayed for a few days due the logistical problems inherent in loading French soldiers onto British transports.¹⁸⁷ The process was further complicated because the French requested that the point of departure be switched from Cherbourg to Calais, which was better integrated with the still-expanding French railway network.¹⁸⁸ This did little to allay the Francophobic inclinations of Sir James Graham or Sir Charles Napier.¹⁸⁹ Regardless, French troops and equipment along with a modest contingent of British combat engineers under Brigadier-General Sir Harry David Jones nevertheless arrived in Lumpar Bay in early August. Here, they joined an Allied fleet that had awaited them since departing from its position in command of the Gulf of Finland. Detached squadrons, meanwhile, watched Sweaborg, blockaded the Åland Islands rather than the Gulf of Bothnia, and maintained a presence in the Gulf of Riga. A seamless *rendezvous* with the main fleet, however, was possible because Napier had wisely altered Sir James Graham’s instructions to transfer the French troops into small steamships two hundred miles south of the Åland Islands.¹⁹⁰ The French received the

¹⁸⁴ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 214.

¹⁸⁵ Murphy, David. *Ireland and the Crimean War*. (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2002), 134.

¹⁸⁶ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 215.

¹⁸⁷ ADM 1/5631 Cap G237 [July 13th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁸⁸ Additional Manuscript 40025, Folio 86 [July 18th, 1854] (BL).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 141.

‘whole of the material of their siege train’ on August 5th,¹⁹¹ and landing operations were completed unopposed several days later.

Vice-Admiral Napier was, to put it charitably, being less than candid when reporting “that the greatest cordiality has existed between Major-General Baraguay d’Hilliers, Vice-Admiral Parseval and myself during this our first operation.”¹⁹² Other documents reveal that both Allied naval commanders were annoyed with one another and at the dispatch of so many French troops, albeit for completely different reasons. Parseval-Deschênes was upset that Napier had ignored his preference for visiting Revel after Cronstadt, but also that Napoleon III preferred to communicate through the British Government and General Baraguay d’Hilliers rather than directly with him.¹⁹³ Although the French Vice-Admiral undeniably harbored an immense personal dislike for his British counterpart, Parseval-Deschênes’ complaints stemmed from deeper issues than personal conflict alone. His complaints that the British press and even d’Hilliers often failed to acknowledge the French Navy’s contributions to the Baltic campaign betrayed Parseval-Deschênes’ underlying fear that Britain’s numerical and technological superiority in warships threatened to marginalize his country’s contributions in the Baltic. Napier, for his part, was forced to accommodate his French counterpart’s concerns and accept the assistance of a French expeditionary force that he believed to be “too many for Aland, and too few for anything else.”¹⁹⁴ Even Major-General d’Hilliers only wanted 1,000 troops, or 1/10th of available total, to be landed for an attack on a fortress Parseval-Deschênes deemed imposing by sea but vulnerable by land.¹⁹⁵

Bomarsund’s isolation from potential reinforcements on the Finnish mainland made the fortress’ August 16th surrender a foregone conclusion: even Nicholas I estimated its fall would take no more than 10 days.¹⁹⁶ There were, however, several steps that the Allies needed to take in order to ensure the Russian garrison’s surrender. The first demanded that Anglo-French warships and transports locate an alternate passage into Lumpar Bay than the one covered by the main fortress and two outlying towers, Forts Novik (Nottich or Tower U) and Prästö (Presto or Tower Z). Attacking these works plus a third tower, Bränklint (Fort Tzee or Tower C) next involved

¹⁹¹ ADM 1/5624 HA 295 [August 7th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁹² ADM 1/5624 HA 293 [August 8th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁹³ BB4 733 170 and 175 [July 12th and 17th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁹⁴ Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 136.

¹⁹⁵ BB4 733 195 and 199 [July 31st and August 6th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁹⁶ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 72.

landing men, artillery, and supplies in position to overcome two towers before turning on the main Russian fort. Finally came questions of arranging the transportation and accommodation of prisoners, conducting gunnery trials, and demolishing the main fort after determining that the Swedish-Norwegian Government was not immediately entering the war. These tasks were each accomplished in under two weeks with varying degrees of difficulty, and casualties on all three sides were minimal. Conflict among commanders and competing ideas related to topics such as the effectiveness of warships against shore fortifications, however, continued to flare long after Bomarsund and its surroundings had been left “a heap of ruins” useful only as a site for scavenging construction material.¹⁹⁷

Threading the Aland Islands’ narrow passages with a long ribbon of large ships was a difficult task made even more pressing by the earlier, unsatisfactory reconnaissance efforts of Rear-Admiral Plumridge’s squadron. The Allied fleets were thus especially fortunate that Bartholomew Sullivan was on hand to guide them almost without a mishap. The process was dramatically illustrated in publications including *The Illustrated London News* and *L’Illustration, Journal Universel*. Such images were often courtesy of artists including Sir Oswald Brierly, commissioned by the former paper to sketch the action and allowed passage on several British warships, in addition to talented artists within the service including the aforementioned surgeon and watercolorist Dr. Edward Hodges Cree. Sketches, paintings, and other artwork were especially important to all of the Crimean War’s naval campaigns because combat photography was still in its extreme infancy and was ill-suited to capture action and events in distant theatres. A different perspective on operations in the Aland Islands was also provided by young British noblemen following their country’s fleet in several private yachts, notably the Reverend Robert Edgar Hughes of Magdalene College, Cambridge. Hughes specifically praised Sullivan’s surveying accomplishments,¹⁹⁸ but was less kind to all the Russian figures he described. The young ‘gentleman’ jauntily recorded observations such as his brother’s remark that Russian corpses were “the first Russians that I have seen clean and sober yet” while comparing these defeated opponents to unclean animals and vermin.¹⁹⁹ Anglo-French forces had to complete the

¹⁹⁷ ADM 1/5625 HA377 [September 5th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁹⁸ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the “Pet” yacht.* (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 67.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

necessary preparations for attacking Russian positions, though, before Hughes could be in a position to make these observations.

A joint reconnaissance mission on August 1st, 1854 saw Bomarsund ‘shot tremendously with spy-glasses’ and ‘carried off every bit on paper,’²⁰⁰ and France’s siege artillery and sappers belatedly arrived on August 5th. With these tasks complete Allied forces landed unopposed at two locations outside the range of Russian cannons on the 8th.²⁰¹ Even non-military observers such as Hughes quickly realized that “not a tenth part of the French were engaged, and the greater part never were within sight of the enemy.”²⁰² British sailors were forced to drag heavy ship’s artillery on sleds without the assistance of horses, but the landing process and subsequent maneuvers were so removed from the threat of a Russian attack that bands preceded them and loudly played popular songs.²⁰³ The forces landed included regular French infantry supported by French and British marines in addition to several companies of field artillery and contingents of combat engineers from both countries.

The Westernmost Russian tower of Brännklint (Fort Tzee or Tower C) was first to come under attack by French forces, the latter hoping to secure that tower’s fall and therefore an undivided share of the resulting credit. Heavy French artillery did not succeed in breaching, or blasting a substantial hole, in the forts granite-faced brick walls. It did, however, keep Finnish-Russian snipers from assuming rooftop positions.²⁰⁴ The latter accomplishment allowed a swarm of French *chasseurs*, or light infantry troops, to pour in a highly accurate rifle fire.²⁰⁵ A number of contemporary sources noted the bravery of the tower’s commander, Captain Tesche, in leading resistance with a sword before being bayoneted and imprisoned; his actions notwithstanding, the 32 Russian soldiers were captured by a French infantry charge on August, 14th²⁰⁶ while 140 more Russian defenders managed to withdraw to Bomarsund’s fortress.²⁰⁷ Brännklint Tower caught

²⁰⁰ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 216.

²⁰¹ Niel, Adolphe. *Siege of Bomarsund, 1854: Journal of Operations of the Artillery and Engineers*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1856), 15.

²⁰² Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the “Pet” yacht*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 82.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, 87.

²⁰⁴ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 229.

²⁰⁵ ADM 1/5625 HA 311 [August 16th, 1854] (NA).

²⁰⁶ BB4 733 205 [August 15th, 1854] (SHD).

²⁰⁷ Niel, Adolphe. *Siege of Bomarsund, 1854: Journal of Operations of the Artillery and Engineers*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1856), 22.

fire and exploded soon thereafter, as Allied attention turned to the western Notvik Tower, or Fort Nottich. A small section of Brännklint's wall remained intact, saving the lives of Allied observers including Sullivan who had ventured too closely to the burning tower while validating one lieutenant's observation that "there was not a spot big enough to lay your hand on that was not marked by their (French *chasseurs* ') murdering bullets."²⁰⁸

Significantly larger projectiles forced the surrender of Notvik Tower the next day. Notvik lay to the North of both Brännklint and Bomarsund, and was designed to project its strength seaward. Instead, the tower was destroyed by over 500 shots and shells from an improvised British artillery battery built on land originally intended to support French efforts against Fort Brännklint.²⁰⁹ Sullivan's nemesis and Master of the Fleet George Biddlecombe described the breach made by three then two 32-pound British cannons mounted on a nearby hill as a trench large enough to drive a coach and team of horses through, while Reverend Hughes added that he could have sailed his 8-ton yacht *Pet* through the gaping hole had there been sufficient water.²¹⁰ At the cost of one man killed and another wounded, the British took another 125 Russian prisoners when Fort Notvik surrendered on August 15th.²¹¹ British sources also learned the French losses had been "trifling,"²¹² while additional Allied land batteries and warships began shelling the main fortress on the same day that Notvik Tower fell. The six Russian dead in Notvik, on the other hand, were left shrouded in linen to be observed by visitors such as Hughes, who wondered in an introspective moment what "these poor fellows know or care about the Turkish question?"²¹³

The Allies' successful landing and assault on the Brännklint and Notvik towers placed Russian Major-General Jakob Bodisco and the remainder of his garrison in the main fortress of Bomarsund and Prästö Tower in an untenable strategic position. In a unique reversal of the dynamics that normally characterized Allied naval campaigns during the Crimean War,

²⁰⁸ Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 256.

²⁰⁹ Niel, Adolphe. *Siege of Bomarsund, 1854: Journal of Operations of the Artillery and Engineers*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1856), 26.

²¹⁰ Biddlecombe, George. *Autobiography of Sir George Biddlecombe, C.B.* (London, UK: Chapman and Hall, 1878), 241 and Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the "Pet" yacht.* (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 121.

²¹¹ ADM 1/5625 HA 311 [August 16th, 1854] (NA).

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the "Pet" yacht.* (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 122.

geography favored Bomarsund's attackers once the Aland Island's intricate passages had been successfully navigated. Britain's and France's complete naval superiority meant that the Russians would receive no reinforcements while the Allies could methodically maneuver cannons and mortars into protected positions on high ground overlooking the doomed fortress. Both sides acknowledged that Bomarsund was more resistant to naval bombardment than landward siege,²¹⁴ and its garrison was left to hope for an opportunity to distinguish itself in hand-to-hand combat against a possible Allied attempt to seize the main fortress by storm. During August 16th surrender negotiations, however, Baraguey d'Hilliers explained to his Russian counterpart that the latter's men would have 'waited in vain' because d'Hilliers was constructing batteries whose fire would have ensured that 'not one stone of the fortress would be left standing on another.'²¹⁵ Following a council with his officers, Bodisco surrendered the fortress and sent orders that Prästö Tower should also surrender before it was destroyed. The order was not immediately obeyed, but was finally acknowledged after several hours and a British naval bombardment. Although the Russian commander was initially accused of cowardness for surrendering the main fort before it had been breached by Allied artillery, he was subsequently exonerated by a commission of enquiry and Czar Alexander II personally. As one influential Russian statesman remarked to Sullivan after the Treaty of Paris in 1856, Bodisco had show great moral courage by risking his own reputation to save the lives of his defenceless soldiers while a weaker man would have held out until many had been killed for the sake of his own credit.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, Russia's eventual Minister of War Dmitry Milutin noted that the "unfortunate" but not "shameful" surrender made the 'heaviest impression' out of "all the failures that we have so far experienced in various battles" because Russia was more tolerant of defeat than surrender.²¹⁷

The 2,255 prisoners taken by Anglo-French forces at Bomarsund²¹⁸ came at a small cost to the Allies, but an ensuing outbreak of cholera added considerably to the total number of French casualties. Matters could have been much worse for the British Royal Navy after the

²¹⁴ BB4 733 195 [July 31st, 1854] (SHD) and HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 61.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 66.

²¹⁶ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 238.

²¹⁷ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 2, Page 35.

²¹⁸ ADM 1/5625 HA361 383 [August 21st, 1854] (NA).

Penelope ran aground 1800 or 1900 yards from Bomarsund on August 10th.²¹⁹ A number of Allied warships and small boats immediately rushed to the helpless ship's assistance, and Napier ordered Rear-Admiral Plumridge and Captain James Crawford Caffin to refloat the *Penelope* by whatever means necessary.²²⁰ These included throwing heavy items including cannons overboard, after which the ship floated free and out of range. The only British warship destroyed by Russian forces during the Crimean War (the *Tiger*) met a different fate after running aground in the Black Sea several months earlier, which corroborated Caffin's observation that his ship's escape with only 3 casualties was "most providential."²²¹ Napier's account of the incident was highly defensive, but little was made of an incident with few losses that came within a week of a widely reported Allied victory. More intense debate instead centered on two questions relating to the siege: how should the victorious Allies dispose of the fortress and islands that surrounded and to what extent had naval gunfire contributed to Bomarsund's fall?

Bomarsund's fate paradoxically depended on a power not even involved in the conflict. Oscar I's and the Government of Sweden-Norway were enticed to join the Anglo-French alliance against Russia, but still declined after surmising that any immediate territorial gains could not be successfully held without the same type of large-scale assistance that Britain and France were unwilling to guarantee. To put it in the more succinct words of a French contributor to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the Swedish-Norwegian king recognized that accepting Bomarsund without further Allied guarantees would place the united kingdoms in "*un terrible danger*."²²² Domestic and international pressure for Swedish-Norwegian intervention against Russia mounted, but events in 1855 proved that questions related to Finnmark and not Aland would be the lure that enticed Sweden to move towards entering the conflict.²²³ Sweden-Norway's August, 1854 position, however, left the Allies free to demolish Bomarsund's walls after gunnery expert and Rear-Admiral Henry Ducie Chads conducted gunnery trials against them with the *Edinburgh* in early September.

Interpreting these trials' results was a controversial process, and was rapidly caught up in the larger debates over the advisability of attacking major Russian fortifications. On September

²¹⁹ ADM 1/5625 HA312 [August 11th, 1854] (NA).

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ *Ibid.*, [August 10th].

²²² Geffroy, A. "Une Visite a Bomarsund." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Vol. 7 (1854), 1061.

²²³ See, for example: Barton, H. Arnold. "Scandinavianism, Fennomania, and the Crimean War." *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Summer, 2005), 63-65 and Hallendorff, Carl. *Oscar I, Napoleon, och Nikolaus*. (Stockholm: Hugo Gebers Förlag 1918), 121.

4th, 1854, the *Edinburgh* anchored 1,060 yards off of Bomarsund and opened fire with both explosive shells and solid cannonballs on a section of the fortress that Allied demolition engineers had deliberately left standing for that purpose.²²⁴ Chads then steered to within 500 yards and began firing a series of broadsides that caused Bomarsund's walls to crumble.²²⁵ Although the trials conclusively demonstrated that heavy shot at close range could destroy shore fortifications, Chads and other circumspect figures immediately detected a number of serious issues for which the test did not account. As the French General of Engineers Adolphe Niel noted, Brigadier-General Harry Jones, Napier, and other senior naval officers such as the commander of Britain's Black Sea Fleet shared his opinion that "such a maneuver could not have taken place under the fire of the enemy: the ship and crew would have suffered too much."²²⁶ Napier's correspondence with the Admiralty emphasized that Bomarsund's walls were mostly brick and only poorly faced with granite, consequently rendering their destruction 'not astonishing.'²²⁷ The aristocratic captains who detested Napier, on the other hand, were more inclined to criticize the "stone wall and red hot shot disease" that they and other brash observers believed had prevented the fleet from engaging larger Russian fortifications with warships alone.²²⁸ In the following three months, such observations played directly into the hands of Sir James Graham, who used them against Sir Charles Napier in assigning blame for the 1854 campaign's frustratingly indecisive conclusion.

Bomarsund's fall received wide and favorable coverage in Western European newspapers,²²⁹ but proved insufficient to alone satisfy the immense expectations that the British public in particular had for their fleet. Sir James Graham was acutely aware of this public discontent, and accordingly altered his public and private correspondence with Napier and the Baltic Fleet. Letters from Graham and other Admiralty Lords, especially Sir Maurice Berkeley, once commended Napier's caution and pleaded with the Vice-Admiral not to 'knock his head

²²⁴ Additional Manuscript 40026, Folio 25 [September 5th, 1854] (BL).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Niel, Adolphe. *Siege of Bomarsund, 1854: Journal of Operations of the Artillery and Engineers*. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1856), 33.

²²⁷ ADM 1/5625 HA377 437 [September 5th, 1854] (NA).

²²⁸ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the "Pet" yacht.* (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 91.

²²⁹ Including, for example, detailed illustrations in French and British publications such as *L'Illustration*, *Journal Universel* and *The Illustrated London News* in addition to articles in newspapers from Luxembourg to New Zealand.

against stone walls,²³⁰ but changed dramatically in the July weeks preceding Bomarsund's fall. Graham began issuing contradictory instructions, alternately suggesting that Napier attack Sweaborg, Revel, or Åbo (Turku) and then praising the Admiral's "prudence and sound judgment" in declining to do so.²³¹ The extent of these contradictions becomes apparent with any examination of Graham and Berkeley's correspondence with Napier, who could hardly contain his temper when drafting replies after September, 1854.²³² The Vice-Admiral's conduct in the immediate aftermath of Bomarsund's fall was still cooperative and British steamers reconnoitered both the approaches to Åbo and the Russian forces defending them on August 18th.

The coastal city of Åbo, located on Finland's Southwest coast across from the Åland Islands, had been the Finnish capital under Swedish rule and remained the Grand Duchy's largest city for decades after 1809. Two forested islands protected its harbor in addition to man-made defenses, which combined with its location to make the city an excellent station for Russian gunboats. Its significance was not lost on either side, and Napier dispatched a reconnaissance mission to compensate for Plumridge's earlier neglect and assess whether the city could be successfully attacked by an Allied Fleet reinforced with the French troops that had just taken Bomarsund.²³³ Captain Francis Scott of the *Odin*, assisted by the surveying Commander Henry Otter and the *Alban* led four vessels through passages so difficult that even relatively small steamers ran aground "frequently" in order to produce a detailed report on the port's defenses.²³⁴ These details, in turn, emphatically contraindicated an assault by either Allied naval or ground forces. Scott and Otter discovered that two of the three possible channels leading to Åbo Harbor were dangerously shallow, and all of them were strongly defended by gunboats, booms, chains, underwater piles, and concealed artillery batteries in addition to natural obstacles such as rocks.²³⁵ British reconnaissance also revealed that 15,000 Russian troops were expected or had already arrived to defend the city, and Captain Scott opined that passing through any channel "must be attended with an immense sacrifice of life" from Russian small-arms fire.²³⁶ Senior Allied commanders including Bartholomew Sullivan, General Baraguay d'Hilliers and the

²³⁰ Parker, Charles Stuart. *Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1907), 230.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

²³² Napier, for example, to apologize for the language he used in an October letter to Graham and the Admiralty: *Ibid.*, 237.

²³³ ADM 1/5625 HA361 [August 25th, 1854] (NA).

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

Brigadier-General Jones all agreed, concluding that a landing without direct naval support in the face of such a large Russian force “would have failed.”²³⁷

No such unanimity existed when the Allies again contemplated assaulting Sweaborg, which proved fatal to an already strained relationship between Napier and Sir James Graham. Even minute differences of opinion became weapons in the hands of a First Lord of the Admiralty determined that Napier alone would bear the brunt of public frustration. Graham skillfully exploited the opinions of multiple figures on how best to attack Sweaborg in the Fall of 1854 in order to deflect mounting public criticism. Sir James’ approach shocked then angered not only Vice-Admiral Napier, but also Parseval-Deschênes and Baraguay d’Hilliers. Interpersonal difficulties began in earnest with the British Admiralty’s September 4th receipt of a dispatch from Napier that included two reports by Brigadier-General Jones on the feasibility of attacking Sweaborg and Revel. The British engineer had accompanied Parseval-Deschênes, d’Hilliers, and Niel on a voyage to Revel and Sweaborg so that the French commanders could personally inspect both bases before France exited the Baltic for the Winter. The French Vice-Admiral and Major-General each agreed with Napier that neither fortified harbor invited attack late in the campaign season,²³⁸ but Jones’ report mentioned that a long-range bombardment that included a landing and ‘large rockets’ might succeed in setting Sweaborg’s wooden buildings on fire.²³⁹ Napier felt that Jones’ observation, *sans* the latter’s plan for landing 5,000 men, agreed with the Vice-Admiral’s own plan for assaulting Sweaborg that had been written “some time ago.”²⁴⁰ Sir Charles therefore duly forwarded Jones’ report with the expectation that it would corroborate his own assessment of Sweaborg as well as those of Parseval-Deschênes and d’Hilliers. Events quickly proved otherwise.

Jones wrote his report on Sweaborg on board the *Lightning* as it returned from carrying the engineer and senior French officers to Revel and Sweaborg on August 24th and 27th, respectively. The engineer freely admitted that Sweaborg’s position was “naturally a very strong one and not open to regular attack” while carefully qualifying his observations as “merely an outline of what is feasible, practicable, and of easy execution.”²⁴¹ Yet Graham was grasping at

²³⁷ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 238.

²³⁸ BB4 733 258 [September 1st, 1854] (SHD).

²³⁹ ADM 1/5625 [August 27th, 1854] (NA).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ PRO 30/16/18 [August 27th, 1854] (NA).

straws in the hope of avoiding public criticism, and honed in on two details from Jones' plan: the possibility of landing 5,000 men on Bak Holmen Island and the possibility of completing an attack in no more than a week. The First Lord chose to ignore Jones' call for heavy batteries of mortars and large rockets, along with the even more pressing detail that Napoleon III considered the season for Baltic operations over and had ordered Major-General d'Hilliers to withdraw his cholera-ravaged expeditionary force on August 30th.²⁴² Worse yet for the prospect of a cordial Allied command relationships for the campaign's remaining months, Graham took a similar approach in interpreting the French engineering general Niel's remarks. Sir James again ignored Niel's opinion that Jones' push for landing on Bak Holmen "is useless in the one case, insufficient and dangerous in the other," that the operation was "rash," and that ships are "very easy to be set on fire."²⁴³ Instead, the First Lord isolated Niel's assessment that Sweaborg could be ruined in less than two hours by concentrated broadsides delivered at close range²⁴⁴ while ignoring the French engineer's assertion that "it does not come within my province to advise it." Despite Napier's August 29th assessment that broaching the possibility of assaulting Åbo, much less Sweaborg, "would lead to discussion which would lead to nothing,"²⁴⁵ Graham forced him to hold three different conferences with his senior commanders and their French counterparts in September: the results only validated Napier's position.²⁴⁶ Irrespective of the large mass of supporting evidence and the opinions available to Napier at sea, the British Vice-Admiral was losing ground at home thanks to a multifaceted smear campaign orchestrated by Graham.

Personal conflict between Graham, Napier, and the French commanders caught in the crossfire was hugely significant because it cut to the heart of an expansive range of issues at stake for the Allies during the Crimean War. The Aberdeen Cabinet's weakness and divisions allowed Graham to assume an unusual degree of control over war-planning and operations, as Chapter Two discussed. This was further magnified by Napoleon III's designs, which included dispatching troops to Bomarsund but not closely coordinating with Parseval-Deschênes and France's sailing battlefleet. Furthermore, debate over attacking Sweaborg highlighted the evils of

²⁴² Additional Manuscript 40025, Folio 303 [August 30th, 1854] (BL).

²⁴³ Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 420.

²⁴⁴ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 120.

²⁴⁵ Parker, Charles Stuart. *Life and Letters of Sir James Graham, Second Baronet of Netherby*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1907), 233.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 126.

a joint command divided not only by nationality but also by service: Chapter Six demonstrates how these divisions between Allies and among officers also hampered operations in the Black Sea and Pacific. Finally and most importantly, however, came the sentiment that still dominates how the Crimean conflict is perceived: frustration. By September, 1854, Britain's aristocratic warship captains, not to mention the press and public, were "getting uproarious because nobody is killed and wounded" and "because Cronstadt etc. and Sevastopol have not been captured."²⁴⁷ These sentiments combined to motivate Graham to use his position at the Admiralty to mercilessly press Napier for results that both knew were impossible. Contrary to the latter figure's reputation, no rash actions ensued, and the damages inflicted in September, October, and November, 1854 ruined reputations rather than warships or fortifications.

All three mid-September Councils of War ordered by Graham ended up confirming the joint opinion of Vice-Admirals Napier and Parseval-Deschênes that further operations that year in the Baltic were impracticable. Parseval-Deschênes, for instance, was furious with Niel for 'spreading a total misunderstanding of naval combat.'²⁴⁸ Although the French Vice-Admiral was equally displeased at Baraguay d'Hilliers' attitude,²⁴⁹ the French Major-General emphatically supported both Allied Vice-Admirals by withdrawing his troops before the second and third councils. Likewise, Parseval-Deschênes declined to attend the third council on the grounds that he had already twice given his opinion that Sweaborg should not be attacked because the Allies had flammable wooden battleships rather than specialized gunboats and mortar vessels.²⁵⁰ Napier's account of the first council's proceedings was especially revealing. The Vice-Admiral mentioned "a good deal of dissatisfaction in England that more was not done," but adamantly resolved to never "lend myself to any absurd projects, or be driven to attempt what is not practicable, by newspaper writers, who, I am sorry to say, I have reason to believe are in correspondence with officers of the fleet, who ought to know better."²⁵¹ Even the unanimous opinion of Napier, Parseval-Deschênes, and three rear admirals including Chads mattered little to Graham, who was busy building a case that Napier's timidity rather than his own lack of planning was responsible for an absence of resounding successes against Russia in 1854.

²⁴⁷ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 163.

²⁴⁸ BB4 710 257 [September 18th, 1854] (SHD).

²⁴⁹ BB4 710 234 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

²⁵⁰ BB4 733 258 [September 1st, 1854] (SHD).

²⁵¹ ADM 1/5625 HA725 [September 13th, 1854] (NA).

Graham's stranglehold on information passing through the Admiralty afforded him considerable advantages in a battle for public opinion that was largely obviated by the Aberdeen Cabinet's fall in February, 1855. The First Lord enjoyed the luxury of disingenuously selecting minor details from correspondence and presenting them completely out of context with no opportunity for rebuttal. Furthermore, Graham did not hesitate to issue entirely contradictory orders, which alternately praised Napier for his caution and prudence before questioning the Vice-Admiral's courage. Graham also skillfully employed the correspondence of Captains including Clarence Paget and Henry Codrington, who deemed their commander an "old lady" and saw their year in the Baltic as "a bad professional dream."²⁵² Paget's letters found their way to Secretary of State for War Lord Newcastle. His lordship, in turn, forwarded extracts to Graham in correspondence that struggled to reconcile Newcastle's conflicting desire to demonstrate his Government's commitment to action while simultaneously ensuring that there would be no "useless waste of life...even to please the British Public."²⁵³ Graham next exploited a fabricated controversy over the exact date of the Fleet's withdrawal from the Baltic to discredit Napier with other Ministers, including Foreign Secretary Clarendon and Viscount Palmerston, still Home Secretary and soon to be Prime Minister.²⁵⁴ The Aberdeen Government's newly unfavorable opinion coupled with public dissatisfaction persuaded even erstwhile friends and allies of Napier, especially *Times* editor John Thadeus Delane, to abandon their public support of the Vice-Admiral's conduct. Napier's command was politically finished several months prior to receiving an order to haul down his flag on December 22nd.²⁵⁵

Napier was hardly blameless throughout the campaign, but fortunately for the men he commanded, the Vice-Admiral's faults lay more with his interpersonal choices than his military ones. Napier's erstwhile supporter and First Sea Lord Berkeley, for instance, informed him on Christmas that "the Admiralty have not to my knowledge found fault with your acts: they do find fault with your writing."²⁵⁶ Napier agreed, and replied "you are quite right- it is the writing that

²⁵² Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 270-271.

²⁵³ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 164.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 168.

²⁵⁵ Bonner-Smith, David and Capt. A.C. Dewar (Ed.). *Correspondence between the admiralty and Vice-Admiral Sir C. Napier respecting naval operations in the Baltic. 1854* (Volume 83). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1943), 187-188.

²⁵⁶ Additional Manuscript 40025, Folios 285-287 [December 25th and 27th, 1854] (BL).

has made the mischief and it will require more to unmake it.”²⁵⁷ Yet Napier was never able to unmake the damage that had ensued from the combination of his irascible nature with Graham’s manipulation. In hindsight, Sir Charles made three serious errors in dealing with his counterparts in the Royal Navy in 1854. The first involved communicating with Sir James Graham rather than the entire Admiralty Board, which later gave Graham complete control and deniability. Napier’s second mistake involved humiliating politically well-connected captains in public, rather than patiently compensating for their lack of experience and judgment in private. The Vice-Admiral’s final error resulted from his generally poor ability to prioritize and therefore determine which issues and documents merited full disclosure to and debate with Sir James Graham. Napier could, but elected not to, take some satisfaction that his initial loss in the battle with Graham was assuaged after the latter’s Cabinet lost a larger war to maintain public support and political power. Instead, the former commander spent the remaining half-decade of his life locked in a bitter struggle to clear his name in the House of Commons and press.²⁵⁸ Although partially successful, the process generated so much acrimony that issues of wider importance, especially strategic planning, were subsumed within a personal rather than a national debate.

The results of the 1854 Baltic campaign were as troubling to both sides. Nicholas I learned that his expensively-built and maintained fleet was utterly useless against screw-propelled Allied warships, though major Russian coastal fortifications did suffice to ward off attacks on Russia’s major harbors that year. The Anglo-French Fleet, meanwhile, was forced to accept that it was ill-equipped to mount assaults using battleships alone without incurring massive damage to these warships and casualties amongst their crews. Although this seemed a prescription for only small-scale actions and larger, frustrating stalemate, it is important to keep in mind that one side had the power to radically alter the balance of power evident in the Baltic campaigns of 1854 and 1855. Great Britain’s industrial and financial resources, discussed in Chapter Two, allowed it to threaten Russia’s straining Imperial Government with the total destruction of its capital, fleet, and finances by 1856. This threat came independent of French assistance, but likely involved Swedish-Norwegian resources and even those of German-speaking powers. The Baltic campaign of 1854 was not an insignificant precursor to the subsequent Great

²⁵⁷ PRO 30/16/14, Folios 95-6 [December 28th, 1854] (NA).

²⁵⁸ See, for example: House of Commons Debate, March 13th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 141, CC48-119 and Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857) [Footnote 21 on Page 96 of this chapter].

Armament and Treaty of Paris. It was instead a foundation that allowed the Allies to build on their reconnaissance and experiences to ensure that, in coming years, they would be able to add *vici*, or conquering, to the *veni* and *vidi*, or coming and seeing, that preceded it in the Julius Caesar quotation repeatedly mentioned by contemporary sources.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ See, for example: Napier, Sir Charles and G. Butler Earp (Ed.). *The History of the Baltic Campaign of 1854*. (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1857), 494.

Chapter Five

Campaigns in the White Sea, 1854-1855

60 years after the Crimean War's first naval campaigns, an unusual token of goodwill arrived in Northern Russia. This icon of St. Michael the Archangel was Britain's to return after its seizure during the 1854 Anglo-French effort against Russia's northern coasts.¹ Contemporary participants and subsequent authors alike noted the considerable distance separating the White Sea and Murman Coast from the Crimean conflict's ostensible focal point around the Black Sea, albeit for markedly different reasons. A special issue of the *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, for example, featured a proclamation in which Nicholas I cited Britain and France's decision to wage "open war against us" by "directing their blows on such points as were more or less accessible to them" in the Baltic, White Sea, and even the "far distant coasts of the Pacific Ocean."² The Czar astutely perceived that these campaigns demonstrated that Britain and France were not simply fighting to protect the Ottoman Empire, but this point was lost on some subsequent historians who incorrectly argued that such efforts were not "what Britain and France had gone to war *for*."³ Archival evidence instead proves that the primary Allied motive for dispatching warships to the White Sea was the same one which had initially attracted English merchant vessels during the 16th century: controlling trade.

Both the 1854 and 1855 Anglo-French campaigns in the White Sea are best seen as blockades designed to employ minimal resources so that larger fleet units could, presumably, be put to better use elsewhere. The fighting that did occur in the region represented raids by isolated British naval units rather than the seeds of a worldwide conflict involving neutral powers⁴ that both French and British leaders were intent on avoiding. Yet even decidedly small-scale conflict in the Czarist Empire's far north had profoundly significant consequences that extended far beyond issues relating to blockading. This became especially apparent after Allied diplomats successfully leveraged a minor dispute involving Finmark⁵ (Finnmark) and northern Finland in

¹ Perrett, Brian and Anthony Lord. *The Czar's British Squadron*. (London, UK: Kimber Publishing, 1981), 45.

² "Manifesto of the Czar." *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, (December 28th, 1854), 'Extraordinary Supplement.'

³ Humble, Richard. *Before the Dreadnaught: The Royal Navy from Nelson to Fisher*. (London, UK: MacDonald and Jane's, 1976), 85.

⁴ Baumgart, Winfried. *The Crimean War, 1853-1856*. (London, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 185.

⁵ Used here to denote the Norwegian portion of the larger Sápmi Cultural Region, which is divided among modern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.

order to secure a decisive alliance with Sweden-Norway. Furthermore, the importance of White Sea sites including the Solovetsky Monastery in the eyes of the Eastern Orthodox Church meant that even half-hearted attacks resonated throughout the Russian Empire and remained controversial for decades afterwards in Britain.⁶

Neither an alliance with Sweden-Norway nor the ethical implications of bombarding a fortified monastery immediately concerned Captain Erasmus Ommanney as his modest squadron of one frigate and two sloops entered the White Sea on June 19th, 1854:⁷ a French frigate and brig were unable to join them until mid-August.⁸ Befitting his fellowship in Britain's Royal Geographical Society and his previous experience in searching for doomed Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, Ommanney continually noted that environmental conditions varied greatly over short distances in the White Sea.⁹ These observations were corroborated during the 1855 campaign by Ommanney's replacement, Captain Thomas Baillie, whose officers noted that men who enjoyed swimming off the Russian Port of Archangel were eager to don overcoats further North. "Sudden and violent transitions from heat to cold" were uncomfortable for Allied seamen,¹⁰ but other environmental factors had even more serious consequences. As France's commander during both campaigns informed Napoleon III's Government, the White Sea's adjoining coastline was very uniform but not especially high, meaning that Allied ships were always exposed when conducting reconnaissance or other operations.¹¹ Surrounding tundra and rugged forests also made obtaining fresh provisions especially challenging for ships that were, in Ommanney's words "in a remote sea surrounded by an enemy's coast...shut off from all resources except those we carried with us."¹²

Russian mariners had a markedly different view of the White Sea, which had once been Russia's only outlet to the sea. Although this situation changed at the expense of Sweden and the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century, the northern ports of Archangel and Onega remained important export centers for products including rye flour and timber well into the 1800s. The materials for Archangel's "considerable exportation commerce," in fact, came from the "interior"

⁶ See, for example: Additional Manuscript 41340, Folios 146, 148 and 150 [April and May, 1870] (BL) and ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [multiple dates in April, 1890] (NA).

⁷ LBK/14 8 [June 23rd, 1854] (NMM).

⁸ BB4 716 08 [August 14th, 1854] (SHD).

⁹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O66 [August 7th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁰ Milner, Thomas. *The Baltic: Its Gates, Shores, and Cities*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), 379.

¹¹ BB4 716 33 [Undated] (SHD).

¹² Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

of Russia as demand ebbed and flowed during Summer months.¹³ Allied leaders thus hoped to interfere with 5-10% of the Russian Empire's trade¹⁴ while safeguarding their own economic interests. They did so by dispatching warships to the White Sea in 1854 and 1855, just as the British had in 1809, when Russia was still participating in Napoleon Bonaparte's Continental System. As Napoleon III's Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos forthrightly pointed out to France's White Sea commander, Capitaine de Vaisseau Pierre-Édouard Guilbert:

"France and England have been drawn into the war with Russia by the Czarist Empire because it threatened their commerce. It is because of this that ships were sent to the Black Sea and the Baltic...As for the White Sea, the Russian ships in the port of Arkhangel could potentially threaten and destroy the boats affected (*sic*) to the fishing commerce of the British unless the Allies blockade them."¹⁵

Ducos concluded that "the Allies should immediately blockade the Russian ports in the White Sea and send a maritime expedition with the goal of annihilating any military establishments in the ports as well as any warships that were found therein,"¹⁶ but paid significantly more attention to economic concerns than military. Such a focus was hardly comforting to the Russian inhabitants of the Kola Peninsula and White Sea coasts, especially considering that the 1809 raid was still within living memory. An Oxford fellow who traveled to Northern Norway in the mid-1850s, for instance, recorded an oral history account outlining how one Russian peasant came to lose a cow. The peasant had been unprepared for a British foraging party that suddenly landed in a bay, and had been unable to hide his cow. A British officer offered to purchase the animal, but the peasant was unwilling to sell it and falsely claimed it was the property of the Imperial Russian Government. Whereupon the officer simply replied "in that case I shall take her without paying for her."¹⁷ 45 years later, another British squadron would 'levy contributions' of livestock 'found' along the White Sea's shores: courteously at first, but by force if necessary.¹⁸

The focus of British efforts in the White Sea during both 19th century campaigns was the port of Archangel (Arkhangelsk), situated at the mouth of the Northern Dvina behind a series of islands in that River's delta. The City of Archangel was built of wood and inhabited by about

¹³ BB4 716 28 [Undated] (SHD).

¹⁴ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 29.

¹⁵ BB4 715 203 [May 20th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ Metcalfe, Frederick. *The Oxonian in Norway; or, Notes of Excursions in that Country in 1854-1855*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1856), 174-175.

¹⁸ LBK/14 25 [August 7th, 1854] (NMM) and Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. "Defense of the Russian North during the Crimean War." (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 107.

25,000 subjects in addition to a substantial garrison commanded by Provincial Governor (and Vice-Admiral), Roman Platonovich Boyle.¹⁹ Similarly to Governor-Generalship of Eastern Siberia under Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov, the Archangel Province's remoteness further enhanced Boyle's authority and role in defence planning. Guilbert viewed the Governor as "almost a vice-king" of the province,"²⁰ and Boyle did not hesitate to concentrate available Russian forces near Archangel while informing towns such as Kola that he was "upset" to "constantly get empty complaints" about their lack of military resources.²¹ A long-time consular presence and information obtained from neutral and captured Russian merchant vessels meant that British commanders knew Archangel was defended by 6,000 troops along with numerous shore batteries, gunboats, guardships, and a "very formidable" Fort Novodvin.²² Worse yet for the chances of a successful Allied naval attack, Archangel was similar to St. Petersburg in that it was only accessible to warships through four shallow channels, all of which were strongly defended. Obstacles including Russian troops, batteries, and gunboats were graphically marked in red by Ommanney on his map of "Arkhangel Bay and the Northern Dvina" and accompanied by discouraging notes including: "by the latest accounts there are 20,000 troops collected to defend Arkangel and the approach of the Dwina."²³ Initial British and subsequent Allied reconnaissance efforts all led to the unanimous conclusion that Archangel could not be successfully attacked because it could not even be reached by Allied warships. Russia's other northern centers, however, were not as fortunate.

Russia's seat of government for the Murman Coast and Kola Peninsula was Kola, a small town that acted as the administrative center of Russian Lapland.. The Town of Kola lay more than 50 kilometres (30 miles) away from the Barents Sea, but was accessible through the ascent of a narrow and shallow Kola River.²⁴ It had been "previously visited" by British forces in May, 1809, resulting in "noticeable losses" for some inhabitants and "complete bankruptcy for

¹⁹ BB4 716 28 [Undated, 1854] (SHD).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 4.

²² ADM 1/5631 CAP O51 [July 4th, 1854] (NA) and LBK/14 8 [June 23rd, 1854] (NMM).

²³ MPI/101 [Originally Printed: May 20th, 1854, Modified by Ommanney on June 16th, 1854] (NA). Russian archival evidence instead indicates that, even in 1855, the Arkhangelsk Province contained fewer than 9,000 soldiers. See, for example: Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. "Defense of the Russian North during the Crimean War." (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 114.

²⁴ ADM 1/5631 CAP O20 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

others.”²⁵ Prominent townspeople believed that “the ease with which the town was taken would be remembered by the enemy,” and petitioned Governor Boyle to reinforce its meagre complement of retired soldiers of on the grounds that Kola would be targeted “if the enemy decides to send a part of its fleet to the northern shores of Russia.”²⁶ Despite the early dates of their requests and petitions, however, the Governor was unwilling to weaken Archangel’s garrison and sent only 100 rifles and ammunition. He reasoned that Kola was safe because the British would have to approach Kola in small ship’s boats, which would be rowed through a narrow river ‘under a steep shore,” allowing them to “be shot at easily and conveniently.”²⁷ Little did the Russians realize, though, that Captain Edmund Lyons and the screw-propelled sloop *Miranda* had another plan entirely for assaulting a town that British commanders “regarded as a place of considerable importance” for its proximity to Norway, governmental role for Russian Lapland, and ability to conceal merchant ships in nearby creeks.²⁸

Another important Russian outpost in the White Sea began preparing for war in early 1854, which seems strange given its designation as a monastery. As the British Government and Ommanney later went to great lengths to point out, though, the Solovetsky (Solovetskoi, Solovetskii, etc.) Monastery and its surrounding complex served triple purposes as Monastery, fortress, and political prison.²⁹ Constructed on the White Sea’s largest island group, the Solovetsky Islands, the Monastery had played an important role in Russian history since its establishment in the 15th century. Its formidable stone ramparts were initially intended to repel enemies including Swedes and crusading orders of Germanic knights, and also allowed the Monastery to become a rallying point for the ‘Old Believer’ sect during the *raskol*, or 17th century schism that tore apart the Russian Orthodox Church. By the end of the Napoleonic Wars, however, the Solovetsky Monastery had shipped its arms to Archangel and was no longer listed as an active fortress. The arms that remained were museum pieces, some dating back to the 16th century reign of Ivan IV “The Terrible.”³⁰ The Monastery’s clergy, some of whom were political

²⁵ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. “About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854.” *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. “About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854.” *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 5.

²⁸ ADM 1/5631 CAP O20 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

²⁹ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

³⁰ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 1, Page 1, Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language].

prisoners, initially felt they had been “left by the Emperor...to be made a sacrifice for his sins” when they heard that British ships were approaching.³¹ Yet they were fortunate to have received substantially more reinforcements than were dispatched to Kola, including regular troops and a half-dozen cannon to supplement older artillery pieces still in the Monastery’s possession.³² Coupled with the complex’s “strong walls of fortification”³³ and the limited supply of ammunition carried by British warships, these reinforcements proved sufficient to repel a British bombardment in mid-July, 1854.

Ommanney and the two ships that accompanied him to the Solovetsky Islands were clearly surprised by their namesake Monastery’s unexpected resistance. This reinforces two themes that re-appeared throughout a number of British and French primary documents concerning their campaigns in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific during the 1850s. The first was that British experiences in these theatres, often involving combat, “tend(ed) to prove...contrary”³⁴ to British officers’ generalizations regarding Russian subjects residing in these regions. Ommanney, for instance, found it “a matter of surprise” that inhabitants of “so remote a country...possess(ed) a degree of intelligence and civilization that could hardly have been anticipated.”³⁵ The second theme to quickly emerge was that the intricacies of coastal and riverine navigation and the specifics of Russian defences in these regions were imperfectly known to the Allies and could only be ascertained through a process of trial and error, especially when it came to navigation.

The White Sea had never been a regular station for British and French warships, which put the naval forces of both countries at a disadvantage during their initial operations. Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos reminded his squadron commander multiple times that French warships had “scarcely” and “infrequently” visited the Russian Far North, making navigation especially “dangerous.”³⁶ The risk presented by shallow and rocky waters was further heightened by a deviation in French compasses caused by the local attraction of the *Psyche*’s armament,

“*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*,” No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854], and Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 191.

³¹ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 190.

³² *Ibid*, 188.

³³ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

³⁴ OD 265 [Multiple Dates] (AHO).

³⁵ ADM 1/5631 CAP O66 [August 7th, 1854] (NA).

³⁶ BB4 715 203 and 214 [Multiple Dates] (SHD).

which Guilbert believed was certainly “the cause of many shipwrecks in these waters!”³⁷ The French did receive British Admiralty charts based on earlier Russian surveys from 1833,³⁸ but these documents were not completely accurate. British officers in 1855, for instance, still found grounds to “respectfully suggest” that a rock “said to be very dangerous” be inserted in the Admiralty Charts and comment on more minor details, including the incorrectness of a lighthouse sketch in the margins of those documents.³⁹ British ships ran aground numerous times without further incident, but there were several instances during which matters threatened to become significantly more serious, most notably when the wooden-hulled *Miranda* ran aground less than 300 yards from the burning Town of Kola.⁴⁰ Ommanney’s 1870 conclusion that White Sea navigation was “not without danger” was thus fully warranted:⁴¹ navigating safely remained an Allied concern throughout the remainder of both the 1854 and 1855 campaigns.

A maladjusted compass was only one of the problems the French experienced in deploying the *Psyche* and *Beaumanoir* to the White Sea. Even more serious was the three week delay resulting from the late arrival of the *Beaumanoir* in Norway. Guilbert realized that “this is wasting precious time because the opening to Arkangel is not open for much of the year,”⁴² and implementation of the Allied blockade was delayed accordingly. The French commander’s subsequent recommendations for an 1856 campaign reveal that he believed a May arrival in the White Sea was ideal, months earlier than the August 11th rendezvous that instead marred the 1854 campaign.⁴³ The resulting delay, given the Allied Squadron’s withdrawal from the White Sea in September of that year, meant that France’s initial campaign in the Russian North was extremely limited in duration. Timing mattered little when it came to assaulting Archangel, though, as the port remained out of reach of Allied warships throughout the campaign. French tardiness instead mattered a great deal because it delayed the implementation of a blockade ordered on May 20th for months.⁴⁴

In addition to tracking the French squadron’s progress, British warships involved in the 1854 campaign also carefully monitored the projected arrival of transports with fresh provisions

³⁷ BB4 716 33 [Undated] (SHD).

³⁸ Chart 2269-2276 [Undated] (AHO).

³⁹ OD 265 [Received: December 11th, 1855] (AHO).

⁴⁰ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

⁴¹ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

⁴² BB4 716 5 [July 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

⁴³ ADM 1/5631 CAP O67 [August 14th, 1854] (NA).

⁴⁴ BB4 715 ____ [June 28th, 1854] (SHD).

and colliers, or coal-bearing ships. Logistical challenge compounded the aforementioned navigational difficulties during both White Sea campaigns, with the former having serious health consequences for French sailors in 1855. The Allies faced a problem due to the region's location and geography, which were not conducive towards providing British and French warships with customary ration staples such as beef. Officers of both nations noted the difficulty of purchasing fresh provisions at Hammerfest, the northernmost Norwegian town of any significance, with approximately 1,000 inhabitants.⁴⁵ Once the Russians were informed by the captain of a Hanoverian merchant vessel that the British squadron cruising off Archangel wished to purchase beef, Russian authorities in the provincial capital limited neutral carrier's beef supplies to two pounds per crewman.⁴⁶ The French *Moniteur de la Flotte* printed a more explicit letter from Captain Guilbert in 1855, which held that Russian civilians were initially "willing to sell fresh provisions" to Allied ships prior to "the appearance of an order from the Government threatening with the punishment of death, or exile to Siberia, all those who held any intercourse with the vessels of the allies."⁴⁷ Governor Boyle's September 1854 suggestion that the inhabitants of coastal villages "should not be so dumb and cowardly as to allow the enemy to use their property" did little to contradict the French Captain's assessment.⁴⁸ Guilbert concluded that "measures of terror" effectively convinced Russian residents to display "a decided hostility" towards Allied forces, but neglected to mention the damage done to coastal towns by British forces as a possible motivating factor.⁴⁹ Allied sailors eventually adjusted to the taste of reindeer venison in place of beef,⁵⁰ but delays in communication remained a problem on account of both distance and a "rigid search" adopted by the Russians with all neutral vessels in order to "detect any communication" from Allied ships.⁵¹

British and then Anglo-French squadrons were drawn to Archangel by the prospect of assaulting the port, and were explicitly instructed to closely blockade its approaches. The first aim of the Allied blockade in the White Sea, as well as in the Baltic and Pacific, was essentially negative. Ensuring that the Czarist Government could not use even the most isolated ports of its

⁴⁵ OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

⁴⁶ LBK/14 12 [July 8th, 1854] (NMM).

⁴⁷ "The White Sea" from *The Moniteur de la Flotte* (November 5th, 1855). Reprinted in *The Times*, (November 6th, 1855), 6.

⁴⁸ Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. "*Defense of the Russian North during the Crimean War.*" (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 107.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ BB4 716 24 [October 20th, 1854] (SHD).

⁵¹ LBK/14 12 [July 8th, 1854] (NMM).

empire as launching points for warships and privateers to threaten Anglo-French commerce was a vital British war aim. Sir James Graham, for one, had come of age during an era in which Britain's merchant marine suffered enormous losses to French and American privateers, and was keenly aware that even isolated or sporadic incidents could throw the London insurance market into a panic.⁵² He was also facing pressure from a Parliament anxious to defend the economic interests of its constituents from even the remotest of Russian naval threats,⁵³ while the French Government shared these apprehensions. Théodore Ducos even went to the trouble of specifying to Captain Guilbert the individual names of Danish and Hanoverian vessels carrying French goods in the White Sea, especially linen, before ordering his commander to ensure that they were protected.⁵⁴ Speedily implementing these directives, however, was entirely another affair.

An Allied blockade of the White Sea did not begin with the arrival of British ships in the White Sea on June 19th, 1854. This was certainly attributable to the delayed arrival of French warships, but also to larger diplomatic considerations. Graham and Clarendon needed time to coordinate blockade policy with Napoleon III's ministers, tailor an exemption for Finmark, and iron out practical details such as how to address an existing Anglo-Russian system that allowed British merchants to pre-pay for Russian goods.⁵⁵ A political problem quickly arose as a result of Graham's deceptive statements to merchants and shipowners that he had "no intention of establishing a Blockade" of Archangel⁵⁶ when, in fact, the First Lord's private correspondence betrayed his long-held intentions to the contrary.⁵⁷ By June 2nd, 1854, Former Ambassador to St. Petersburg Lord Clanricarde was openly questioning Graham's statements in the House of Lords and pushing, along with Lord Beaumont, for an aggressive blockade of Archangel in order to drive home the "inconveniences of the present war" to the Russian population and their Government.⁵⁸ Lord Aberdeen vocally objected to Lord Beaumont's assertion that "any" British Admiralty had a "perfect right" to blockade "any" Russian port without prior notice.⁵⁹ Yet the

⁵² Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 40.

⁵³ See, for example: Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, July 31st, 1855. *Hansard's* Vol. 139, CC 1589-604. BB4 715 211 and 21- [Multiple Dates] (SHD).

⁵⁴ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 31 and 35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁶ ADM 2/1698 50-51 and 62-23 [May 2nd and 5th, 1854] (NA).

⁵⁷ Great Britain. House of Lords Debate, June 2nd, 1854. *Hansard's* Vol. 133, CC. 1225-30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

sitting Prime Minister's extended counter-argument that the War was being pursued with vigor and determination that stopped short only of "any such horrible notions as firing upon all parts of a town" manifested a tone entirely out of synch with subsequent British actions at locations including Kola.⁶⁰

The undisclosed determination of Graham and Clarendon to blockade Archangel and mounting parliamentary pressure had already obviated the need for Ommanney's dispatch "Suggesting a Blockade of the Ports in the White Sea" by the time it was written on June 14th, but the document nevertheless reveals several problems faced by Allied forces in this endeavor.⁶¹ The first and most important problem with the Anglo-French blockade in 1854 was that its delayed implementation rendered attempts to implement it absurd. By mid-June, Ommanney had watched over 400 neutral vessels as having entered Archangel, with almost another full month remaining until a blockade could be formally implemented.⁶² This meant that Russian exports for 1854 had already departed long before Anglo-French legal requirements could be met through the delivery of a formal blockade notification to Archangel on August 13th. The few vessels legally captured by the Allied squadron were consistently under 100 tons and carrying cargos of fish or rye flour,⁶³ staples related to local trade rather than international commerce. When the schooners *Volga* and *Dvina* were captured by British and French warships, respectively, Russian sources emphasized the flimsiness of pretexts that included lack of an official coat of arms on the Swedish-Norwegian consular certificate and the fineness of their construction rather than a more substantial presence of contraband, weapons, or Russian Government property.⁶⁴

On May 17th and 19th, 1854, Governor Roman Platonovich Boyle received two letters: the first from his own Government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the second from the Royal Swedish-Norwegian Consulate in Archangel.⁶⁵ They informed his Excellency that the British and French Governments would not interfere with trade between Russia's northern possessions and the Norwegian territory of Finmark even after the formal establishment of a blockade. In keeping with the aphorism that a good compromise leaves everyone unhappy, the provision drew protests

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O53 [July 14th, 1854] (NA).

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ ADM 1/5631 CAP O82 [September 14th, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁴ Davydov, Ruslan A. [Russian-language], "The Capture of Russian schooners *Volga* and *Dvina* by the Anglo-French Navies in the White Sea in 1854," Ushakovsky Readings: The Collection of Scientific Articles (MGPU: Murmansk, Russia, 2006), 160-172 and *L'Invalide Russe* (July 15th, 1854), 687.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 160.

from military authorities in each of the belligerent powers. Théodore Ducos complained that the Russian Government and its agents were deliberately exploiting isolated incidents in which a few Russian ships carrying grain and bound for Finmark had been stopped by Allied vessels, and instructed Guilbert to ensure that “local populations are confident in our ability to protect their commerce.”⁶⁶ Ducos accused the Russian Government of forcing its merchant vessels to stay in their harbors and pretend they were not allowed to trade with Finmark,⁶⁷ while the Russians countered that crews and vessels engaged in permitted trade had been illegitimately seized by both British and French warships. Ommanney also denounced Czarist Authorities for ‘circulating false representations with a view to excite a prejudice against our intentions.’⁶⁸ The British Captain’s letterbook, however, indicated that problems relating to the Finmark exemption could not be solely attributed to Russian duplicity. Even euphemistic phrases such “mature consideration” could not disguise the confusion that British officers experienced when attempting to make lawful blockade captures.⁶⁹

The British Government’s blockade policy, or initial lack thereof, was the principal target of critical newspaper articles. Unlike with Cronstadt and Sweaborg in the Baltic, no acrimonious debate over the wisdom of assaulting Archangel demanded the attention of Britain’s press or Parliament. Clanricarde got off a parting shot at the Aberdeen Cabinet’s White Sea blockade policy in a *Times* article from August 30th. This piece, in turn, reprinted a July letter emphasizing that, without a blockade, the British squadron’s presence in the White Sea was “next to useless.”⁷⁰ Allied efforts improved considerably the following year, with controversy limiting itself to continued, and often anonymous, sniping over the Finmark exception and the specific date of the Allied squadron’s withdrawal.⁷¹ Regardless of whether its mandate was to blockade or simply injure Russian interests in the region, the British squadron’s first destination in the White Sea was Archangel: the same was true for subsequently-arriving French warships.

The correspondence and actions of Ommanney and subordinates, especially Captain Edmund Moubray Lyons, from the outset of the 1854 campaign revealed their eagerness to attack Archangel. Yet these ambitions were defeated in both 1854 and 1855 by the simple fact that

⁶⁶ BB4 ____ [August 1st, 1854] (SHD). See also: BB2 332 [August 29th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ LBK/14 [August 30th, 1854] (NMM).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “Our Naval Operations in the White Sea.” *The Times*, (August 30th, 1854), 5.

⁷¹ “Letters to the Ed.” *The Times*, (November 7th, 1855), 1.

British warships drew too much water to pass the channels potentially allowing access to Archangel. As one contemporary civilian critic pointed out, merchants had “known for centuries” that even the deepest channel, Berezov, was obstructed by a shallow sandbar.⁷² This made Graham’s choice of the *Eurydice*, *Brisk*, and *Miranda*,⁷³ the shallowest of which drew still 15 feet of water, an act of “singular fatuity,” or utterly complacent and smug stupidity.⁷⁴ Although the First Lord’s defense was busy planning larger operations elsewhere, Graham thus unwittingly limited the potential military accomplishments of Ommanney’s squadron by depriving them of the means necessary to successfully attack their largest possible objective. This unpleasant reality quickly became apparent to British commanders as reconnaissance missions commenced in early July following an improvement in the weather.

At a conference on board the frigate *Eurydice*, Ommanney and his two senior officers, Captain Lyons (*Miranda*) and Commander Frederick Seymour (*Brisk*), formulated a simple plan for attacking Archangel. After sounding the bar that obstructed the channels entering the Dvina River and leading to Archangel, the steam sloops and armed ships boats would enter the Dvina and proceed to attack the port city and shipyard. Problems immediately arose during initial reconnaissance operations in July, when small ship’s boats discovered that the Berezov Channel, even with favorable weather conditions and a high tide, was simply not deep enough to allow either the *Miranda* or *Brisk* to continue towards Archangel.⁷⁵ The British boats were then forced to withdraw after horse-drawn Russian shore artillery and approaching Russian gunboats drove home the realization that they had moved beyond the protective range of the larger British warships kept at a distance in deeper waters.⁷⁶ Ommanney then ordered the *Miranda* to reconnoiter the lesser channels, but Lyons found the Murman Channel “perfectly impracticable for any thing but small vessels”⁷⁷ and withdrew. Later surveys soon revealed that the Nikolski

⁷² Milner, Thomas. *The Baltic: Its Gates, Shores, and Cities*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1854), 385.

⁷³ Altogether, these ships had a total complement of approximately 60 guns (26 on the *Eurydice*) and were manned by 540 officers and men. The corresponding armament of France’s 1854 White Sea Squadron was 40 guns for the *Psyche* and 18 for the *Beaumanoir*- Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 31.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ ADM 1/5631 Cap O54 [July 5th, 1854] (NA).

⁷⁶ ADM 1/5631 Cap O51 [July 4th, 1854] (NA).

⁷⁷ LBK/14 [July 5th, 1854] (NA).

and Poujience Channels were even shallower.⁷⁸ Pierre-Édouard Guilbert, for one, later noted that these channels were only 9 feet deep and were also defended by Russian forces even though Allied passage seemed “implausible.”⁷⁹ British commanders were thus forced to conclude that their “Squadron is totally inadequate to attempt any operations” against Russian defenses surrounding Archangel,⁸⁰ especially because the small boats that could pass the bar were “far too insignificant to attempt anything.”⁸¹ Firmly convinced that operations against “such an overwhelming force, defended by natural obstacles” would be “utterly futile,”⁸² British warships accordingly steamed and sailed away in search of other targets.

On the morning of July 18th, 1854, Russian lookouts manning the Solovetsky Monastery’s towers sighted two approaching enemy vessels.⁸³ These were the British sloops *Miranda* and *Brisk*, which were proceeding “with the intention of examining the Bay of Onega” to the southeast of the Solovetsky Islands.⁸⁴ The two steam vessels carried reinforced complements drawn from the *Eurydice* along with Ommanney and an interpreter. The larger sailing frigate, meanwhile, stayed at the White Sea’s entrance to guard Cross Island and a collier.⁸⁵ Accounts then diverged dramatically, depending on the nationality of their authors. Russians believed the British were after the monastery’s treasures, which had already been removed for safekeeping to Archangel as a precaution.⁸⁶ Ommanney, on the other hand, argued that he was simply “admiring the imposing aspect of the Monastery and its massive fortifications” from *Brisk* when he heard an exchange of cannon shots involving the *Miranda*.⁸⁷ The events that followed remained so controversial that, 46 years later, the British Admiralty demanded the right to inspect a draft historical account based on official records and to prevent publication of “all or any part of” the account should it be deemed objectionable.⁸⁸

⁷⁸ Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 33.

⁷⁹ BB4 716 28 [October 20th, 1854] (NA).

⁸⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP O55 [July 8th, 1854] (NA).

⁸¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O51 [July 4th, 1854] (NA).

⁸² ADM 1/5631 CAP O52 [July 15th, 1854] (NA).

⁸³ Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. “*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*,” No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854].

⁸⁴ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. “*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*,” No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854].

⁸⁷ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

⁸⁸ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [April 25th, 1890] (NA).

British and Russian officials immediately began to dispute two major points related to the Monastery's bombardment. The first involved how to most accurately describe the "character" of a complex that, by Ommanney's own admission, was simultaneously "a fortress, monastery, and place of banishment for political offenders" as well as a destination for pilgrims.⁸⁹ The second concerned the more tangible issue of which side fired first. Archimandrite Alexander claimed in his report to the Russian Orthodox Synod, or Church Council, that two three-masted frigates with about 60 guns each opened fire on the Monastery and Holy Gates without provocation, with the only Russian artillery battery out of British sight.⁹⁰ The Archimandrite's claims were deliberately exaggerated. The *Miranda* and *Brisk* carried only half that number of cannon and had merely fired warning shots, explaining why the first shots entirely missed such "an extensive mass of buildings."⁹¹ The observations of a Russian civilian in British custody also indicate that the firing soon ceased, as he 'did not know why they stopped (firing) after that and waited until the next day.'⁹² Furthermore, Captain Lyons' description of the Russian infantry and artillery batteries' precise location in a report written on July 19th proves that both were obviously visible to *Miranda's* crew.⁹³ The contemporary Russian view that the British squadron was after the Monastery's treasury is more plausible, although Ommanney claimed that a "vast amount of wealth" had been sent to St. Petersburg in support of the Russian war effort rather than to Archangel for safekeeping.⁹⁴ Despite his non-involvement with Lyon's initial decision to fire a warning shot and then return Russian fire, the British commander made an ill-advised decision soon after both ships temporarily withdrew beyond the range of Russian cannon-shot for the night.

At 6 AM on the following morning of July 19th, a small boat flying a flag of truce arrived on shore with an ultimatum from Captain Ommanney. Archimandrite Alexander's report objected to a reference to the "commandant of the garrison" as a groundless assumption that the Monastery had a commandant,⁹⁵ but the Russian prelate did "acknowledge himself to be the

⁸⁹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

⁹⁰ Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. "Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events." (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 66 and Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. "Almanac Solovetsky Sea," No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854].

⁹¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

⁹² Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. "Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events." (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 74.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. "Almanac Solovetsky Sea," No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 2 [July 22nd, 1854].

director of the military operations.”⁹⁶ Ommanney argued that this was “at variance with...the character of the Monastery,”⁹⁷ while adding an interesting adjective to his description of events 16 years later by deeming the Archimandrite the “sole director of military operations.”⁹⁸ The ultimatum’s contents, however, were the subjects of considerably less disagreement. Both Russian and British sources contain full translations the document, and the texts of each are consistent.⁹⁹ Although Russian participants laughed at interpreter Frederick Hill’s rendition of “squadron of ships” as a “squadron of horse (cavalry),”¹⁰⁰ the type of linguistic misunderstanding that marred Anglo-Japanese negotiations that same year was absent from this exchange. There was no mistaking British demands, which Ommanney labeled as “conditions.”¹⁰¹ They included the unconditional surrender of all Russian military forces on Solovetsk Island along with their weapons, including the garrison commandant’s sword, on pain of a bombardment that “must necessarily follow their refusal.”¹⁰²

The British ultimatum explicitly justified its “conditions” as a response to the Monastery’s defenses having first fired on the *Miranda* without provocation.¹⁰³ The document reached the Russian delegation once the small British boat reached shore, and thereafter relayed to the Monastery on horseback. Within two hours, the British received a general response that denied the Convent had initially opened fire and pointed to the *Miranda*’s warning as the “first shot” of the exchange.¹⁰⁴ Ommanney characterized the reply as “evasive” and hauled down the flag of truce at 8 AM. At 8:30, the *Miranda* opened fire on a Russian field artillery battery, while the *Brisk* threw solid shot and shell against “the walls of the Monastery and the building enclosed therein at a distance of 16 or 17 hundred yards”.¹⁰⁵

Six and a half hours and hundreds of artillery rounds later, Ommanney and his captains reached an embarrassing conclusion. Their two sloops together mounted less than a third of the

⁹⁶ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA). See also: Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. “*Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events.*” (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 70.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

⁹⁹ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856.*” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 1-2.

¹⁰⁰ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia.* (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 194.

¹⁰¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856.*” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 2 and Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia.* (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 195.

¹⁰⁵ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

cannons carried by the largest British battleships, which meant that the *Miranda* and *Brisk* possessed neither the firepower nor the ammunition to batter down the Monastery's heavy stone walls. As Ommanney defensively observed years later: "the nature of the coast and navigation" meant that "our closest position to the Monastery was 1600 or 1700 yards(:) a long range for damaging stone walls."¹⁰⁶ The *Miranda* repeatedly drove Russian gunners from their positions beside the Monastery, but both sides acknowledged the Russian gunners' bravery in returning to their batteries.¹⁰⁷ Ommanney later cited "the admirable and advantageous" placement of Russian artillery as evidence that an "skilled artillerist" was present,¹⁰⁸ and immediately informed the Admiralty that such evidence "prove(d) that some military officer of experience was on the spot."¹⁰⁹ Russian return fire killed 19-year-old King Marshall, "an ordinary seaman and man of colour" from Sierra Leone, and left another crewman on the *Miranda*, Stephen Hart, without an arm.¹¹⁰

More serious than their two casualties was the simple fact that British "shot fell harmless on the massive outwork which encloses the Monastery."¹¹¹ This forced the *Brisk* to aim at church domes and outworks, "the only portions of the building which were within range,"¹¹² and lent credibility to the assertions of Archimandrite Alexander and subsequent Russian accounts that charged the British with "tend(ing) to aim at the churches and their domes."¹¹³ The "hurricane of brass and iron" hurled from British decks set some fires,¹¹⁴ but even Ommanney disappointedly observed that these remained only "occasional" due to the fire-fighting efforts of Russian monks.¹¹⁵ Throughout the engagement, British officers had difficulty assessing the extent to which they had damaged Russian fortifications. A late afternoon landing on nearby Peri Island, though, allowed Ommanney to observe that the Monastery and its surrounding defenses were "unassailable by the small force at my command"¹¹⁶ and that "the extent and strength of the

¹⁰⁶ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

¹⁰⁷ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA) and Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. "*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*," No. 3 (2004), Letter 2, Page 1 [July 22nd, 1854].

¹⁰⁸ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

¹⁰⁹ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁰ *The Courier*, (December 13th, 1854), 2.

¹¹¹ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. "*Almanac Solovetsky Sea*," No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Page 2 [July 22nd, 1854].

¹¹⁴ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 201.

¹¹⁵ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁶ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

walls” made it “quite impracticable for our small force to assail.”¹¹⁷ Concluding that there was nothing more to be done, Ommanney and his squadron left the anchorage soon after daylight on July 20th.¹¹⁸

The Solovetsky Monastery’s resistance fit seamlessly with the Czarist Government’s wartime propaganda efforts. Russian writers mocked Britain and France for calling themselves Christian, “worrying about the abolition of slavery,” and “writing laws that prohibit the cruel treatment of animals” while entering into an “unrighteous alliance with the enemies of Christ (the Muslim Ottoman Empire).”¹¹⁹ News of the incident was “carried into every part of Russia,”¹²⁰ and contemporary Czarist publications emphasized that it was “impossible to make up” facts including absence of any deaths among the small seagulls that covered the Monastery’s yards.¹²¹ Archimandrite Alexander, on the other hand, freely exaggerated the details of his Monastery’s encounter in his official report and during a personal audience with Nicholas I.¹²² The Russian prelate neglected to mention that the first shots fired by the English were warnings that came nowhere near the Monastery’s Holy Gates, and claimed that the *Miranda* and *Brisk* were frigates mounting about 120 guns instead of their actual total of 31.¹²³ He also added poetic details such as the timing of the last British round, which allegedly hit just after a bell had signaled the beginning of a service of the Kazan Mother of God.¹²⁴

As British historian, columnist, and traveler William Hepworth Dixon recorded in an oral history account taken from a peasant in 1870, Britain lost a larger ideological battle. Dixon’s subject, for example, “scoffed” to his English visitor:

“Now, see what you have done. You wage war upon us; you send your fleets into the Black Sea and into the White Sea; in the first to fight against the Empire, in the second to fight against the Church. In one sea, you win; in the other sea, you lose. Sevastopol falls to your arms; while Solovetsk drives away your ships. The arm of the spirit is seen to be stronger than the arm of the flesh.”¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁸ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

¹¹⁹ [Russian-language]. “*Solovetsky Monastery and the Description of its Bombardment by the British on July 7th, 1854.*” (Moscow: Smirnov, 1867), 19.

¹²⁰ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 201. See also, for example: *L’Invalide Russe*, (August 1st, 1854), 757.

¹²¹ Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. “*Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events.*” (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 74.

¹²² Burov, Vladimir [Russian Language]. “*Almanac Solovetsky Sea,*” No. 3 (2004), Letter 1, Pages 1-3 [July 22nd, 1854].

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁵ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 187.

As Russian journalist and historian Mikhail Pogodin added in the widely-read *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, he was unsure why “the British decided to attack the Monastery...they could neither do any military harm nor derive any benefit from it- why would they annoy the whole nation and arouse hatred against themselves without any benefits or prospects?”¹²⁶ Pogodin also countered objections that the British were not certain that they could destroy the Monastery by pointing out that Ommanney must have been “absolutely sure” he could destroy Solovetsky: otherwise, British forces ‘would not have started the attack, like they have not started attacks on Kronstadt and Sveaborg.’¹²⁷ The Russian writer further opined that his country’s foes were “not that simple to take on an impossible task; they do not make even one step without the hope of success.”¹²⁸ Although this was true for Britain’s cautious senior commanders in the Baltic, it sadly overestimated Ommanney’s discretion on this particular occasion.

Russian points of view such as Podgorin’s, according to Dixon, were especially interesting to his British readers because, with good reason, few English-language accounts existed beyond “a dry dispatch.”¹²⁹ More formally known as “Reporting the Bombardment of the Solovetsky Fortress and Monastery,” the document arrived in London on August 24th, 1854.¹³⁰ Even on the eve of battle, Ommanney had been painstakingly careful to justify his decisions and demonstrate that the Solovetsky Monastery was actually a Russian fortress that had opened fire without provocation on British ships.¹³¹ Sir James Graham was neither convinced nor impressed and wrote a note to that effect directly on Ommanney’s report, reading:

“Regret expenditure of his ammunition & do not consider it advisable to commence hostile operations on building of this character without more decided expression of hostility on the part of the enemy, & prospect of more decided success on ours.”¹³²

Captain Ommanney always remained especially sensitive about the incident, and vigorously defended his reputation and actions for decades until his death as a knighted Admiral in 1904. He particularly objected to Dixon’s 1870 book *Free Russia*, intended by its author “as a report from the other side...singular and imprecise as an illustration of native modes of thought”

¹²⁶ Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. “Defense of the Russian North in the Crimean War: Chronicle of Events.” (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 75.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 73-74.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

¹²⁹ Dixon, William Hepworth. *Free Russia*. (London, UK: Hurst and Blackett, 1870), 187.

¹³⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹³¹ See, for example: *Ibid* and LBK/14 15 [June 19th, 1854] (NMM).

¹³² ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA), reprinted in Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 36.

regarding an episode that was still a topic of conversation “in clubs and at dinner tables.”¹³³ Ommanney and Dixon then exchanged a series of letters that politely complemented one another while Ommanney bitterly denigrated the Russian “race” as “slaves to superstition.”¹³⁴ The British Captain sarcastically claimed that “canonization is my due!!!” because the Archimandrite “made good capital out of me for the benefit of his monastery.”¹³⁵ Ommanney’s ultimate conclusion that the “attack was not made hastily or without due consideration of the unpleasant duty which circumstances imposed on us, nor did we retire with shame as you have expressed it”¹³⁶ was certainly less than candid. Sir Erasmus nevertheless had no reservations in pointing out each of the inaccuracies of Archimandrite Alexander’s statements to Nicholas I, although he seemingly protested too much that British forces did not leave Solovetsky with “shame” by repeating the assertion on several occasions.¹³⁷ Ommanney and his legacy were thus especially fortunate that the British Admiralty shared his sensitivity in relating to the attack and imposed conditions on accessing relevant records for decades.¹³⁸

Later Soviet historians were likewise displeased with the religiosity of contemporary Czarist accounts relating to the Solovetsky Monastery’s defense. Stalin Prize-winner Yevgney Viktorovich Tarle, in particular, savagely criticized the “nonsense” of 1854 publications whose emphasis on “miraculous deliverance” undermined what Tarle saw as the “true” heroism of Archimandrite Alexander and his subordinates.¹³⁹ Tarle’s and Ommanney’s retrospective criticisms corroborated British observations during the 1855 campaign, where remarks by figures including Master and Assistant Surveyor George Frederick McDougall repeatedly mentioned the efforts of Russia’s Orthodox clergy to sustain popular “fanaticism.”¹⁴⁰ From his vantage point on board the frigate *Maender*, McDougall singled out a Russian priest who was “particularly zealous in inciting the inhabitants to resist any landing that might be attempted (by the British).” The navigator also mentioned the credibility lent to the Orthodox Church in Northern Russia by the Solovetsky Monastery incident.¹⁴¹ McDougall recounted the Monastery’s alleged contention that

¹³³ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 148 [April 30th, 1870] (BL).

¹³⁴ Additional Manuscript 41340, Folio 150 [May 5th, 1870] (BL).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [April 25th, 1890] (NA).

¹³⁹ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 1, Page 2.

¹⁴⁰ OD 265 [Received: December 11th, 1855] (AHO).

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

“the Holy Virgin” caused the “iron shower” of Ommanney’s bombardment “to fall harmlessly to the ground,” before adding that, “absurd as it may appear,...the assertions of the Monks are devoutly believed by the ignorant mass of the Russian people.”¹⁴² Such commentary was seconded by the 1855 Squadron’s interpreter, who explained to the surveyor that the terms of abuse hurled by Russian “scoundrels” resisting landing parties included telling British sailors to “Go to H-ll!”¹⁴³ By all accounts, the Orthodox Faith was an important dimension of Russian resistance to Allied efforts in the White Sea.¹⁴⁴ This was especially important given that the destruction of Kola and a more effective Allied blockade in 1855 left the Russian populace in need of all possible sources of moral support.

When it came to the actions at both the Solovetsky Monastery and Kola, a revealing contrast emerges from within the records of France’s White Sea Squadron, which was not involved in either incident. Captain Pierre-Édouard Guilbert noted only that the British had “attempted an expedition with their steamships on a small island off Onega called Solovetsky but retreated after one of their men was killed,” and made no mention whatsoever of a monastery or bombardment in mid-July.¹⁴⁵ The late August destruction of Kola by Captain Lyons and the *Miranda*, however, was prominently featured and extensively discussed. Guilbert emphasized that it “went without saying that he was in no way informed of this devastating investigation.”¹⁴⁶ The French commander neatly summarized the incident, though, by writing that the *Miranda* had just returned from Finmark where its crew had burned the Town of Kola, Russian Lapland’s main point.¹⁴⁷ Kola’s inhabitants and few defenders, along with Governor Roman Boyle in Archangel, had anticipated a British attack for months, but by small ship’s boats rather than a substantial steam-propelled warship:¹⁴⁸ on August 22nd, 1854, the consequences of their mistaken expectations became devastatingly apparent.

Kola’s destruction was the result of Captain Edmund Moubay Lyons’ aggressive interpretation of his orders to reconnoiter the Kola River before the British squadron withdrew.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Russian-language sources, for example, mention Father Petr Lyskov’s efforts to “cheer up” vulnerable peasants. Davydov, Ruslan A and Gennadii Pavlovich Popov. [Russian-language]. “*Defense of the Russian North during the Crimean War.*” (Ekaterinburg, Russia: UrO RAN, 2005), 163.

¹⁴⁵ BB4 716 18 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid* and BB4 716 21 [September 4th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴⁷ BB4 716 18 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴⁸ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. “About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854.” *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 1 and 3.

Lyons was an especially daring officer killed while bombarding Sevastopol less than a year later, and shared Ommanney's frustration off Archangel and against the Solovetsky Monastery. On August 21st, 1854, Lyons and the *Miranda*, preceded by ship's boats used to sound and place navigational markers, pushed up the narrow River Kola to within two miles of its namesake Town.¹⁴⁹ The passage had previously been deemed by both Russian authorities and Ommanney as "inaccessible to anything but boats," but this worked to the British ship's advantage.¹⁵⁰ In Guilbert's analysis, for example, the Russians "never thought that a ship the size of the *Miranda* would ever enter these waters."¹⁵¹ Both Lyons and Governor Boyle were well aware that the "precipitous, and, in parts, overhanging" cliffs flanking the Kola River¹⁵² potentially afforded Russian defenders excellent cover to destroy the British with "apt shots."¹⁵³ Boyle's command that Kola's inhabitants 'themselves think about the kinds of vessels that will come to them,' however, meant that these potential natural obstacles went unused. Lyons instead observed that:

"the defenses were evidently prepared with a view to resist an attack by Boats, the possibility of the ship getting up apparently not having entered into their calculations, for if it had done so, they might easily have prevented it by sinking a vessel or even a boat filled with stones...Presuming an attack to have been made by Boats, the defenses were strong and skilfully (*sic*) arranged, and would probably have inflicted a heavy loss."¹⁵⁴

Instead, the *Miranda* and its crew proceeded unopposed to within 500 yards of the town by the evening of August 22nd.¹⁵⁵

Russian sources are consistent in describing Kola as a wooden town of just under 200 houses, two churches, and storehouses for bread, salt, and wine.¹⁵⁶ The British, meanwhile, recorded its defenses as including a two-gun turf and stone battery along with an extensive wooden stockade with blockhouses and loopholes allowing defenders to fire from within houses.¹⁵⁷ In a scene that was repeated countless times over the next two years, a British ship's boat and Lieutenant Cecil Buckley rowed to shore and, according to Ommanney, "submitted

¹⁴⁹ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁵⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP 020 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

¹⁵¹ BB4 716 22 [September 4th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵² AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁵³ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 3.

¹⁵⁴ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ See, for example: *Ibid.*, "News from the White Sea." *L'Invalide Russe* (September 10th, 1854), 951, and Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. "*Eastern War 1853-1856*." (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 3.

¹⁵⁷ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

conditional terms for the surrender of the Garrison.”¹⁵⁸ The document’s original text, however, told a completely different story, and was presented as a “demand (for) the immediate and unconditional surrender of the Forts, Garrison, and Town of Kola” along with “every article of whatever description belonging to the Russian Government.”¹⁵⁹ The British deputation was met, according to Lyons, by “a person who represented himself to be a magistrate of the Town, but whom I believe to have been an Officer.”¹⁶⁰ Russian sources establish that this was Governor Boyles’ adjutant, Naval Lieutenant Brunner, a visitor to whom command had fallen due to the illness of Captain Pushkarev of the First Archangelsk Garrison Battalion.¹⁶¹ In the absence of capable interpreters, Brunner had to be brought on board the *Miranda* so that the terms could be delivered orally in French.¹⁶² After Lyons patronizingly read the document twice so that Brunner would be sure understand, the Russian officer’s French sufficed to inform his British counterpart “at once” that “the terms would not be accepted.”¹⁶³ Lyons nevertheless insisted on waiting for an answer until daylight on the following morning of the 23rd, at which time *Miranda* hauled down the flag of truce and opened fire on the town and its defenses.

Kola was quite unlike Solovetsky in that the town was built entirely of wood and was within close range of British naval gunfire. Red hot shot and explosive shells quickly and predictably combined with a “fresh breeze” to make the town “burn furiously.”¹⁶⁴ The *Illustrated London News* contained an even more poignant description that mentioned church bells ‘tolling their last knells’ as they fell into the conflagration below them.¹⁶⁵ Kolas’ ill-armed garrison of 50 retired soldiers, assisted by civilian volunteers, had no hope of defending the densely concentrated and irregularly-spaced wooden structures,¹⁶⁶ which were reduced “to ashes” during

¹⁵⁸ ADM 1/5631 CAP 020 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁶¹ *L’Invalide Russe*, (September 10th, 1854), 951, and Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856*.” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 7, Pg. 3, Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. “About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854.” *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 7, and Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 1, Page 3.

¹⁶² AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ ADM 1/5631 CAP 020 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

¹⁶⁵ *The Illustrated London News*, (October 7th, 1854), 336.

¹⁶⁶ Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. “About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854.” *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 7 and *L’Invalide Russe*, (September 10th, 1854), 951.

a daylong bombardment.¹⁶⁷ Russian forces were similarly unable to prevent the British from landing three boats in order to confirm that the Russian's only battery had been rendered "a heap of ruins" and to burn outlying Government buildings and storehouses that would have otherwise escaped unscathed.¹⁶⁸ The entire enterprise was not without some difficulty for the British. The same 'violent' tides that had run at six or seven knots and previously driven the *Miranda* aground eight times caused the ship to become "critically situated" by driving it less than 300 yards from the burning town.¹⁶⁹ The sloop's crew, though, succeeded in keeping the sails, rigging and decks "well wetted" until it could be removed from danger, thus ensuring that "no bad consequences ensued."¹⁷⁰ With Kola's destruction complete, the British seized a church bell as a trophy and returned upriver after capturing several small Russian merchant vessels hidden in nearby creeks thanks to intelligence obtained from a fisherman.¹⁷¹ Russian forces were thus left to deceptively report to Archangel that the British landing party "had rushed back to the frigate after taking just one look at our soldiers" and had suffered three casualties from Russian rifle fire.¹⁷² Kola's now homeless inhabitants did receive a grant for relief from St. Petersburg, but later evidence from 1856 indicates that the funds were corruptly misappropriated and that an investigation was ongoing.¹⁷³

In keeping with the fears that Kola's mayor expressed just days prior to the conflict's March outbreak, British and colonial newspapers indeed relished "the idea of spreading the news of victory" that accompanied the Town's destruction.¹⁷⁴ The *Miranda's* exploits against Kola were portrayed in "the most favorable terms,"¹⁷⁵ in contrast to more reserved reporting of the earlier bombardment of the Solovetsky Monastery.¹⁷⁶ *The Illustrated London News* received several sketches from the White Sea within three weeks of the incident and was therefore able to

¹⁶⁷ ADM 1/5631 CAP 020 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

¹⁶⁸ AGC/30/17 [August 24th, 1854] (NMM).

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid* and *The Illustrated London News*, (October 7th, 1854), 336.

¹⁷² Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 8.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁷⁵ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39.

¹⁷⁶ *The Courier*, (December 13th, 1854), 5.

add a print of Kola in flames.¹⁷⁷ After complaining that it had heard no more of “the proceedings of Captain Lyons and Captain (actually Commander) Seymour for the last three months than if they had sailed on a Polar expedition,” *The Times* was likewise happy to report “that the northernmost shores of the Russian empire have not escaped the ravages of war.”¹⁷⁸ These accounts overshadowed less savory aspects of the campaign, which included British landing parties’ repeated destruction of small coastal villages in retaliation for the resistance that their armed male inhabitants usually offered to British landing parties. One of the few modern articles on the subject, Ian R. Stone’s “The Crimean War in the Arctic: a Further Note,”¹⁷⁹ vigorously defends British actions during these engagements.

Stone’s argument that British sources, official and otherwise, were and are always more reliable than their heavily censored Russian counterparts is undermined by a specific controversy over the capture of Orthodox Church bells as war trophies. The historian’s contention that “there is no mention of taking bells” in documents such as the ship’s log of the *Brisk*¹⁸⁰ demonstrates the problems inherent in using only a narrow base of a half-dozen sources written exclusively in English while examining complex historical events. The article would presumably have reached a dramatically different conclusion, for example, had its author been aware of contemporary British newspaper articles containing details that included the following description:

“The Miranda has brought home a very ancient bell (which is now being used as a ship’s bell). It was taken from the ruins of the monastery at Kilo, in the Gulf of Onega...It has a magnificent tone. The date on it is Anno 1656. Around the upper rim, in beautiful relief, is a hunting party...around the other base is a splendid raised wreath of grapes and pine-apples, which is only broken by the figure of a priest holding a cross in his left hand...”¹⁸¹

The above passage also indicates that modern scholars are best served by carefully balancing evidence from primary sources representing all parties to a conflict. Stone, however, further opined that “suggesting that the truth lies somewhere between” Russian and British sources “may be oversimplifying” the otherwise “reasonably accurate impression” gained only from the *Brisk*’s ships logs and the work of 19th century British historians. Contemporary Russian sources did admittedly make inflated claims when it came to British casualty figures while exaggerating the

¹⁷⁷ *The Illustrated London News*, (October 7th, 1854), 336.

¹⁷⁸ Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 38 and 39.

¹⁷⁹ Stone, Ian R. “The Crimean War in the Arctic: A Further Note.” Vol. 22, No. 140 (1985), 531-536.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 534.

¹⁸¹ *The Courier*, (December 13th, 1854), 5. See also: *The Illustrated London News*, (October 7th, 1854), 336.

reasons for British tactical withdrawals.¹⁸² Yet British participants also exhibited a similar desire to present their actions in the best possible light. Consider, for instance, Ommanney's sanguine assessments that the Solovetsky Monastery had "sustained considerable damage."¹⁸³

Regardless of modern historiographical disputes, it remains indisputable that British forces destroyed a great deal of Russian property throughout the White Sea Region, especially in July, 1854. Captain Guilbert, for one, reported that "the British have burned and destroyed this year many villages that were little or not at all defended" and was eager to emphasize that "these things happened before my arrival and since I have not hidden the little sympathy that I have towards similar expeditions."¹⁸⁴ The village of Pushlakhta at the Bay of Onega's entrance grievously suffered the consequences of Ommanney's resentment at being fired upon and ordered away "in an insulting manner."¹⁸⁵ The British Captain's determination "to resent this reception" soon manifested itself in small boat expedition and shrapnel shelling of the town, which allowed British marines to take possession and 'burn the place to the ground; being built of wood the fire raged with fury for three hours."¹⁸⁶ Russian accounts do not hesitate to point out that the village had no garrison,¹⁸⁷ which is not convincingly countered by Ommanney's deliberately vague assertion that the inhabitants "were led by some armed people of a military aspect."¹⁸⁸ Other villages escaped more lightly after choosing not to resist and lost only Government property and civilian foodstuffs that proved tempting to British foraging parties who, by their commander's own admission, "took as we chose."¹⁸⁹ Even more so than in the Gulf of Bothnia, British coastal raids in the White Sea thus stretched the boundaries of the morality to which the Royal Navy claimed adherence and harmed civilian populations far more than the Imperial Russian Government. Yet these operations also allowed British sailors to vent frustrations similar to those shared by their counterparts in the Baltic, most of which centered on the immunity of major targets, lack of major fleet actions, and frustrating inefficiency of a blockade that resulted in few lucrative captures.

¹⁸² See, for example: Kunzevich, T.Z. [Russian-language]. "About the Defense of Kola Town from the Enemy in 1854." *Publication of the Imperial Society of History and Ancient Russian Studies under the Moscow University* (1906), 7 and the *Arkhangelsk Provincial Gazette's* July 28th account of a British raid on the Village of Pushlakhta.

¹⁸³ ADM 1/5631 CAP O57 [July 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁸⁴ BB4 716 31 [October 20th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁸⁵ OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *L'Invalide Russe*, (August 2nd, 1854), 771.

¹⁸⁸ OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

The belated mid-August arrival of French ships allowed a formal blockade to commence the next day. Even had the blockade begun weeks earlier, though, its starting date would still have been “rendered ridiculous by the fact that not a single merchant ship normally remained at Archangel or Onega so late in the season.”¹⁹⁰ *The Times* picked up Clanricarde’s criticism that it was “obvious such a blockade will only be a farce as regards Russian trade for this year” along with an anonymous letter of complaint from Britain’s White Sea Squadron.¹⁹¹ Yet it was hardly necessary for his Lordship to “force” the Aberdeen Government to alter its commercial warfare policy for the coming year.¹⁹² Graham and Clarendon were already making arrangements for blockading Archangel more efficiently in 1855.¹⁹³ Ommanney and Guilbert, meanwhile, jointly reconnoitered Archangel and concurred that “nothing can be done with our force towards an attack upon Arkangel.”¹⁹⁴ They also decided that there was “no motive for hazarding the safety of either (French or British) Squadron” by remaining in the White Sea as weather conditions became progressively more hazardous.¹⁹⁵ After Guilbert refused to remain behind after the impending British departure,¹⁹⁶ Allied ships embarked Britain’s Vice Consul at Archangel and left the White Sea on September 22nd. They arrived at their home ports in Britain and France in mid to late October, respectively.

The *Psyche*’s October 20th arrival in Brest completed a brief campaign, but it was precisely this “promptitude” that the ship’s surgeon believed had undoubtedly “saved this frigate from the disaster that a longer journey at sea would inflict upon the crew.”¹⁹⁷ Such a disaster took the form of scurvy, a dreaded disease resulting from a deficient intake of Vitamin C. French forces in all the war’s theatres suffered painful symptoms in both 1854 and 1855, prompting French surgeons from both the White Sea and Pacific squadrons to independently publish their

¹⁹⁰ Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 35.

¹⁹¹ *The Times*, (August 30th, 1854), 5.

¹⁹² *The Times*, (August 30th, 1854), 5.

¹⁹³ Lambert, Andrew “The Royal Navy’s White Sea Campaign of 1854” in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39.

¹⁹⁴ ADM 1/5631 CAP O78 [September 4th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ BB4 716 46 [October 20th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁹⁷ “Scourbut: Emploi du Suc de Citronne Comme Moyen Prevétatif et Curatif.” *L’Abeille Médicale*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1856).

observations on the subject during the mid to late 1850s.¹⁹⁸ The “great number” of his countrymen facing an “impending death” especially concerned surgeon First Class Gallerand, who participated in both of France’s White Sea campaigns.¹⁹⁹ Fortunately for the lives and gums of their fellow sailors, both Gallerand and Captain Guilbert began to examine why their British Allies seemed unaffected by the disease during the 1855 campaign. Their efforts were considerably aided by Dr. Murray of the *Maender*, who observed the poor health of French crews and explained the British Admiralty’s methods of preemptively combating the disease through prophylactic, or preventative, distributions of lemon juice.²⁰⁰ Gallerand had “known for a long time that lemons and oranges had antiscorbutic properties,”²⁰¹ but it is important to remember that the precise link between Vitamin C deficiency and scurvy remained unknown until 1932. “The beneficial effect of lime juice + other anti-scorbutics in the shape of preserved vegetables,” for example, was only the third of four reasons given by Master George McDougall of the *Maender* for “the absence of scorbutic taint of any importance” during his ship’s 1855 voyage.²⁰² His other reasons, such as “the wholesome nature of the climate,” were sadly mistaken, though the British were well-advised to consume the White Sea coast’s blackberries and wild onions ‘on principle whenever an opportunity offered.’²⁰³

The British Navy’s prior experience with long voyages and polar exploration, cited both by Gallerand and Guilbert, meant that ships such as the *Maender* and *Phoenix* carried plentiful supplies of lemon juice and were thus able to provide the French with several dozen 2-litre bottles to save those worst afflicted.²⁰⁴ Convinced that “these unfortunate men would be dead today without the arrival of this unexpected relief,”²⁰⁵ France’s senior medical and naval officers in the White Sea independently made sure to call “attention to this potent preservative” and the necessity of its preventative administration.²⁰⁶ As Gallerand emphasized, consumption of lemon juice was “organized in the British Navy to a grand scale” using lemons from Malta, with

¹⁹⁸ Laguérène, Claude de and Jean Pierre Kernéis. “Le Voyage Autour du Monde du Pharmacien René-Primevé Lesson.” *Revue D’Histoire de la Pharmacie*. Vol. 76, No. 279 (1988), 420.

¹⁹⁹ “Scourbut: Emploi du Suc de Citronne Comme Moyen Prevétatif et Curatif.” *L’Abeille Médicale*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1856).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ “Scourbut: Emploi du Suc de Citronne Comme Moyen Prevétatif et Curatif.” *L’Abeille Médicale*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1856).

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ BB4 716 29 [October 29th, 1855] (SHD).

lunchtime lemonade consumption occurring as regularly on British ships as the distribution of wine on French vessels.²⁰⁷ Britain's emphasis on citrus was certainly more helpful than Assistant Surgeon John M. Tronson's thought "that fresh baked bread, such as that supplied to the French sailors each morning at sea not being easily digested, is consequently injurious to their health."²⁰⁸ Happily for British crews in the Pacific and on his vessel, the steam sloop *Barracouta*, Tronson also noted that British sailors subsisted on salted provisions for no more than two weeks before receiving "a liberal allowance of lime juice."²⁰⁹

France may not have been able to improve its medical preparations for the 1855 White Sea campaign, but the renewed Allied blockade was a different story. Guilbert again led a French squadron, this time including the warships *Cléopâtre*, *Coccyte*, and *Petrel*, to establish a blockade of the White Sea. Their commander was ecstatic to note their significantly earlier departure on May 12th, 1855 allowed his 32-gun sailing frigate *Cléopâtre* and its accompanying paddle steamers, together mounting 10 guns, to 'almost precede the British in these waters!'²¹⁰ French warships were able to rendezvous with their British counterparts off Archangel on June 15th, 1855, whereupon they discovered that the British had already declared a blockade four days earlier.²¹¹ The British Admiralty had again dispatched a sailing frigate (*Maender*) and two screw-propelled sloops, the *Ariel* and *Pheonix*, but Captain Thomas Baillie now led British forces after Captain Ommanney's assignment to the Baltic.²¹² In late October 1854, Sir James Graham was already determined to strictly blockade the White Sea in 1855 "from the first moment when the state of the Sea will permit." A larger Allied squadron and earlier blockade declarations boded well for the 1855 blockade's efficacy and meant that Russian coastal populations "suffered severely" during the War's second year.²¹³ Even the smallest vessels were capable of ferrying arms to coastal populations and necessitated interception, which kept blockading warships busy.

In complete contrast to their frustration experiences the previous Summer, British and French naval forces "intercepted, captured, and destroyed a number of enemy ships" in 1855.²¹⁴

²⁰⁷ Scourbut: Emploi du Suc de Citronne Comme Moyen Prevétatif et Curatif." *L'Abeille Médicale*, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1856).

²⁰⁸ Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Cost of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 105.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ BB4 716 35[June 5th, 1855] (SHD).

²¹¹ BB4 716 37[June 23rd, 1855] (SHD).

²¹² OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ BB4 716 40[July 23rd, 1855] (SHD).

Guilbert could happily report that patrolling Allied steamships were “thus able to intercept all mercantile interactions from one port to the other.”²¹⁵ British and French sources recounted learning from Russian ones, including Mr. Anton Pofkoff of Kandalaksha, that the White Sea Districts and Kola were so ill-supplied that renewing a blockade in 1856 would probably result in these areas being “entirely deserted” by their inhabitants.²¹⁶ Guilbert further noted that blockading as a “mode of operation had angered and discouraged the costal populations that can no longer receive their supplies from Arkangel unless by land.”²¹⁷ Russian peasants in coastal districts also confronted the burden of their Government’s taxes, conscription, and threats to banish collaborators to Siberia, to which British forces added confiscation of livestock and provisions along with the prospect of fiery destruction for any villages that resisted.

Far from being lamented by British observers, plight of Russian civilians was instead celebrated as a “great point” and ‘achievement’ that made them “feel the injurious effects of the war.”²¹⁸ Neither the Allies nor neutral powers seriously questioned what destroying the White Sea’s peasant-dominated fishing industries and making tea, salt, and spirits “unobtainable” in coastal districts had to do with winning the Crimean War and weakening the Imperial Russian Government.²¹⁹ Figures including Graham instead emphasized “the moral effect” of a strengthened 1855 blockade as ‘a good indicator of the firm purpose of the Allies,’ and it is difficult to follow his argument that a severe approach in the White Sea would “dry up one of the large Sources of Capital which flows...into the Enemy’s Country.”²²⁰ Furthermore, British raids on villages during the 1854 campaign, especially those adjoining the Gulf of Kandalaksha and Murman Coast, made Russian villages even less likely to cooperate with British efforts to purchase fresh supplies for their ships.²²¹ Royal Navy officers nevertheless refused to acknowledge any possible connection between “the questionable degree of respect with which Flags of truce were received” and the fact that these flags usually preceded heavily-armed

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

²¹⁷ BB4 716 40[July 23rd, 1855] (SHD).

²¹⁸ OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO).

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Baumgart, Winfried (Ed). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 2 [11. Dezember 1853 bis 1. Dezember 1854] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006), No. 435, Pg. 715.

²²¹ Davydov, Ruslan A. [Russian-Language]. “‘We should come back to a frigate without feeling disappointed:’ British Troop Landings at Kuzomeni on July 16th and the Activities of Rural Resistance.” *Ushakovsky Readings: Scientific Materials from the Inter-Regional Conference in Memory of Professor I.F. Ushakov* (MGPU: Murmansk, Russia, 2005), 127-134.

landing parties that incinerated wooden houses if their demands went unmet.²²² Although Russian sources credit Captain Baillie with exercising a considerably more moderating command influence than had Ommanney,²²³ Guilbert pointed out that the Allies had still “not yet created links with the local populations and thus cannot get information” on how best to attack fortified Russian positions.²²⁴ Coupled with the “paucity” of means available to Allied White Sea forces to attack a substantially reinforced Archangel in 1855, this meant that British and French warships ‘settled for the establishment of a severe blockade’ before withdrawing in October of that year.²²⁵ Little did French and British personnel realize, however, that British-led diplomatic efforts to transform the Region’s importance were already well underway.

For all the attention drawn to Cronstadt, Sweaborg, and the Aland Islands, the venue that finally allowed the Allies to entice Sweden-Norway into signing a treaty directed against Russia was Finmark, a coastal region in the extreme northeast of Norway. Key members in the new Palmerston Ministry, which had replaced Aberdeen’s Coalition in February, 1855, allowed themselves to be convinced by ever more hyperbolic correspondence that Russia’s alleged designs on an “never freezing port in Finmark” would result in “another Sebastopol at small distance from Scotland.”²²⁶ Britain’s Consul General to Norway, John Rice Crowe, when not sending seeds to Charles Darwin,²²⁷ had diligently warned his superiors of a Russian threat to Finmark since the beginning of his diplomatic career in the 1830s.²²⁸ By the end of that decade, Crowe had succeeded in attracting the earnest attention of the then-Foreign Secretary Palmerston, already a committed Russophobe. The latter figure, in turn, involved the Admiralty and Board of Trade. These early developments meant that simmering tensions would more easily reach a boiling point a decade and a half later, when Prime Minister Lord Palmerston and Foreign

²²² OD 265 7 [Undated] (AHO) and *Ibid.*

²²³ Davydov, Ruslan A. [Russian-Language]. ““We should come back to a frigate without feeling disappointed:’ British Troop Landings at Kuzomeni on July 16th and the Activities of Rural Resistance.” *Ushakovsky Readings: Scientific Materials from the Inter-Regional Conference in Memory of Professor I.F. Ushakov* (MGPU: Murmansk, Russia, 2005), 133-134.

²²⁴ BB4 716 37 [June 23rd, 1855] (SHD).

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 3 [3. Dezember 1854 bis 9. September 1855] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), No. 550, Pg. 827.

²²⁷ Letter 1,777 [November 9th, 1855]. *Darwin Correspondence Project*. <<http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-1777>>.

²²⁸ See, for example: FO 881/494 [May 23rd, 1855] (NA).

Secretary Clarendon seized upon the little-known dispute as a pretext for entering into a defensive alliance with Sweden-Norway in November, 1855.

Crowe and a Scottish compatriot, travel writer Samuel Laing, provided elaborate historical accounts through which they traced Russia's supposed designs on Finmark back to the Middle Ages.²²⁹ Along with more senior British and Norwegian politicians, both men were thoroughly convinced that insidious Russian motives consistently underlay otherwise local disputes, especially the right of indigenous, nomadic Sami (then known as Lapps) to graze their reindeer herd on either side of the border separating Sweden-Norway and Russian Finland. Even the most sympathetic historians, such as the Norwegian-Canadian Paul Knaplund conceded as early as the 1920s that Crowe's missives were a "cry of wolf, which may have had but a slender basis in fact."²³⁰ This was confirmed after Soviet authorities, eager to discredit their Czarist predecessors, allowed the Swedish historian Carl Fredrik Palmstierna access to Russia's secret diplomatic archives in the 1930s. Palmstierna's work, since reinforced by modern historians including the Norwegian Jens Petter Nielsen, revealed that there was never "any" evidence to support British suspicions and that Russian authorities actually attempted to exert a moderating influence on the Finnish Senate.²³¹ Lord Aberdeen similarly emphasized in December, 1855 that the British Government had never seen "any unfriendly correspondence" regarding Finmark,²³² but he was no longer Prime Minister. His political superiors were instead inclined to agree with Crowe, who emphasized the 'secrecy with which Russian transports her material to vast distances' and used a stinging example from 1854 when he wrote that it: "is notorious that, ten years ago, Petropaulofsk (*sic*), in Kamtchatka, was neither fortified nor contained any of the appliances for defence: how did our ships find it prepared last year?"

Those skeptical of Russian motives feared that the Czarist Empire coveted Finmark because the region contained Varangerfjord (Waarenger Fiord), a channel that allowed ice-free sea access even in winter. Their alarmist views were fed by geographical ignorance: it was a "common view" in Sweden-Norway, for example, "that all Russian harbours on the Barents Sea

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Knaplund, Paul. "Finmark in British Diplomacy, 1836-1855," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1925), 482.

²³¹ Nielsen, Jens Petter. "The Russia of the Tsar and North Norway. 'The Russian Danger' Revisited." *Acta Borealia*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2002), 81.

²³² Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs (AGKK): Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 302, Pgs. 540-541.

are covered by ice for as long as even or eight months a year, whereas the coast of Norway is never covered by ice.”²³³ This misconception was not disproved until 1867, by which time Sweden-Norway was firmly entrenched along Palmerston’s “long line of circumvallation to confine the future extension of Russia.”²³⁴ The British Prime Minister had thus succeeded in convincing Napoleon III, Oscar I, and key ministers in his own government that, in Clarendon’s words, “some obligation” was necessary²³⁵ before Varangerfjord could “speedily” become” the Sebastopol of the North.”²³⁶

Palmerston and Clarendon felt that the Finmark Controversy, heightened by a wartime atmosphere, was a perfect “opportunity” for France and Britain to diplomatically commit themselves to the defense of all Sweden-Norway and not just Finmark.²³⁷ Palmerston also emphasized that the Treaty’s coverage of Sweden in addition to Northern Norway would play to “the French interest concerned in the Swedish part.”²³⁸ The French Emperor and Queen Victoria, though, were both initially skeptical that their respective countries would derive any advantages from guaranteeing Sweden-Norway’s territorial integrity. Yet even a strictly defensive alliance promised to move Sweden-Norway closer to actively participating in the struggle against Russia, which Napoleon III’s envoys had previously failed to obtain. The proposed alliance was also an excellent fit with the domestic political goals of the Swedish-Norwegian Government for several reasons. It allowed Norway, the significantly smaller and less powerful partner of Sweden, to demand the attention of a combined Swedish-Norwegian Government and defense establishment.²³⁹ The Swedish-Norwegian King admitted to the British ambassador that Finmark was “a subject little understood in Sweden” and had to ask France’s Minister to Sweden “whether he had heard it mentioned here as a subject of apprehension.”²⁴⁰ In spite of the relative obscurity of the Finmark issue, it proved to be the catalyst of a much larger and more significant process. King Oscar discerned that an Anglo-French guarantee of the entirety of Sweden-Norway’s

²³³ Nielsen, Jens Petter. “The Russia of the Tsar and North Norway. ‘The Russian Danger’ Revisited.” *Acta Borealia*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2002), 82.

²³⁴ FO 519/174 301-304 [September 25th, 1855] (NA).

²³⁵ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 3 [3. Dezember 1854 bis 9. September 1855] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), No. 509, Pg. 775.

²³⁶ FO 73/269 [October 18th, 1855] (NA).

²³⁷ *Ibid*, No. 508, Pg. 774.

²³⁸ FO 519/174 301-304 [September 25th, 1855] (NA).

²³⁹ Nielsen, Jens Petter. “The Russia of the Tsar and North Norway. ‘The Russian Danger’ Revisited.” *Acta Borealia*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (2002), 76.

²⁴⁰ FO 73/270 54 [July 16th, 1855] (NA).

territory was sufficient to satisfy “His Swedish Subjects” and “justify the entire change of that policy which had been followed in this country since 1815,- namely, instead of leaning for support on their powerful neighbor (Russia), now to seek for that support from England and France.”²⁴¹

All the parties involved consequently had good reason to welcome the so-called ‘November Treaty,’ signed on the 21st day of its namesake month in 1855. The agreement bound Britain and France to defend the entirety of Sweden-Norway, which in return promised not to cede any part of its territory to Russia. In contrast to previous Allied negotiations with Oscar I’s Government, disagreements over issues including Sweden’s demand that Austria also join the Allies did not prove to be insurmountable obstacles because they were irrelevant to negotiations begun in response to a perceived Russian threat to Finmark, rather than to specifically entice Sweden-Norway to actively join a great power conflict. The Crimean War and Allied leaders thus created conditions that allowed an initially petty controversy over reindeer pastures in a remote polar region to become the catalyst for a major diplomatic coup. Considerable credit is due to Palmerston, who clearly stated that Britain surely had “a strong interest also in keeping the Russians out of Norway and Sweden and if we can do so by Inkshed instead of by Bloodshed, sure it is wise to take the opportunity to do so.”²⁴² The British statesman bluntly added that his government acted not “out of pure love and regard for the Swedes & Norwegians; it is not to keep them in; but to keep the Russians out.”²⁴³ Lord Clarendon wholeheartedly agreed, and had already argued that “the importance to us of not having a large Russian naval establishment in an unfreezing Port of the North Sea is immense (tho’ we need not put that prominently forward).”²⁴⁴ The November Treaty was a powerful confirmation that, by late 1855, the British Government viewed “the main and real object” of the Crimean War as an opportunity to curb “aggressive ambition of Russia” not only in Black Sea, but much further afield.²⁴⁵

The November Treaty aside, it makes little sense to examine the White Sea campaigns of 1854 and 1855 in terms of victories, especially military ones. It is instead helpful to analyze the belligerent powers’ accomplishments, even negative ones, in the northernmost theatre of the Crimean War. British and subsequent French actions during both years indisputably prevented

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

²⁴² FO 519/174 301-304 [September 25th, 1855] (NA).

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ FO 73/269 [June 28th, 1855] (NA).

²⁴⁵ FO 73/270 54 [July 16th, 1855] (NA).

the potential escape of Russian privateers or commerce raiders from the confines of the White Sea and their correspondingly catastrophic effect on London insurance markets.²⁴⁶ Anglo-French warships also succeeded in overcoming logistical and navigational obstacles in order to tie down thousands of Russian troops around Archangel, though at the cost of terrorizing villagers all along the White Sea's coast. The Allied blockade in 1854 was largely an exercise in futility, but it did furnish important lessons for the following year, which saw Britain and France severely curtail both local and international maritime trade throughout the region. Events including Ommanney's futile bombardment of the Solovetsky Monastery meant that Allied efforts hardly resulted in an uninterrupted triumph, but even the normative capital gained by the Czarist regime from such incidents was outweighed by Russia's fundamental inability to break the Anglo-French naval stranglehold on her northernmost navigable waterways. Although the Czarist Government could take some solace in its achievements towards the Pacific, the Allies' dominance of Russia's other seas, increasingly effective blockades, and diplomatic understandings with Sweden-Norway and Austria increasingly indicated to even the most stalwart Russian decision-makers that renewed campaigns in 1856 would "favour the Western Powers more than Russia beyond all reasonable comparison."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Lambert, Andrew "The Royal Navy's White Sea Campaign of 1854" in Bruce Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (Eds.). *Naval Power and Expeditionary Wars: Peripheral Campaigns and New Theatres of Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 41.

²⁴⁷ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs (AGKK): Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 200, Pg. 383.

Chapter Six

The Crimean War in the Pacific, 1854

The Crimean War played multiple roles in a larger drama that unfolded in the Pacific World during the 1850s. Anglo-Russian conflict, or the threat thereof, took center stage in Russia's nascent efforts to expand its territorial holdings in East Asia at the expense of Qing China. Likewise, linguistic and cultural misunderstandings among British and Japanese protagonists transformed this ostensibly European struggle into the catalyst of diplomatic relations between the two countries, much to the chagrin of British mercantile interests in China. European and American efforts to 'open' Japan had already begun in earnest with contemporary American, Dutch, and Russian missions dispatched prior to outbreak of war in March 1854. Yet the Crimean conflict did not interrupt a protracted series of negotiations over a broader range of issues than were a stake during Commodore Matthew Perry's famous mission. The details emerging from joint Anglo-French naval campaigns against Russia's easternmost possessions in 1854 foreshadowed subsequent developments, including the Hawaiian Islands' loss of independence, Russia's 1867 sale of Alaska to the United States, and the abandonment of time-honored practices from the waning 'Age of Sail,' especially privateering. Such a multifaceted sequence of events involved far more than British naval actions as "the mainspring of events" and principal determinant of the far-reaching consequences that ensued.¹

The Crimean War in East Asia began in late August 1854, months before Russian forces first sighted a combined Anglo-French naval expedition off the Kamchatkan port of Petropavlovsk. Just as scattered British and French naval forces and colonies learned of the conflict's outbreak in May of that year, over 1,000 Russian troops gathered at a remote riverside mine in Eastern Siberia and set out for the distant Pacific Ocean on "ungraceful boats...and equally clumsy rafts."² Before embarking down the Amur River and its tributaries, however, this locally raised force paused to pray before an icon rescued from a settlement ceded to the Chinese by the 1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk.³ This agreement, motivated by the presence of thousands of Qing troops, compelled Russia to renounce any claim to an area larger than France in return for

¹ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), IX.

² Glehn, Nicholas von and A. Danilov (Ed.). [Russian-language]. "N(ikolay) N(ikolayevich) Muravyov's First Amur Expedition." *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1889), 642.

³ *Ibid.*

an ambiguously defined border and limited trade concessions.⁴ Such an outcome was hardly surprising given the tenuously slight Russian presence in region, and the sole aspect of the document that displeased Czar Peter the Great was that his imperial seal followed rather than preceded the Kangxi Emperor's on an initial copy.⁵ Reinforced by the subsequent Treaty of Kyakhta (or Kiakhta) in 1727, the integrity of China's northern borders was largely secured until the 19th century, when the Crimean War proved ideal for the designs of an ascendant faction of Russian expansionists.

Historians often simplistically portray Russia's vast territorial acquisitions of the 1850s as the culmination of tireless individual efforts by Governor-General of Eastern Siberia Nikolay Nikolaevich Muravyov.⁶ This obscures the complex dynamics that actually allowed Russian soldiers and settlers to push down the Amur River and annex the lands to its North. Muravyov's predecessor W. Yakovlevich Rupert, for instance, fervently argued that "the Amur is necessary for Russia's eastern region in the same way that the Baltic coast is necessary for its western region" and fervently pushed for Russian annexation.⁷ Several critical factors unique to the late 1840s and 1850s, however, allowed Muravyov and like-minded supporters to succeed in winning Nicholas I's personal approval for their actions, unlike earlier figures who had failed to convince the Czar. The first such factor was the complete victory, discussed in Chapter Three, of expansion-minded Russian officials over their more conservative colleagues. By April 1853, Czar Nicholas had sanctioned his Government's official involvement in the pursuit of aggressive East Asian policies even at the risk of damaging Russo-Chinese trade at Kyakhta and angering Britain.⁸ Yet Muravyov was still forbidden from venturing down the Amur despite his contention that circumstances required more vigorous action. As Nicholas responded: "let circumstances lead to this... we will wait."⁹ The Crimean War was thus a godsend to Muravyov and other imperialist ideologues because it added resonance to their Anglophobic arguments that

⁴ Stephan, John J. *The Russian Far East: A History*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994), 31.

⁵ *Ibid*, 31-32.

⁶ See, for example, John Grainger's contention that it was "the ambition of one man which compelled the British to fight in the Pacific area" in *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), XIV.

⁷ Bassin, Mark. "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865." (Berkeley, California: University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 113.

⁸ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volume I)*." (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 324-325.

⁹ *Ibid*. The slightly more poetic version of Emperor Nicholas' response is "let us wait until events lead us thither" and is found in sources such as: Vladimir (Volpicelli), Zenone. *Russia on the Pacific and the Siberian Railway*. (London, UK: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1899), 199.

St. Petersburg might one day “read in the newspaper that the British have obtained navigation rights on the Amur” if Russia did not act decisively.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Crimean conflict’s timing meant that China, weakened by the First Anglo-Chinese or ‘Opium’ War of 1839-1842 and the ongoing Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), was in no position to resist Russian military expeditions and the territorial demands that followed.

The motivations of Muravyov and his Government in viewing the Amur Region as a territory that “should be ours!”¹¹ are thoroughly examined in other scholarly works,¹² as is the perspective of China’s administration.¹³ Yet virtually all available evidence unmistakably leads to the conclusion that Muravyov’s overriding concern in Siberia was to pre-empt British expansion at Chinese expense even in the absence of official approval from St. Petersburg.¹⁴ Consequently, the outbreak of a conflict with Britain and France over a set of issues entirely unrelated to East Asia fit seamlessly with the Governor-General’s fear that avaricious British “islanders” would “conquer Kamchatka or at least leave it a desert,” “rule the shores of China and Japan,” and “tear Russia away from the Pacific.”¹⁵ Thanks to the presence of an Ecclesiastical Mission in China’s Imperial Capital and the correspondence of its Archimandrite,¹⁶ both St. Petersburg and Russia’s Siberian administrators were keenly aware that the Taiping Rebellion and other internal turmoil were ‘enfeebling and exhausting the (Chinese) government to the extreme.’¹⁷ The question then,

¹⁰ Bassin, Mark. “A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865.” (Berkeley, California: University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 113.

¹¹ Vladimir (Volpicelli), Zenone. *Russia on the Pacific and the Siberian Railway*. (London, UK: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1899), 198.

¹² See, for example: *Ibid*, Bassin, Mark. *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Paine, Sarah. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. “Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky.” (Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1955), Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. “*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volumes I and II)*.” (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), etc.

¹³ See, for example: Quested, Rosemary K. *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press for the University of Malaysia, 1968 and the Chinese-language compilation *Ch’ou Pan I Wu Shih Mo*, or IWSM.

¹⁴ 1996), Sullivan, Joseph Lewis. “Count N. N. Muravyov-Amursky.” (Doctoral Thesis, Harvard University, 1955), Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. “*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volumes I)*.” (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 200, 205-106, 212, 259 and Paine, Sarah. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 36-37.

¹⁵ Bassin, Mark. “A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865.” (Berkeley, California: University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 134.

¹⁶ Archimandrite and distinguished Sinologist Palladii, née Petr Ivanovich Kafarov.

¹⁷ Paine, Sarah. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 41, Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. “*Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (Volumes I)*.” (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 294, 298-305, 452, 483, 489, etc. all counter Grainger’s

according to Russian expansionists, was whether Russia or Britain would benefit from China's faltering control over its Northeastern domains. As tensions continued to mount in Europe in January, 1854, Nicholas I decided that "circumstances" had arrived¹⁸ and authorized an Amur expedition in response to Muravyov's 'main' argument that Petropavlovsk was in dire need of reinforcements.¹⁹ Wartime exigencies thus provided Muravyov with long-awaited permission to descend the Amur and renegotiate the boundary separating Qing and Romanov domains. In practice, this meant that the Crimean War in East Asia began with Russian preparations to ride, or more accurately march and sail, roughshod over China's position that it "had no concern with the rivalry of the outside world."²⁰

A month after embarkation of Russia's first *Amur* journey or *Amurflotillen*, as described by one German observer, Chinese officials in the country's Southern Provinces provided Beijing with a "confused" description of the Crimean War's outbreak and underlying causes.²¹ This alone led the young Xianfeng (Hsien-feng) Emperor, I-ting, to conclude that "the Russians surely have some other treacherous plans besides intending to fight the English."²² The next day, June 24th, 1854, Emperor I-ting learned that a Russian expedition had passed the strategic town of Aigun (modern Aihui) and had proceeded down the Amur.²³ In the absence of instructions from Beijing, the Deputy Commander of Aigun, Hu-sun-pu, had met with Muravyov and then let the Russian flotilla pass after noting that "since in the Eastern Provinces the soldiers and arms are entirely insufficient, it was not convenient to start hostilities."²⁴ As confusion over the Crimean War's true course mounted in China's capital, I-ting issued orders that the Russians be allowed to proceed peacefully with the official rationalization that it 'seemed unworthy to put difficulties in their way.'²⁵ Chinese officials only learned in mid-October, 1854, that Russians had been establishing fortified settlements near the Amur River's mouth months before Muravyov's

assertion that it "how much Muravev knew of the internal Chinese situation is unclear" in *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 146.

¹⁸ Bassin, Mark. "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865." (Berkeley, California. University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 235.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 236.

²⁰ Wong, George H.C. and Allan B. Cole. "Sino-Russian Border Relations, 1850-1860." *The Chung Chi Journal of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1966), 113.

²¹ Quested, Rosemary K. *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860*. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press for the University of Malaysia, 1968.

²² *Ibid*, 45.

²³ *Ibid*, 45-46.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 46.

expedition had begun.²⁶ As an anonymous correspondent of the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung* recounted to his readers in Germany, a Chinese envoy from Beijing thereafter arrived to address the situation. In a tone the Chinese “used to use for rebellious barbarian,” the official ordered the Russians to abandon Amur with “signs of compunction and contriteness for their shameless robbery.”²⁷ The Russian response was indirect yet telling: the Chinese official was shown Russian ships, cannon, and military personnel and then asked whether all this would not suffice for the defense of Russia’s newly-“acquired country.”²⁸ By July 21st, 1854, Archimandrite Palladii could write to Muravyov that China’s Grand Council would seemingly be content to play “an observer’s role on the Amur” in light of the Empire’s weakness and Russia’s historic ban on the export of opium to China.²⁹

Despite its Emperor’s persistent conclusions that “the Russian barbarians have some intentions which they do not speak of openly,”³⁰ China’s Imperial Government was unable to reach out to Britain and France for assistance against Russia. Palladii was happy to report he doubted that China would accept British help even if it had been forthcoming on the grounds that “Britain is the nation they hate most.”³¹ Russian figures adroitly played upon these sentiments by explaining to another Chinese delegation pressing for an explanation of the first Amur voyage that the Russians were “forced” to occupy the Amur estuary because “the British were now determined to conquer China.”³² The Russian argument held that the British, realizing that they could not conquer all of China from Canton, had “modified their plan of war and wanted to try to invade the country from the north through Russian territory.”³³ Although this did not fool the China’s Imperial Court, its delegation, in the words of one Russian midshipman, “seemed to have been satisfied by this explanation and believed that their government must certainly be grateful to the Russians for this measure and perhaps would even support it.”³⁴ Worse yet for the Chinese

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Rohn, Marcus “Die Expedition Alexander Th. Middendorffs (1843-1845) und die Folgen.” (Münster, Germany. Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Master’s Thesis, 2004), 59.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Quested, Rosemary K. *The Expansion of Russia in East Asia, 1857-1860*. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press for the University of Malaysia, 1968), 48.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. “(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*” and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 8.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

cause, British and French diplomatic archives indicate that Beijing's suspicions were disturbingly accurate. This becomes especially apparent in documents such as British diplomat Sir John Bowring's response to Lord Clarendon's suggestions that British diplomats convince the Chinese Emperor to cease trading with Russia, expel Palladi, and incite Mongols to rebel on Russian territory. Bowring, recently appointed Governor of Hong Kong and a former Superintendent of Chinese Trade, informed his Foreign Secretary that the Taiping Rebellion and the unfavorable state of Anglo-Chinese relations meant that "these measures were neither feasible nor desirable."³⁵ Sir John instead urged the French Government to join Britain and "profit from the embarrassment of the Tartar dynasty,"³⁶ just as Hong Kong had in 1853.³⁷ French diplomats, meanwhile, argued that the Allies would not obtain anti-Russian concessions from China unless negotiators from both naval powers were supported by a force "capable of inspiring more terror than the Russians could exert."³⁸ Further to the South in Hong Kong and Canton (modern Guangzhou), British and French warships were already intent on protecting their commercial interests from rebels, pirates, and overzealous Chinese officials alike. It thus comes as little surprise that, by the time British and French forces undertook joint military action in China in late 1856, it was against Chinese rather than Russian adversaries.³⁹ Russia's expansion efforts thus grew more secure by the year and were permanently formalized by treaty within a decade, which made neutral China one of the biggest losers of the Crimean War despite its status as a non-belligerent.

China and island states including Japan and Hawai'i were not the only polities in the Pacific to remain neutral between 1854 and 1856. Despite a considerable degree of confusion and mistrust,⁴⁰ the Hudson's Bay Company, persuaded the British Government to accept a February, 1854 offer from the Russian American Company designed to maintain "reciprocal neutrality... on the North West Coast of America."⁴¹ Although it initially seems ironic that the belligerent

³⁵ Okuhira Takehiko. [Japanese-Language] "The Crimean War and the Far East, Part 2 [Kurimiya sensō to kyokutō (ichi)]." *Kokusaihō Gaikō Zasshi*. Vol. 35, No. 4 (1936), 17.

³⁶ Cady, John F. *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), 121.

³⁷ *Ibid* and FO 17/200 [Multiple Dates in 1853] (NA).

³⁸ *Ibid*, 138.

³⁹ France, for instance, did not even bother to join a feeble British diplomatic protest in 1855 against Russia's occupation of Chinese coastline South of the Amur. Cady, John F. *The Roots of French Imperialism in Eastern Asia*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1954), 138.

⁴⁰ Even French authorities in San Francisco were monitoring the strength of Sitka's garrison, albeit inaccurately. See: BB4 682 759 (SHD).

⁴¹ CO 305/6 5422 [Received: June 13th, 1854] (NA) and CO 305/6 292 [Received: June 13th, 1855] (NA).

empires' only adjacent territories were excluded from a conflict before it even began, closer inspection helps explain the motivation of both sides. Correspondence reveals that key Russian officials had given up any hope that Russian America (Alaska) could be held in the face of American expansion and British maritime supremacy. Far from attempting "to round out" a position in North America,⁴² Muravyov was instead urging Nicholas I that they "must not lose sight of the fact that sooner or later we will be compelled to give up all of our North American holdings."⁴³ British authorities including Vancouver Island Governor James Douglas, meanwhile, appealed to the Colonial Department for protection but instead learned that London viewed defensive measures as both "unnecessary and unadvisable."⁴⁴ Far from being a "sign that neither side had seriously thought" that conflict would extend to North America,⁴⁵ the bilateral agreement was instead a recognition that Russia, Britain, and their respective chartered companies had little to gain and a great deal to lose in fighting over these sparsely-populated lands.

In contrast to the relative tranquility along the Northwest Coast of North America, the situation off South America was significantly more volatile. Throughout 1853, for example, French warships had to closely monitor conditions in Guayaquil, Ecuador.⁴⁶ Chile and Peru also struggled to maintain political stability even as their economies and shares of international trade and investment expanded rapidly.⁴⁷ Captain Charles Parker of the frigate *President's* Royal Marines, in fact, was struck by new evidence of "very extended commerce" when visiting Valparaiso, Chile and Callao, Peru in early 1854 after an absence of 20 years.⁴⁸ Protecting trade in products ranging from guano to silver attracted warships from Britain, France, and the United States, which explains the presence of the bulk of Allied naval forces off South America at the

⁴² Baumgart, Winfried [Ann Pottinger Saab, Translator]. *The Peace of Paris 1856*. (Santa Barbara, California and Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1981), 200.

⁴³ Bassin, Mark. "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865." (Berkeley, California. University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 133.

⁴⁴ CO 305/5 10301 [November 28th, 1854] (NA)

⁴⁵ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 70. Grainger's claim is contradicted, for instance, by the Russian decision to dispatch scarce reinforcements to Novo-Archangel (now Sitka) to defend against a "fully expected" attack by an Anglo-French fleet even after the declaration of neutrality. See, for example: Glehn, Nicholas von and A. Danilov (Ed.). [Russian-language]. "N(ikolay) N(ikolayevich) Muravyov's First Amur Expedition." *Istoricheskii Vestnik*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1889), 642

⁴⁶ BB4 702 201 and 203 [April 5th, 1853] (SHD).

⁴⁷ See, for example: Bulmer-Thomas, Victor John Coatsworth and Roberto Conde (Eds.). *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America* (Volume I). [Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 492.

⁴⁸ Parker, Robert. "The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War." (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master's Thesis, 2003), 8.

Crimean War's outbreak.⁴⁹ Problematically for Rear-Admirals David Price and Febvrier-Despointes, however, conducting wartime operations did not relieve them from their peacetime responsibilities of monitoring Chilean and Peruvian politics while protecting commerce as far North as San Francisco. Price's obligation to deploy *Dido* and *Cockatrice* to monitor Valparaiso and Callao in May 1854,⁵⁰ for example, meant that these warships and their crews would not be available for use against Petropavlovsk. As Febvrier-Despointes discerned after a frank exchange with Price on May 7th, 1854, "The English Admiral regrets not having more steamboats and that his forces are not large enough to act immediately and effectively."⁵¹ Anglo-French naval forces in South American Waters continued to have notable impact on politics in Peru, Chile, and Ecuador through the 1850s, but it came at the expense of their Allied naval campaigns against Russian in 1854.⁵²

Across the Pacific, the less numerous British and French forces stationed in Chinese waters found themselves similarly overextended. Hong Kong, like other British colonies including Vancouver Island, Australia, and even the Falkland Islands,⁵³ clamored for protection from the same potential Russian commerce raiders so greatly feared by French consular agents.⁵⁴ Britain's commander in the combined East Indies and China Station, Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, perceptively realized that Hong Kong was an unlikely target for outnumbered Russian warships: he instead envisioned a Russian threat further to the North against China and East against Japan.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Allied warships were still required to suppress an epidemic of piracy whose severity motivated one American ship, according to *The Times*, to lock all of its ethnically Chinese passengers in an iron cage as a security precaution.⁵⁶ Assets outside of Hong Kong also had to be protected, not only against Chinese pirates and Russian raiders, but also from deteriorating domestic political conditions in a faltering Qing Empire. By 1854, the Taiping

⁴⁹ See, for example: BB4 702 283 [February 23rd, 1854] (SHD) for a discussion of guano deposits and Erulin, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. "Les Opérations dans le Pacifique pendant la Guerre de Crimée 1854-1856." (Unspecified Thesis/Dissertation, L'École Navale (à Brest), 1933-1934), 6-7, for details on Allied deployments.

⁵⁰ ADM 50/260 [May 16th, 1854] (NA).

⁵¹ BB4 702 439 [May 7th, 1854] (SHD).

⁵² For details on French naval forces' relationship with eventual Peruvian President Ramón Castilla, for example, see BB4 702 396 [February 12th, 1854] (SHD).

⁵³ Stone, Ian R. "The Falkland Islands and the Crimean War." *The War Correspondent (The Journal of the Crimean War Research Society)*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (April, 2001). Pgs. 42-26.

⁵⁴ CO 129/50 76 [Multiple Dates] (NA) and BB4 682 671 [June 14th, 1854] (SHD).

⁵⁵ ADM 50/278 [June 9th, 1854] (NA).

⁵⁶ Graham, Gerald S. *The China Station: War and Diplomacy, 1830 to 1860*. (London, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 284.

Rebellion had raged for years, and figures such as French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys were receiving reports from Shanghai that tensions could re-explode at any moment.⁵⁷ Although a small British squadron obtained unexpected concessions during its attempt to secure the neutrality of Japan's ports, British and French warships from Chinese and even more distant waters were unable to directly participate in Allied efforts against Russian possessions in the Pacific until 1855.

When it came to coordinating the efforts of these widely dispersed Allied squadrons around the Pacific, it is instructive to consider that British officers noted that their country's South American and Chinese/East Indian squadrons were so distant that ships logs' recoded time using different days.⁵⁸ The demands that such distances placed on a limited number of warships consequently added to already demanding expectations that they protect the coast and exports of entire continents while still attempting to destroy Russian ships in the Pacific. The difficulty inherent in successfully accomplishing this mission was not lost on British diplomats in Chile, who expressed their concerns to Sir James Graham over the "smallness" of British naval forces in the Pacific. In response, the First Lord simply stated that the Admiralty believed existing British naval forces would suffice to destroy any Russian warships because of French cooperation.⁵⁹ The French Legation in Chile also anticipated that Allied forces in the Pacific would suffice to protect commerce, but was "still worried" that Russian agents would buy large amounts of coal and exploit any momentary absence of Allied warships off Valparaiso.⁶⁰ Further north, the French Consulate in Lima, Peru, was even more alarmed that Russian warships and privateers could potentially hide off Cape Horn and capture French ships and exports destined for Peru and Chile.⁶¹ All the available primary sources, in fact, overwhelmingly indicate that the overriding concern of senior Allied decision-makers during the Crimean War in the Pacific and East Asia was protecting a broad range of economic interests. With the exception of Rear-Admiral James Stirling's 1854 mission to Japan and the concessions that followed, Allied actions over the next two years had little to do with Muravyov's ambitions⁶² and were instead intended to protect

⁵⁷ BB4 706 53 [June 21st, 1854] (SHD).

⁵⁸ Ashcroft, William Petty. "The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII). *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 275.

⁵⁹ ADM 2/1698 [May 1st, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁰ BB4 682 671 [June 14th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶¹ BB2 332 14 [June 5th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶² See Footnote Seven at the beginning of this chapter.

British and French commerce in that part of the world from all possible threats, not just Russian warships.

The emphasis that British and French figures placed on economics is easy to discern from three critically important sets of documents related to Crimean War's initial stages in the Pacific. As Chapter Three discussed in more detail, the two elements of the otherwise vague instructions dispatched to Allied naval commanders were mandates to cooperate with one another and safeguard the "commerce" of both states.⁶³ Additionally, the task-oriented communications that supplemented these overarching orders dealt with subjects such as protecting valuable cargos carried by the British-owned Pacific Steam Navigation Company rather than how to locate and destroy Russian forces.⁶⁴ These directives were hardly surprising given the second set of documents in question; correspondence involving British and French consular officials. Even before the conflict's formal outbreak, communications from diplomats posted from New York to Australia warned of Russian privateers operating out of bases in Alaska, Hawai'i, Manila, Japan, San Francisco, New York, etc.⁶⁵ The concerns of Guillaume Patrice Dillon, France's consul in San Francisco were sometimes seen as exaggerated by officials at France's Ministry of the Marine and Colonies.⁶⁶ Yet they were similar to those of John Rice Crowe in Norway because, irrespective of their accuracy, they had a significant impact on the Allies' wartime policies. Finally, a third set of documents reveals that Allied naval commanders were keenly aware of the danger posed by Russian privateers and received reports of their potential activities directly rather than through London or Paris.⁶⁷ As French officer Edmond du Hailley, aka Édouard Polydore Vanéechout, noted in his subsequent study of the 1854 campaign, North Pacific whaling operations returned more gold to the United States than the mines of California. Du Hailley added that the Allies feared that Russian naval forces or privateers would emulate the actions of Captain David Porter and the United States Ship *Essex* during the War of 1812 by wreaking havoc on British whaling operations in the Pacific.⁶⁸ Given that Russian archives still hold a draft

⁶³ ADM 2/1611 [February 24th, 1854] (NA) and Erulin, Lieutenant de Vaisseau. "Les Opérations dans le Pacifique pendant la Guerre de Crimée 1854-1856." (Unspecified Thesis/Dissertation, L'École Navale (à Brest), 1933-1934), 11.

⁶⁴ ADM 50/260 [July 22nd, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁵ BB3 683 23 and 26 [March 2nd and February 6th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶⁶ BB4 682 791 [October 24th, 1854] (SHD).

⁶⁷ See, for example: ADM 50/260 [Multiple Dates] (NA).

⁶⁸ Du Hailley, Edmond. (Édouard Polydore Vanéechout). *Campagnes et Stations sur les Côtes de l'Amérique du Nord*. (Paris, France: Librairie de la Société de Gens de Lettres, 1864), 223.

copy of a letter of marque and that Czar Alexander II waited until May, 1855 to reach a final decision not to employ privateers, Allied concerns were well-founded.⁶⁹

The wartime consequences of Britain and France's concern with protecting their economic assets in the Pacific were profound. This priority combined with logistical difficulties to ensure that of the two dozen or so warships nominally available to Allied squadrons in early 1854, only six of them arrived off Petropavlovsk in late August of that year. The rest were protecting ports or engaged in missions such as the one that fell to the *Amphitrite* and *Arthémise*. These two Allied vessels' mission to monitor San Francisco was hardly 'inexplicable'⁷⁰ to those who understood the importance that the Allied governments placed on safeguarding commerce.⁷¹ Considering, by their own admission, how little French and British commanders knew about the whereabouts of Russian warships and the North Pacific's geography, even remote possibilities such as Russian warships threatening British merchant vessels in the Gulf of Bengal became a source of anxiety.⁷² Even more significantly, the wide dispersal of Allied naval units and the commercial assets they were required to protect meant that cooperation among warships from the Americas with their counterparts based off China and the East Indies had to wait until 1855 despite the pleas of Rear-Admiral Adolphe Laguerre, the commander of France's (naval) "Division of Réunion and Indochina."⁷³ Laguerre blamed a lack of information regarding Russian whereabouts for ruining any chance of Allied success in the Pacific,⁷⁴ but, in truth, inaccurate intelligence effectively sabotaged British and French forces even when they did locate substantial Russian forces at Petropavlovsk in 1854 and De Castries (De Kastri, Des Castries, etc.) Bay in 1855. Before arriving at either destination, however, British and French warships from South America first had to rendezvous in the Marquesas Islands before visiting Honolulu, Hawai'i.

The combined Anglo-French South American squadrons were compelled to visit Hawai'i for multiple reasons, the most important of which involved supporting the then-independent Kingdom's independence in the face of growing American pressure. Both British and French officers expressed their countries' "great interest" in the island kingdom's continued

⁶⁹ Ponomarev, Valerii. "Russian Policy and the US during the Crimean War" in Ragsdale, Hugh and Valerii Ponomarev (Eds.). *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press and the Woodrow Wilson Center, 1993), 189.

⁷⁰ Stephan, John J. "The Crimean War in the Far East." *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1969), 263.

⁷¹ Febvrier-Despointes, for example, reminded Paris of this mission's purpose in 'protecting commerce' on September 22nd, 1854: BB4 702 495 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD).

⁷² See, for example: BB4 682 793 [August 31st, 1854] (SHD)

⁷³ BB4 684 194 [November 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

⁷⁴ BB4 684 213 [November 29th, 1854] (SHD).

“independence” and noted that their unprecedented display of naval force “naturally created...a great sensation, especially among the natives.”⁷⁵ Despite the efforts of his government and its British Allies, however, Edmond du Hailley predicted that the Anglo-American “race” for influence in Hawai’i would eventually result in the addition of a new star to the United States’ flag.⁷⁶ In addition to their brief 20-minute audience with His Majesty Kamehameha III during which Price more directly requested the Hawaiian King to maintain the islands’ sovereignty than did Febvrier-Despointes,⁷⁷ the Allied squadrons accomplished several important tasks. Firstly, British and French warships ensured that the Russians were not using Hawai’i as a base to outfit privateers, a prospect that especially concerned the French government.⁷⁸ Secondly and more importantly, the Hawaiian visit was also intended to gather military intelligence concerning the whereabouts of Russia’s largest warships in the Pacific, the frigates *Diana* and *Aurora*.⁷⁹ As Lieutenant Achille Amet wrote home to France, though, it was “quite probable” that the Allies were too late to catch one or more Russian frigates at Honolulu; “birds” that had “flown off already.”⁸⁰ On the British side, meanwhile, Price learned from an agent of the Hudson’s Bay Company that two Russian vessels had left the archipelago two weeks earlier bound for Petropavlovsk, Russia’s principal military outpost on the Kamchatka Peninsula.⁸¹

According to a letter written by Febvrier-Despointes off Petropavlovsk days prior to the Allies’ failed attack on September 4th, both Rear-Admirals had a twofold object in mind in assaulting the Russian port.⁸² Their first goal was to eliminate the Russian naval threat to British and French whaling vessels in the North Pacific, with the French commander adding: “our presence here has met our first goal, safeguarding the interests of our two *commerces*.”⁸³ Febvrier-Despointes noted that Petropavlovsk had been “extremely fortified by the nature of its

⁷⁵ ADM 1/5630 Y136 [July 25th, 1854] (NA). The French government also believed that the squadrons’ presence was “important” in helping to maintain Hawaiian independence. See: BB3 683 252 [November 27th, 1854] (SHD).

⁷⁶ Du Hailley, Edmond. (Édouard Polydore Vanéechout). *Campagnes et Stations sur les Côtes de l’Amérique du Nord*. (Paris, France: Librairie de la Société de Gens de Lettres, 1864), 224.

⁷⁷ Gregg, David Lawrence and Pauline King (Ed.). *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg: An American Diplomat in Hawaii 1853-1858*. (Honolulu, Hawai’i: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982), 172.

⁷⁸ BB4 682 224 [March 17th, 1854] and BB3 683 [February 6th, 1854] (SHD).

⁷⁹ Du Hailley, Edmond. (Édouard Polydore Vanéechout). *Campagnes et Stations sur les Côtes de l’Amérique du Nord*. (Paris, France: Librairie de la Société de Gens de Lettres, 1864), 226 and Gough, Barry M. *The Royal Navy and the Northwest Coast of North America 1810-1914 : A Study of British Maritime Ascendancy*. (Vancouver, Canada : University of British Columbia Press, 1971), 114.

⁸⁰ Amet, Achille and Jean Etévenaux (Ed.). *La France à la Conquête du Pacifique: Correspondance de l’élève-officier Achille Amet 1849-1854*. (Paris, France: Editions Osmondes, 1996), 106.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 1st, 1854] (NA).

⁸³ *Ibid.* See also: BB4 702 462 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD) and BB4 702 477 [September 2nd, 1854] (SHD).

terrain” as well as by Russian military arts, and suggested attacking with “*vive force*” rather than conducting siege operations with the modest stocks of ammunition carried by Allied warships.⁸⁴

It is important to note, though, that Price and Febvrier-Despointes only arrived at this course of action after a “lengthy” meeting after leaving Honolulu in late July. For a few hours in the afternoon of July 30th, Allied officers believed that their ships were headed to Sitka and San Francisco, respectively.⁸⁵ Baltic German nobleman and Russian Navy Lieutenant Nikolay Schilling, captured after 1855 wreck of the *Diana*, recounted how:

“British officers told me that their Admiral had made this decision (to set off for Petropavlovsk) without previous orders, at his own risk, and only on persuasion of his subordinates, especially the commander of the frigate *Pique*, Sir Frederick Nicolson. The old man (Price) was himself undecided over this, because he feared to arouse by such action the indignation of his government”⁸⁶

Price’s chaplain, Reverend Thomas Holme, described the Rear-Admiral as a “poor old man...always weak and vacillating in everything he did.”⁸⁷ The log of Alexander Vernon Maccall, a clerk on the British frigate *Pique*, similarly noted that Price “evidently showed great weakness in allowing everybody to sway him as they willed,”⁸⁸ making him hardly capable of dominating his French colleagues. Ultimately, a full array of primary sources reveals the glaring historical inaccuracy of the two longest English-language studies of the Crimean War’s Pacific Theatre. The Anglo-French assault on Petropavlovsk in 1854 was not defeated because French cooperation was somehow lacking,⁸⁹ just as the Northern Pacific emphatically not an area in which “the central players...were always British.”⁹⁰ At any rate, this “British expedition with French participants” added was defeated by Russian forces that had done considerably more than ‘largely react to what the British did, either actively or unconsciously.’⁹¹

Unbeknownst to approaching Anglo-French warships in 1854, Nikolay Muravyov had personally supervised a complete overhaul of Petropavlovsk’s defenses during the preceding five years. The Russian Governor-General of Eastern Siberia ignored the objections of figures

⁸⁴ *Ibid* and BB4 702 477 [September 2nd, 1854] (SHD).

⁸⁵ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 156.

⁸⁶ Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. “(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*” and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 71.

⁸⁷ LES/4/6 [September 12th, 1854] (NMM).

⁸⁸ LOG/N/P/1 [August 30th, 1854] (NMM).

⁸⁹ Parker, Robert. “The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War.” (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master’s Thesis, 2003), 3.

⁹⁰ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), XIII-XIV.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

including explorer Grennady Nevelskoy (Nevelskoi, Nevel'skoi, etc.) that Kamchatka could easily be isolated and besieged by an enemy fleet.⁹² The base undeniably faced significant logistical challenges thanks to a lack of nearby arable land, but Muravyov's advocacy on behalf of Petropavlovsk's excellent natural harbor and formidable natural defenses nevertheless convinced Nicholas I to make it Russia's principal naval base in East Asia.⁹³ As early as the summer of 1849, Muravyov and Kamchatkan Military Governor Vasily Zavoyko (Zavoiko, etc.) began attempting to bolster the port's previously "insignificant" defenses.⁹⁴ In choosing the site for a landwards artillery battery, the Governor-General also considered the possibility of an enemy landing and accordingly made arrangements to 'welcome it with grape-shot.'⁹⁵ These defenses were further augmented by the arrival of reinforcements fresh from their initial voyage down the Amur River, along with the frigate *Aurora* and armed transport *Dvina*. Instead of facing sailors and a handful of volunteers, the approaching Anglo-French ships were instead faced with hundreds of troops of whom many were "originally Siberian bear hunters" and therefore excellent marksmen.⁹⁶ Contrary to the completely erroneous assertion that "no serious planning had been undertaken for a war in the North Pacific by anyone,"⁹⁷ Russian forces trained for months in the expectation of fighting in hilly and wooded terrain. Village girls even played the role of an "enemy" so that Russian troops could practice maneuvering under cover of trees, bushes, and rocks.⁹⁸ Additionally, the well-educated children of Russian officers noted that their fathers supervised the construction of batteries from 4:00 AM to 10:00 PM, only breaking for lunch.⁹⁹ The effect of these preparations was not lost upon Allied observers. Upon their squadron's early September arrival, for example, one British officer bitterly noted that the Russians had "not idled

⁹² Bassin, Mark. "A Russian Mississippi?: A Political-Geographical Inquiry into the Vision of Russia on the Pacific 1840-1865." (Berkeley, California: University of California PhD Dissertation, 1983), 239.

⁹³ Barsukov, Ivan. [Russian-language]. "Graf Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Amursky (*Volume I*). " (Moscow: Sinodalnaya Tipografiya, 1891), 219-222.

⁹⁴ Vladimir (Volpicelli), Zenone. *Russia on the Pacific and the Siberian Railway*. (London, UK: Sampson, Low, Marston and Company, 1899), 177.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 178.

⁹⁶ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. "The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant)." *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 299.

⁹⁷ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 70.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹⁹ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. "In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 69.

their time away,” in contrast to the leisurely pace of the Allied squadron’s passage that had ‘thrown away hours when minutes were invaluable.’¹⁰⁰

On August 28th, 1854, an unidentified black steamship appeared at the entrance of Avacha (or Avatcha) Bay, Kamchatka. Although it flew American colors instead of British and French ones, the *ruse de guerre* did not fool anyone on shore for long, especially after it abruptly reversed course and headed away from shore.¹⁰¹ Russian forces had already sighted the remaining five British and French ships earlier that morning,¹⁰² and an observation post was “busily at work” relaying information to headquarters in Petropavlovsk.¹⁰³ Officers on the *Aurora*, including Captain Ivan Izylmetiev,¹⁰⁴ recognized the mysterious vessel as the British paddle-steamer *Virago* from a pre-war visit to the latter vessel’s home port of Callao, Peru.¹⁰⁵ Izylmetiev’s suspicions were confirmed when the vessel abruptly headed back out of the bay, and Russian forces worked through the night to reinforce the boom protecting the harbor’s narrow entrance.¹⁰⁶ The *Virago*’s senior surgeon, Dr. Henry Trevan, meanwhile, noted that the Allied entrance “caused a great excitement” and that Petropavlovsk’s “batteries and heights were lined with people.”¹⁰⁷

In addition to sighting the *Aurora* and a smaller warship just inside the sheltered harbor’s bar, the British and French officers on board the *Virago* also observed seven or eight merchant vessels sheltered in the rear of the harbor.¹⁰⁸ These included vessels such as a sloop from Hamburg (the *Magdalena*) chartered by the Russian American Company to deliver provisions

¹⁰⁰ MS-0805 213 [September 1st, 1854] (ABC).

¹⁰¹ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents.*” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 79 and 192.

¹⁰² Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854,” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 103.

¹⁰³ MS-0805 202 [August 28th, 1854] (ABC).

¹⁰⁴ Later known as the “soul of the defense” for his role in helping repel the Allied assault. Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents.*” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 224.

¹⁰⁵ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870),

¹⁰⁶ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents.*” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 192.

¹⁰⁷ Akrigg, George P. and Helen B. Akrigg. *H.M.S Virago in the Pacific: 1851-1855*. (Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press, 1992), 183.

¹⁰⁸ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloitre Imprimeurs, 2004), 166.

and the American whaling brig *Noble*, whose crew joined American merchants in being “very indignant” at Allies’ choice of the Stars and Stripes as a disguise.¹⁰⁹ The mission lasted only a few hours, but confirmed Price’s worst fear: multiple artillery batteries now augmented Petropavlovsk’s natural defenses.¹¹⁰ After a series of desultory, probing bombardments and small-scale landings over the next two days, the 64-year-old Welshman slipped into a small armory on board his flagship shortly after noon on August 30th, 1854 and deliberately shot himself in the chest with a pistol.

David Price was not the first senior British officer to die on station during the 19th century, but his death is singularly important for multiple reasons. The first involves the incident’s immediate impact, which resulted in alterations to the Allied plan of attack that dramatically favored Russian defenders. As British Admiralty correspondence soberly reported, Price’s “untimely death...stopped the movement of the ships”¹¹¹ and abruptly halted operations that day.¹¹² Senior Allied officers rushed to pay their respects to the unfortunate Rear-Admiral, who clung to life for almost five hours as the bullet had missed his heart and instead lodged in his lungs.¹¹³ Although overall command passed to Rear-Admiral Febvrier-Despointes, a commander similar to Price in both age and experience, the senior British officer became the aggressive, younger Sir Frederick Nicolson, Captain of the frigate *Pique*. Nicolson was already chafing at the cautious approach of his superiors, audibly remarking just before Price’s suicide that he would “anchor for no Admiral; I left England to engage the Russian frigate. Tow me alongside her!”¹¹⁴ Before these changes in command and their consequences could even register, however, Anglo-French officers faced the pressing issue of how to record the circumstances surrounding Price’s death and inform the approximately two thousand sailors and marines in their combined

¹⁰⁹ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents*. (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 146. See also: Novikov, Valery. “A Heroic Epic (Defence of Petropavlovsk Kamchatski in 1854).” *Far Eastern Affairs*. Vol. 20, No. 1 (1994), 56.

¹¹⁰ See, for example: Ashcroft, William Petty. “The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII).” *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 275.

¹¹¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 19th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹² As British navigational officer (*Virago*) George Hastings Inskip noted in his diary, “the proceedings of the day (were) knocked in the head and everybody (was) more or less out of sorts.” MS-0805 207 [August 30th, 1854] (ABC).

¹¹³ LES/4/6 [September 12th, 1854] (NMM).

¹¹⁴ Ashcroft, William Petty. “The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII).” *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 276. Rear-Admiral Febvrier-Despointes also added that Nicolson “incredibly neglected” agreements: BB4 702 461 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD). In fairness to Nicolson, however, enlisted sailor William Petty Ashcroft noted that Commander Marshall on the *Virago* was also “grumbling to the First Lieutenant” on account of Price’s initial caution. *Ibid*, 275.

squadron. These tasks, in turn, resulted in a lingering historiographical controversy that highlights the importance of considering a broad range of primary sources instead of simply relying on official records.

Earlier scholarship on the incident considers “an equivocally laconic” entry in the logbook of the *President*; “12:15 PM: Rear Admiral Price was shot by a Pistol Ball by his own hand,” as evidence that Price’s death may have been an accident.¹¹⁵ British diplomatic records from Honolulu, referring to “French sources,” are also cited in an effort to prove that Price had shot himself “while putting pistols in his belt” and that his death “will remain unexplained until new and conclusive evidence comes to light.”¹¹⁶ The immediate problem with this conclusion is that it is based on an incomplete reading of the relevant Admiralty file, which included a report from the *President*’s Captain, Richard Burridge, indicating:

“the impression was that the Rear Admiral had accidentally wounded himself, but the observations afterwards made by him tended to induce me, and those about him to fear that it must have taken place during a momentary alteration of mind, the result of intense mental anxiety.”¹¹⁷

The modern article in question also neglected to include all the reports to reach diplomats in Hawai’i, which led American Minister David Lawrence Gregg to conclude that the circumstances surrounding Price’s death “lead many to the conclusion that it was an act of suicide.”¹¹⁸ It also does not account for the deliberate falsification of these reports, as French naval archives confirm that French officers deliberately fed American reporters in California a fabricated account of Price’s “accident” upon their return to San Francisco in the aftermath of the Petropavlovsk fiasco.¹¹⁹

In spite of its shortcomings, literature written in the 1960s¹²⁰ is significantly more thorough than the most recent monograph on the subject, published in 2008. The latter work does not cite any sources at all in concluding that “the only close evidence” of Price’s intentional death

¹¹⁵ Stephan, John J. “The Crimean War in the Far East.” *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1969), 264-265 and Novikov, Valery. “A Heroic Epic (Defence of Petropavlovsk Kamchatski in 1854).” *Far Eastern Affairs*. Vol. 20, No. 1 (1994), 57.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 265.

¹¹⁷ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [August 30th, 1854] (NA).

¹¹⁸ Gregg, David Lawrence and Pauline King (Ed.). *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg: An American Diplomat in Hawaii 1853-1858*. (Honolulu, Hawai’i: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982), 200.

¹¹⁹ BB4 857 [October 15th, 1854] (SHD).

¹²⁰ See also: Lewis, Michael. “An Eye-Witness at Petropaulovski.” *The Mariner’s Mirror*, Vol. 49., No. 4 (1963), 265-272.

was Chaplain Thomas Holme's letter,¹²¹ in which the Reverend reached the subsequently ironic conclusion that "there is no chance of concealing the horrid deed from the world."¹²² Worse yet, the 2008 book incorrectly attributed Price's post-Napoleonic Wars service as a justice of the peace in rural Wales rather than at sea as indicative of a lack of ability rather than a consequence of the widely-studied backlog of senior Royal Navy officers after 1815.¹²³ Had that work's author not considered his lack of linguistic acumen in French and Russian "less vital than it appears,"¹²⁴ its author presumably would have reached a different conclusion. Official French records, in fact, directly state that "on the planned day of the attack [Febvrier-Despointes] learned that Admiral Price had committed suicide."¹²⁵ The only remaining question for well-informed contemporaries was motive: as Prince Dmitri Petrovich Maksutov mentioned, "the reason for the Admiral's suicide remains a mystery."¹²⁶

Despite Maksutov's observation, a more complete examination of available Russian sources is fraught with the same ambiguity present in British official records. This is hardly surprising for several reasons, including the misinformation that rank and file Allied captives offered to Russian defenders and the pronounced ideological orientations of subsequent Soviet historians, not to mention confusion over Price's motives in 1854. Baltic geologist Karl von Ditmar, whose work in Kamchatka placed him close to Petropavlovsk in 1854, believed that "there was no reason for suicide at the very beginning of the attack since the enemy forces heavily outnumbered the Russians."¹²⁷ The port's second-in-command reacted angrily to a translation of an English article mentioning that "Admiral Price was more afraid of responsibility than a child is afraid of a ghost" by discussing how Price, as a young man, once climbed the highest tower of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, tied his handkerchief on it, and challenged his

¹²¹ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2008), 39.

¹²² LES/4/6 [September 12th, 1854] (NMM).

¹²³ Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2008), 39. Also see, for example: Lewis, Michael. *The Navy in Transition 1814-1864: A Social History*. (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1965).

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, XIII-XIV.

¹²⁵ BB4 702 495 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹²⁶ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. "In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 212.

¹²⁷ Ditmar, Karl von. [Russian-language]. "Stay and Travels in Kamchatka in the Years 1851-1855." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Novaia Kniga, 2009). Originally published in German as: *Reisen und Aufenthalt in Kamtschatka in den Jahren 1851-1855* (St. Petersburg, Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1890), 520.

peers to take it down.¹²⁸ Problematically, though, both Czarist and Soviet historians reached inaccurate conclusions for different reasons. Some, for example, hold that Price perished “within seconds” and that his reported suicide was a British “fabrication” designed to conceal Price’s death at the hands of a Russian cannonball fired from shore.¹²⁹ A combat-related death or an accident, however, were both highly unlikely to make even dispassionate observers label August 30th “a day that should be blotted out of the calendar.”¹³⁰

It is thus left to French official records and the private correspondence of British and French officers to corroborate Chaplain Holme’s description of Price’s suicide and establish that a cover-up ensued, and both sets of sources deliver brilliantly. Febvrier-Despointes, for example, directly stated that “Nicolson came to tell me that Admiral Price just used his pistol to fire a bullet into his heart.”¹³¹ Private correspondence elaborated on the French Rear-Admiral’s observations. Inskip, for one, angrily confided in his journal that he had learned of Price’s suicide from a second lieutenant who happened to be on board the *President*, adding that:

“Never before and, God grant, never again will such a thing happen as a British Admiral and a Commander-in Chief to commit suicide just as his squadron are all looking up to him to lead them into action, to honour and to victory.”¹³²

Furthermore, and in spite of Sir James Graham’s best efforts to obtain the best possible press coverage of the incident, *The Times* printed a letter from a midshipman on the *President* in which they author reported:

“the Admiral shot himself with a pistol, I believe on account of great excitement about the result of the battle; but, as it seems to be kept very quiet on board, it is better not to talk too much about it.”¹³³

Ultimately, however, it was Captain Armand Christophe de Miniac of the French flagship *La Forte* who penned a candid narrative that convincingly explains ambiguity marring later reports of Rear-Admiral Price’s death:

“We saw Captain Nicholson who, coming on deck, told me point-blank and without any caution that Admiral Price was dying, and that he had just shot himself in the cardiac region. Being extremely moved myself of this terrible news, and realizing how much this would demoralize the crews and thereafter the consequences that this would

¹²⁸ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), Footnote 12.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 303-304 and Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 8, Page 7.

¹³⁰ MS-0805 207 [August 30th, 1854] (ABC).

¹³¹ BB4 702 462 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹³² MS-0805 206 [August 30th, 1854] (ABC).

¹³³ “The Affair of Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 26th, 1854), 9.

entail, I encouraged him to stay calm and to say that it was while charging his pistol that M. Price had hurt himself.”¹³⁴

De Miniac, whose conclusions were fully supported by other observers including the *Forte's* illustrator, non-enlisted nobleman Jean-René-Maurice de Kerret, and the oft-cited Edmond du Hailley, had the presence of mind to urge Nicolson to remain calm and loudly say that Price's death was accidental “to those that were surrounding me so that they could not disprove this and that they would not repeat the ill-considered and imprudent comments of Captain Nicolson.”¹³⁵ Combined with a mass of additional evidence, de Miniac's correspondence not only proves that Price committed suicide, but also definitively reveals that French officers immediately took the lead in obscuring the British Rear-Admiral's true cause of death from both contemporaries and modern historians.¹³⁶ These efforts were so successful that wounded Allied prisoners informed their Russian captors, in Captain Izylmetiev's words, that Price “shot himself by accident while loading his gun.”¹³⁷

Now that the basic facts relating to Price's suicide are firmly established, the question that arises is one of significance. In other words, why did it matter that this particular historical figure joined the ranks of more than 200 casualties Britain and France suffered at Petropavlovsk? The answer lies in the alterations Price's successors made to his original approach of methodically isolating and destroying individual Russian shore batteries protecting the harbor's entrance. In a striking reversal of the previously amicable relationship between the two Allied Rear-Admirals, Febvrier-Despointes and Nicolson irritated not only each other, but also their respective subordinates.¹³⁸ Even the restrained language of Febvrier-Despointes' normally understated correspondence, for example, includes the French Rear-Admiral's observation that “until Admiral Price's death, perfect concordance existed between the two divisions and I am convinced that this would also have been the case if the one who replaced him would have taken

¹³⁴ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 169.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Britain's National Maritime Museum rejected an offer to display Price's sword by claiming that its facilities, the largest of their kind in the world and recently expanded through a multi-million pound construction project, were “too full” (Dr. Barry Gough: personal communication, September 15th, 2011).

¹³⁷ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents.*” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 204.

¹³⁸ See, for example, the tense exchange on September 1st and 2nd in ADM 1/5631 CAP N52] (NA).

responsibility.”¹³⁹ The basic problem was that Price, and Febvrier-Despointes after him, had been adamant that their squadron of three frigates, two smaller vessels, and a paddle-steamer remain “efficient,”¹⁴⁰ or sufficiently undamaged, in the event of the potential arrival of Russia’s two other frigates in the Pacific, the *Pallada* (Pallas) and the *Diana*.¹⁴¹ Neither Febvrier-Despointes nor Nicolson had any idea that Russian Vice-Admiral Yevfimiy Vasilyevich Putyatin (Putiatin) had already abandoned the aging *Pallada* near the Amur River’s mouth and assigned the *Diana* to obtain concessions from Japan.¹⁴² Unlike Febvrier-Despointes, Nicolson deemed potential casualties to be of secondary importance to the successful destruction of Russian batteries and ships.¹⁴³ Although these commanders’ divergent opinions were eventually reconciled after much correspondence and negotiation, the ensuing compromise of landing 700 men on ground not covered by their ships’ cannon produced precisely the type of “unfortunate result” that Febvrier-Despointes had hoped to avoid.¹⁴⁴

Combat actually began in earnest on August 31st, the day following Price’s suicide, although a confused Allied command structure considerably limited the fighting’s scope. A lack of morning winds forced the 120-horsepower *Virago* to laboriously tow the larger frigates *Forte*, *Pique*, and *President* into position to engage the first and second Russian batteries at the edge of point Shakov (Shakoff, Schakov, etc.) and the neck of the Koshka, or Little, Spit that enclosed Petropavlovsk’s inner harbor.¹⁴⁵ The port’s military and civilian commander, Governor Vasily Zavoyko, claimed that Russia’s most distant and isolated position, a three-gun battery at Krasny

¹³⁹ BB4 702 461 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD). Nicolson, to quote Lieutenant Schilling’s conversations with British officers, reportedly “did not want to submit to any foreigner, and then began a duality of power.” Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. “(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*” and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 72.

¹⁴⁰ Specifically; the frigates *President*, *Pique*, and *Forte*; the smaller vessels *Eurydice* and *Obligado*; and the paddle-steamer *Virago*.

¹⁴¹ See, for example: BB4 702 469 [August 31st, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁴² Lensen, George Alexander. *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697-1875*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 330.

¹⁴³ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 3rd, 1854] (NA).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁵ See, for example: ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 19th, 1854] (NA); Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 299; and Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854.” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 106-107.

Yar (Krasnyi Yar), “worried everyone” in his camp yet could not be reinforced.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, the midshipman in charge of that modest position received instructions to spike its guns and retreat to Russia’s second battery at the neck of Koshka, which he did after the *Virago* finished towing larger ships and launched small boats carrying an Allied landing party. In contrast to existing sources that exclusively credit the efforts of British Royal Marines under Captain Charles Parker,¹⁴⁷ however, it is interesting to note that Rear-Admiral Zavyoko, his wife Yulia, his second-in-command Captain Aleksandr Arbuzov, and Captian Izylmetiev of the *Aurora* all independently observed the French *tricolore* and not a British standard flying above Krasny Yar.¹⁴⁸ Much to the Russian commanders’ relief, the Allied landing force, swelled by reinforcements to some 300 men, abruptly re-embarked on their ships instead of pressing home an attack on the 11-gun battery number two at Koshka. Although Russian observers and some historians credit the approach of improvised Russian reinforcements that had gathered near the *Aurora*, an entry in Royal Marine commander Charles Parker’s journal reveals otherwise: his men were instead recalled so that they could have lunch.¹⁴⁹ Parker was bewildered, as were observers on the *Virago*, who noted that “everything was going on prosperously.”¹⁵⁰ British forces were eager to re-engage the *Aurora* from sea while a landing party could again place itself in a position to attack battery number two from its left flank and rear, but were “doomed to disappointment” after consulting with their French Allies.¹⁵¹ Thus began a strained exchange of

¹⁴⁶ Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854.” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 104.

¹⁴⁷ Parker, Robert. “The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War.” (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master’s Thesis, 2003), 36-37. *The Times* did mention that both French and British sailors had landed to support the *President*’s complement of British marines commanded by Parker: “The Affair at Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 7th), 8.

¹⁴⁸ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 302; Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854.” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 107; Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents. (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 148; and Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 196-197.

¹⁴⁹ Parker, Robert. “The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War.” (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master’s Thesis, 2003), 38. The meal was lunch and not dinner, as (Robert) Parker claims.

¹⁵⁰ MS-0805 208 [August 31st, 1854] (ABC).

¹⁵¹ MS-0805 210 [August 31st, 1854] (ABC).

correspondence and meetings that underlay a “lamentable delay” in Allied operations between September 1st and 3rd.¹⁵²

The essential points at issue among Febvrier-Despointes, Nicolson, and their respective subordinates were straightforward. The French Rear-Admiral emphasized how Allied “reconnaissance has proved” that the narrow entrance to Petropavlovsk’s harbor was protected by a frigate and a half-dozen “admirably placed” batteries.¹⁵³ This meant “that no more than two of our Frigates could attack at one time,” that they “would inevitably be raked while getting into position,” and that “great damage must necessarily attend” any attempt to storm and capture the place by sea.¹⁵⁴ Nicolson ‘concurred’ with this assessment that such an attack would “not be prudent to attempt,”¹⁵⁵ and instead pressed for an amphibious assault. The senior British officer’s preference for a landing was not inherently disastrous, as the events of August 31st had demonstrated that Allied landing parties could successfully overwhelm Russian batteries such as the one at Krasny Yar if covered by naval gunfire. It was only when Nicolson’s aggression combined with Febvrier-Despointes’ caution and inaccurate intelligence provided by deserters from American whaling ships to produce a land attack that became, in the words of Britain’s next Pacific commander, “a badly managed business.”¹⁵⁶

The seeds of an Allied defeat at Petropavlovsk took root on the afternoon of September 1st, 1854. The timing was especially sudden given that, only a day earlier, Allied warships led by the frigate *Forte* had bombarded two Russian batteries at Shakov and Koshka into temporary silence and taken a third, Krasny Yar, by landing sailors and marines. Even one of the largest Russian emplacements, the five guns entrenched on Point Shakov at the base of a rocky hill, simply could not match the broadsides of the *Forte*, reinforced by its English peers, the *President* and *Pique*. These warships were able to hurl hundreds of rounds against the battery on the afternoon of August 31st. Allied shots rained rocky fragments from a cliff behind the Russian battery down on its gun crews, wounding its commander and eventually rendering the cannon impossible to man.¹⁵⁷ This preliminary bombardment, in conjunction with the landing at Krasny

¹⁵² BB4 702 486 [September 2nd, 1854] (SHD) and ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 3rd, 1854] (NA)

¹⁵³ BB4 702 484 [September 2nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* See also: ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 2nd, 1854] (NA)

¹⁵⁵ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 2nd, 1854] (NA). See also: BB4 702 484 [September 2nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵⁶ Additional Manuscript 49565, Folio -[April 1st, 1856] (BL).

¹⁵⁷ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 302 and Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan

Yar earlier that day had Zavyoko preparing for the worst: the Russian commander issued orders to abandon the Shakov battery and spike its guns while positioning ammunition and reinforcements at the Koshka battery to repel the Allied landing force approaching from Krasny Yar to the South.¹⁵⁸ The Russian Major General was also preparing to burn the *Aurora* and *Dvina* and transfer their crews onto shore, but he understandably omitted this detail when writing an official report describing the battle.¹⁵⁹ Judging by the actions of their commander, Petropavlovsk's approximately 1,000¹⁶⁰ defenders were thus especially fortunate that Rear-Admiral Febvrier-Despointes' caution and the Allies' diminishing supply of projectiles led them to cease these August 31st bombardments, "as if to take a break."¹⁶¹ By the time British and French forces resumed active operations on September 4th, they had settled on a plan that promised to produce results entirely more favorable to Russia.

Allied warships sustained minor damage and a half-dozen casualties from Russian return fire on the last day of August, but the unity of British and French commanders was splintering far faster than their vessels' wooden hulls.¹⁶² French and British participants alike were upset that, in de Kerret's words, the results of operations on the 31st were "nil" after orders prevented Allied ships from pressing home their bombardment by engaging the *Aurora* and setting the wooden town of Petropavlovsk ablaze.¹⁶³ As negotiations between Febvrier-Despointes and Nicolson stalled on the following morning of September 1st, the British paddle-steamer *Virago* traveled across the Bay of Avacha to dispose of Price's body "without the least ceremony more than

Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854." *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 106.

¹⁵⁸ Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. "Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854." *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 106.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid* and Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. "The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant)." *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 302.

¹⁶⁰ Russian estimates of the garrison's size range from of 921 to 1,018, but the most specific give the following total: 41 officers, 476 soldiers, 349 sailors, 18 civilian volunteers, and 36 indigenous Itelmen (Kamchandal) hunters. See, for example: Zavrazhnov, Yuri. [Russian-language] *Forget The Admiral: A Historical Reflection with Investigation*. (Petropavlovsk, Russia: Novaia Kniga, 2005), 13.

¹⁶¹ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. "The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant)." *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 304.

¹⁶² See, for example, Febvrier-Despointes' comments that "since the first attack, everything has gone wrong" and that there was "no cooperation between France and England" in BB4 702 462 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁶³ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloitre Imprimeurs, 2004), 171.

decency required.”¹⁶⁴ Yet the Rear-Admiral continued to haunt his erstwhile squadron even after death, as the British burial party encountered several American deserters from whaling vessels. These men confidently assured British officers that Petropavlovsk’s scurvy-ravaged garrison men was vulnerable to a landwards assault from the town’s rear.¹⁶⁵ Nicolson’s deliberately vague description of “some information having been obtained during this interval,” however, did not sway Sir James Graham, who wrote a scolding reminder to his Captain that Petropavlovsk’s outcome was: “of a nature which ought to impress upon the officers of H.M. Ships that the utmost discretion is necessary in undertaking expeditions on shore.”¹⁶⁶ Once Captain Charles Parker received American¹⁶⁷ assurances that the dense brush at the back of the hills protecting Petropavlovsk had been removed and was traversed by good paths, Nicolson had his senior marine officer draw up a plan for a large-scale amphibious assault on Petropavlovsk and set about coercing Febvrier-Despointes into ordering the attack

British and French correspondence alike paints a vivid picture of Nicolson as hyper-aggressive and intent on employing any argument necessary to steamroll his senior French colleague’s profound misgivings regarding a proposed landing. It must be noted, however, that the ranking British Captain enjoyed the full support of his subordinate naval officers, Captain Richard Burrige of the *President*, and Commander Edward Marshall of the *Virago*, and Captain Charles Parker of the Royal Marines. Febvrier-Despointes, meanwhile, had to deal with the indignant Captain of the *Eurydice*, Pierre-Paul de La Grandière, who was furious with his commander for allegedly starting a rumor that La Grandière was a coward for not bringing the *Eurydice* to the *Forte*’s assistance when the latter ships was engaged with Russian shore batteries on August, 31st.¹⁶⁸ At any rate, simple mathematics ensured that, if Febvrier-Despointes yielded to Nicolson, La Grandière, Armand Christophe de Miniac (*Forte*), and Capitaine de Frégate de

¹⁶⁴ MS-0805 212 [September 1st, 1854] (ABC).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 212-213; Parker, Robert. “The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War.” (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master’s Thesis, 2003), 42; and Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 176.

¹⁶⁶ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [December 6th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁶⁷ Russian sources reveal that the Americans had already secured their passage to Hawai’i on the more recently-arrived American whaling brig *Noble*, contrary to British assumptions that these men were dependent on Allied ships for that purpose. The American wood-chopping party, in fact, was preparing planks for use on board the *Noble* on the orders of its captain. Zavrazhnov, Yuri. [Russian-language]. *Forget The Admiral: A Historical Reflection with Investigation*. (Petropavlovsk, Russia: Novaia Kniga, 2005), 10.

¹⁶⁸ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 177.

Rosencoat (*Obligado*) would be outvoted in a council of war. At it turned out, La Grandière's abstention meant that the definitive September 3rd vote was not even that close: the key was convincing Febvrier-Despointes that his preference for reconnaissance and a rendezvous with warships from Chinese waters¹⁶⁹ would "compromise" the "Flags of England and France."¹⁷⁰

Nicolson's correspondence was at least forthright, and concluded with the succinct observation that "the possible loss of our good name arising from leaving this place without further attempts upon it appears to me all important."¹⁷¹ His earlier comment about compromising both nations' national flags had already made a stinging impression on French senior officers, who took Nicholson's statement to mean, that, "by opposing such a plan... they were taking the responsibility of a failure that could befoul the colors of both nations."¹⁷² In response to Febvrier-Despointes' leading question "do you foresee any unfortunate result arising from the debarkation for the purpose of taking Petropaulovski?," the British Captain blithely answered that "casualties must necessarily take place, but so far as I can foresee I cheerfully prognosticate that success must attend our efforts to capture the batteries from the rear."¹⁷³ Nicolson's optimistic assessment also included his opinion that Petropavlovsk's destruction "would compensate for the heavy casualties that will probably ensue,"¹⁷⁴ but the plan he adopted in order to satisfy Febvrier-Despointes' caution ensured that this statement was only half correct. Instead of following Parker's suggestion that a 700-man force approach the rear of Petropavlovsk using Lake Kultush to shield their route,¹⁷⁵ Nicolson instead pushed through a proposal that forced a divided landing party under multiple commanders to climb Nikolskaya (Nikolsky, etc.) Hill, cut paths through dense foliage, and maintain good order while facing fierce Russian opposition. As Captain de Miniac sarcastically remarked after the landing, "the result of this nice combination was not long in occurring."¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁹ Parker, Robert. "The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War." (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master's Thesis, 2003), 43.

¹⁷⁰ BB4 702 486 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD) and ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 3rd, 1854] (NA). See also: BB4 702 482 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 176. See also: BB4 702 462 [September 22nd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁷³ BB4 702 486 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD) and ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 3rd, 1854] (NA).

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ Parker, Robert. "The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War." (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master's Thesis, 2003), 45.

¹⁷⁶ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 176.

In the early morning darkness of September 4th, 1854, Allied forces began preparations for a large-scale landing to the rear of Petropavlovsk accompanied by diversionary bombardment of Russian shore batteries. As 700 sailors and marines gathered on board the *Virago*, which was again towing the *Forte* and *President*, Russian defenders raised the alarm on shore and prepared for what both sides anticipated would be a “decisive battle.”¹⁷⁷ Yulia Zavoyko, for instance, remarked that “this time we were expecting the most decisive attack” because “the squadron could not stay a lot longer because of the time of year.”¹⁷⁸ The Anglo-French attack followed a sharply divided council of war a day earlier, during which Captain Pierre-Paul de La Grandière had abstained from voting on the grounds that, as the leader of any potential French amphibious assault, it would be improper to offer an opinion.¹⁷⁹ Although his two fellow French warship commanders voted against a landing, Febvrier-Despointes and the British majority led by Nicolson carried the meeting. It is critically important to note, however, that the French Captains opposed such a landing only because they were, in Captain de Miniac’s words, “proponents of trying a naval attack once more.”¹⁸⁰ French non-cooperation was, correspondingly, not the “primary cause of the (Allied) defeat,”¹⁸¹ and figures including Price’s successor as Britain’s Pacific Commander-in-Chief certainly did not view it as such. Rear-Admiral Henry William Bruce, in fact, reviewed documentary evidence in 1856 only to conclude: “not only was the attack wrong made but badly Executed.”¹⁸² This assessment noticeably declined to blame Allied failures on either the French or Captain Richard Burridge, who commanded the British landing force. The Allied defeat at Petropavlovsk was instead due to the a combination of determined Russian resistance, rough terrain, and Nicolson’s determination to mount an attack despite the caution of Febvrier-Despointes, even if meant, in Sir James Graham’s scathing assessment, “detaching Seamen and Marines from their ships in the neighborhood of fortified positions of the

¹⁷⁷ Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854.” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 110.

¹⁷⁸ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 151.

¹⁷⁹ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 177.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 21.

¹⁸¹ Parker, Robert. “The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War.” (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master’s Thesis, 2003), 3.

¹⁸² Additional Manuscript 49565, Folio -[April 1st, 1856] (BL).

Enemy, with imperfect knowledge of the Nature of the Country and the force expected to be encountered.”¹⁸³

Allied participants first observed that “everything appeared to be going well.”¹⁸⁴ After having embarked a 700 man landing force an hour earlier, the *Virago* began towing the *Forte* and *President* towards the five-gun Russian shore battery at six o’clock that morning. Although the *Forte* in particular came under heavy fire at 7:10 AM from multiple Russian batteries including the 5-gun ‘saddle’ battery South of Nikolskaya Hill, it only took Allied ships an additional hour to silence Russian shore defenses and commence landing operations at 8:15. At that point, two-dozen small boats ferried British and French sailors and marines to their landing site near a destroyed 5-gun Russian emplacement. This position protected a valley separating two mountains and ending in a gradual slope at a beach, which seemed to offer an approach to Petropavlovsk’s rear. From then on, however, the planned attack began to unravel. Captain La Grandière, in command of the French landing contingent, “looked for the path that the guides had pointed out” but instead “found a mountain cut perpendicularly, brushwood between the rocks and dense thickets on the slope.”¹⁸⁵ “Thinking that we could not advance in order over such a terrain,” La Grandière attempted to “beseech” Captain Richard Burridge” of the *President* to call back the marines of both nations and alter their plan of attack.¹⁸⁶ Yet Britain’s Royal Marines under Captain Charles Parker, visibly “shining in his nice red uniform,” had quickly formed their ranks under heavy fire and advanced, in Armand Christophe de Miniac’s judgment, “indiscriminately and without any caution.”¹⁸⁷ The results of moving, in the words of one British midshipman, “without any order”¹⁸⁸ had predictable consequences, exemplified by Arbuzov’s subsequent discovery of corpse bearing a shirt embroidered “Parker” along with a flyer for the opera in San Francisco.¹⁸⁹ Yulia Zavyoko added that Parker’s “appearance and clothing showed that he was

¹⁸³ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [December 6th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁸⁴ MS-0805 215 [September 4th, 1854] (ABC).

¹⁸⁵ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 177. See also: BB4 702 472 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid* and BB4 702 472 [September 3rd, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 176.

¹⁸⁸ “The Affair of Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 26th, 1854), 9.

¹⁸⁹ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 30.

from a good family” while regretfully noting that “next year we found out from the officers of the enemy squadron that Parker left a wife and five children... what a cruel fate!”¹⁹⁰

English and French accounts consistently emphasized the difficulty of the terrain that the Allied landing force encountered, which Burrige described as “steep and covered with thick jungle.”¹⁹¹ Although the Marines of both maritime nations pressed forward up the gorge under heavy fire while sailors “climbed like cats”¹⁹² up Nikolskaya Hill, but a third division of sailors under Burrige’s command never managed to organize and advance off the beach. Confusion reigned supreme as the Allied forces advancing up the valley found itself paralyzed by, in de Miniac’s words,

‘a lack of adequate preparations, an absolute ignorance of the locale (because the information provided by the Americans was found to be wrong and deficient), and the difficulties of all kinds that it presented.’¹⁹³

Worse yet, British sailors began mistaking Russian troops for French ones. Short-sighted Lieutenant George Robinson from the *Pique*, for instance, called out in French to a party of Russian soldiers “don’t shoot, I’m English,” for his trouble receiving a bullet that failed to kill him only because it hit his cartridge box/pouch.¹⁹⁴ As another British sailor recounted years later, “all our men had a broad white armband but the French and Russians were all wearing big coats and looked very much alike.”¹⁹⁵ French sailors made the same mistake and began simply shooting in the direction from which they heard sounds, which La Grandière deemed a “misunderstanding” that “probably led our allies to believe that they had enemies in front as well as behind them.”¹⁹⁶ This misunderstanding, in turn, prompted British marines to return fire against a mixed party of Anglo-French sailors.¹⁹⁷

The Allied marines and sailors that had reached their intended destinations down the valley and at the top of Nikolskaya Hill, respectively, were further decimated by accurate Russian small-arms fire that killed or wounded almost every officer. Marines who had allegedly imagined

¹⁹⁰ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 155.

¹⁹¹ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 5th, 1854] (NA).

¹⁹² Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 179.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Seymour, Edward H. *My Naval Career and Travels*. (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1911), 71.

¹⁹⁵ Ashcroft, William Petty. “The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII).” *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 277.

¹⁹⁶ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 177.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

“that all they had to do was march on the town that they saw in front of them” down the valley instead encountered Russian emplacements including an artillery battery, trench, log houses, and other dugouts, with the cannon therein welcoming “by a shower of grapeshot.”¹⁹⁸ With Parker dead and their losses becoming “most severe owing to the number of the enemy that had been strongly posted,”¹⁹⁹ the Allied marines began to retreat, catching the trailing party of Burridge’s sailors in their wake. The British Captain employed his official report to emphasize how “incessant force...compelled” these men to “retreat towards the beach...after many attempts to rally,”²⁰⁰ while conspicuously omitting his observation to La Grandière upon returning to ship: “the cowards, they abandoned me. They fled.”²⁰¹ When joined by the sailors atop Nikolskaya Hill, this series of Allied retreats became a terrible rout.

Russian defenders commanded by a police chief had initially abandoned Nikolskaya Hill in an attempt to join the fighting below, but this tactical error was soon remedied as small groups hastened to “remove” Allied forces at bayonet point.²⁰² To make matters worse for this hilltop detachment of British and Frenchmen, a dozen indigenous Kamchandal (Itelmen) hunters accustomed to shooting beavers through they eye so their fur would remain undamaged hid behind boulders and took aim at the retreating Allied sailors.²⁰³ The results were predictably catastrophic as, to quote Rear-Admiral Zavoyko’s official report, “mutilated, lifeless bodies hit the shore far below.”²⁰⁴ This brings us to the second aspect of the fighting that struck Russian observers: the heavy casualties that the Allied landing forces suffered while reembarking in small boats.²⁰⁵ A desperate stand and naval cover fire combined with Russian forces’ lack of ammunition and further orders to prevent British and French forces from being cut off from the

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

¹⁹⁹ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 5th, 1854] (NA).

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 179.

²⁰² For the exact wording of this order, see Warrant Officer Nikolay Fesun’s account in Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 7, Page 11.

²⁰³ Arbuzov, Aleksandr Pavlovich. [Russian-language]. “The Defense of the Petropavlovsk Port against the Anglo-French Squadron in 1854 (from the notes of an eyewitness and participant).” *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1870), 312.

²⁰⁴ Zavoyko, Vasily Stepanovich and A.A. Preobrazhensky. [Russian-language]. “Report of the Kamchatkan Military Governor about the Attack of an Anglo-French squadron on Petropavlovsk Port in 1854,” *Historic Archive of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Institute of History*, Vol. 7 (1951), 114.

²⁰⁵ See, for example: BB4 702 490 [September 4th, 1854] (SHD).

beach and entirely destroyed, but the last stage of the Allied reboarding was still a “tragic.”²⁰⁶ As Yulia Zavoyko observed from a safe distance:

“There was moaning everywhere. One of the longboats left with only eight rowers, people from another [boat] put their hands in the air, as if asking for mercy. A few people went after the boats, with water up to their necks; others swam towards [the boats]. Not many of them were rescued.”²⁰⁷

Her view was emphatically corroborated by sources at the scene, but ‘official’ reactions in Paris and, initially, London were entirely another story.

Two months after the Allied landing at Petropavlovsk, an article appeared in the official *Moniteur Universel* and was reprinted in publications including the *Journal de Toulouse*. Its text mentioned Navy and Colonial Minister Théodore Ducos’ reception of dispatches from Febvrier-Despointes indicating that “the re-boarding proceeded without any difficulty.”²⁰⁸ This could not have been further from the truth, though Captain La Grandière had already predicted that his commander’s official report would ‘diverge considerably’ from what had, in fact, been a “heartbreaking spectacle.”²⁰⁹ Less publicly, Febvrier-Despointes had already acknowledged to Nicolson that the landing had been an “unhappy” one²¹⁰ precisely because of the circumstances surrounding the Allied retreat and re-embarkation. In contrast to the dry understatements of Febvrier-Despointes and Nicolson, however, the correspondence of those actually on shore told an entirely different story. By August 1856, the conservative British *Fraser’s Magazine* was recounting anecdotes that included how a young midshipman “stood still and burst into tears” after finding himself alone when the landing party he was leading fled without him.²¹¹

The Allied marines’ retreat down the gorge and the panicked reaction of the sailors who had followed them was especially problematic because of its influence on the third Allied division, which had scaled Nikolskaya Hill as a diversion. The few sailors who actually reached its summit encountered fierce resistance that rapidly reduced their force of “about 30” to a half-

²⁰⁶ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*National Heroes: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Documents*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1979), 154.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Journal de Toulouse*, No. 306 (November 28th, 1854), 1.

²⁰⁹ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 179.

²¹⁰ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 6th, 1854] (NA).

²¹¹ The boy survived, however, when a Russian officer instructed him (in English) to “put up your sword, my both; this is no place of you. Run back to your boat as fast as you can.” Marx, Francis. *The Pacific and the Amoor: Naval, Military and Diplomatic Operations from Fraser’s Magazine*. (London, UK: Robert Hardwicke, 1861), 7-8.

dozen men led by a corporal, who was also soon wounded.²¹² As these men desperately threw themselves down a steep hill to arrive at its base “with their clothes in shreds...almost unconscious,”²¹³ they dislodged loose earth and stones that rolled down on their comrades and “wounded a great many men” during this “most terrible affair.”²¹⁴ Although French and a few British sailors bought valuable time by making a stand under cover of ruined Russian positions while the *Virago* attempted to lay down fire to cover an evacuation, BurrIDGE emphasized that, because “the boats had to be brought within range of the enemy’s muskets, many of our men fell during the embarkation.”²¹⁵ Descriptions such as one British sailor’s account of his mate being shot through the head while helping to pull him on board²¹⁶ were common, especially as the Allies’ 209 casualties gave the *Virago*’s decks “the appearance of a slaughter house” as it re-embarked the assaults’ survivors.²¹⁷ The subsequent correspondence of Febvrier-Despointes, Nicolson, BurrIDGE, and La Grandière naturally all praised the landing force’s cooperation and bravery, omitting de Miniac’s less complementary anecdote of finding French small boats “invaded by the British” and “being compelled to send the threat of shooting them if they did not return to take our men.”²¹⁸ As icicles already began to form due to progressively colder weather,²¹⁹ the Anglo-French squadron weighed anchor on September 7th and left Kamchatka for the Americas, capturing two small Russian transport vessels in the process.

News of the Allied defeat at Petropavlovsk traveled slowly, but nevertheless appeared in around the world, beginning in Hawai’i. As the American minister to that Kingdom gleefully noted in early November, “there is no doubt that the allies have been disgracefully whipped,” and “the Americans here do not put on long faces on account of British and French disasters.”²²⁰ Reports of a ‘great victory of the Russian Army over English and French barbarians’ also reached

²¹² Ashcroft, William Petty. “The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII). *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 277.

²¹³ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 180.

²¹⁴ “The Affair of Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 26th, 1854), 9.

²¹⁵ ADM 1/5631 CAP N52 [September 5th, 1854] (NA).

²¹⁶ Ashcroft, William Petty. “The Reminiscences of William Petty Ashcroft (Part VII). *The Naval Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 1965), 277.

²¹⁷ MS-0805 220 [September 4th, 1854] (ABC).

²¹⁸ Kerret, Jean-René-Maurice de and Tugdual de Kerros (Ed.). *Journal de mes Voyages Autour du Monde, 1852-1855*. (Saint-Thonan, France: Cloître Imprimeurs, 2004), 180.

²¹⁹ Febvrier-Despointes had already written in April 1854 that Kamchatka could only be attacked in ‘nicer seasons.’ BB4 702 407 [April 25th, 1854] (SHD).

²²⁰ Gregg, David Lawrence and Pauline King (Ed.). *The Diaries of David Lawrence Gregg: An American Diplomat in Hawaii 1853-1858*. (Honolulu, Hawai’i: Hawaiian Historical Society, 1982), 200.

Shimoda, Japan by January 1855.²²¹ News traveled even faster to French authorities in China thanks to the Hamburgian vessel that witnessed the battle while at anchor, which brought a Sardinian passenger and his report to Shanghai in October 1854.²²² French naval authorities strove to put the best face possible on their defeat, but their revised orders for 1855 revealingly emphasized that destroying the city itself was “not a priority” and that another landing would unjustifiably “endanger” the squadron’s men.²²³ Sir James Graham privately agreed, as is evident from his minute written over Nicolson’s optimistic report, but publicly emulated the French approach by feeding only the most flattering documents to *The Times* and *The Illustrated London News*.²²⁴ His approach was only a temporary expedient, however, as private letters reached these publications a few weeks later. Often reprinted in newspaper columns, such unofficial accounts instead offered frank commentary from participants in this “disastrous affair.”²²⁵ These descriptions included acknowledgements such as “our loss was most serious” and the details of confused friendly fire that caused men to “meet their deaths without Russian interference.”²²⁶ As Allied planners looked ahead to a campaign in 1855, Russian figures including eventual Minister of War Dmitry Milyutin (Dmitri Milutin, etc.) regarded events in the Pacific “as a ray of light on a then bleak horizon”²²⁷ while looking to consolidate their hard-won gains in East Asia.

The same day that a beaten Allied squadron left the shores of Kamchatka, another group of British warships 3,200 kilometers away approached the Japanese island of Kyushu. Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, in command of the Royal Navy’s East Indies and China Station, brought four warships led by the frigate *Winchester* to search for Russian warships and “prevent the enemy from making use of the ports and resources of Japan” for the Crimean War’s duration.²²⁸ Like its counterparts in other theatres throughout 1854, the mission had been hastily improvised and was ill-equipped for the task at hand: this is evident, for example, from even the briefest glance at the abilities of its Japanese-interpreter. Entirely unlike every naval mission

²²¹ Mormanne, Thierry. “La Prise de Possession de l’île d’Urup par la Flotte Anglo- Française en 1855.” *Cipango: Cahiers d’études Japonaises*. No. 11 (2004), 212.

²²² BB4 710 39 [January 28th, 1855] (SHD).

²²³ BB4 682 880 [November 28th, 1854] (SHD).

²²⁴ See, for example: “The Affair of Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 6th, 1854), 8 and “Naval Attack on the Russian Fort of Petropaulovski.” *The Illustrated London News*, (November 25th, 1854), 534.

²²⁵ “The Affair of Petropaulovski.” *The Times*, (December 26th, 1854), 9.

²²⁶ “The Attack on Petropaulovski.” *The Illustrated London News*, (December 16th, 1854), 534.

²²⁷ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 8, Section 7, Page 13.

²²⁸ FO 881/541 [October 26th, 1854] (NA).

from 1854 to 1856, however, ill-preparedness and miscommunication actually worked in Britain's favor as, in Stirling's words, "negotiation ultimately took a more extensive and important character than that which I had originally contemplated."²²⁹ Obtaining limited political concessions similar to those gained months earlier by the well-known American expedition led by Commodore Matthew Perry was a great achievement considering the avowedly limited initial object of Stirling's mission. Yet even this outcome angered British merchants who had hoped for extensive trading privileges. Although Stirling's mission never attained the notoriety of its American predecessors or the approbation of Britain's Asian mercantile community, it still represented a unique set of circumstances that transformed misunderstanding into unanticipated gain.

Stirling's conception of his mission's nature was simple, yet was completely misinterpreted both by Japanese decision-makers and some subsequent historians. In his correspondence with Japanese officials, for example, the Rear-Admiral proudly emphasized that "the business" which brought his squadron to Japan did not place it in the same light as "all former visitors-English, French, Russian and American," who came as "mendicants" and 'solicitors.'²³⁰ This point was completely lost on some British historians,²³¹ who allowed themselves to be misled by sources including *The Times*, which criticized Stirling's determination to, in his own words, "pertinaciously" neglect "every opportunity for opening trade."²³² Furthermore, it is important to note that Lord Clarendon and the British Foreign Office had already issued explicit instructions in June 1854, that eliminating pirate and Russian threats to British shipping and commercial interests in China took absolute priority over obtaining economic concessions from Japan.²³³ When Stirling's dispatches reached London in December, in fact, Clarendon felt Stirling's actions "deserving of entire approbation."²³⁴ Even before he knew that Stirling would negotiate with the Japanese, Clarendon did not object to the multitalented diplomatist and economist Sir John Bowring's cancellation of a commercial

²²⁹ ADM 1/5629 [October 26th, 1854] (NA).

²³⁰ ADM 1/5657 27 [September 30th, 1854] (NA).

²³¹ See, for example: Eckel, Paul E. "The Crimean War and Japan." *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (February, 1944), 111 and Parker, Robert. "The British Pacific Naval Station in 1854; Problems of Trade, International Affairs, and War." (Newcastle, UK. University of Newcastle Master's Thesis, 2003), 29.

²³² ADM 1/4647 S10 [October 27th, 1854] (NA).

²³³ FO 17/221 [June 9th and 24th, 1854] (NA) and Beasley, William G. *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan, 1834-1858*. (London, UK: Luzac, 1951. Re-issued in paperback by Routledge, 1995), 100.

²³⁴ Statham-Drew, Pamela. James Stirling: *Admiral and Founding Governor of Western Australia*. (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2003), 482.

mission to Japan, as events in China demanded Bowring's continued presence in that country and a trade mission to Siam (Thailand) promised easier results.²³⁵ Stirling's improvised mission thus lacked the plenipotentiary, commercial representatives, and capable pool of Japanese-language interpreters that had, in some cases, already agreed to accompany Bowring's diplomats to Japan.²³⁶ In their place arrived a negotiating team of naval officers who, as Stirling wrote to Sir James Graham in a private letter, saw the country as "far more important in a Political, than in a Commercial sense" and felt that it would be a mistake to "force a trade upon them in opposition to the long established Institutions of the country."²³⁷

The principal factor that distinguished the Stirling Mission, Perry's American Expedition, and an ongoing Russian effort under Vice-Admiral Yevfimy Putyatin from 1852 onwards was their success at altering Japanese policy, not their novelty. British and Russian warships had visited Japan on other missions in the early 19th century, sometimes with dramatic results. At the height of the Napoleonic Wars in 1808, for example, the British frigate *Phaeton* sailed into Nagasaki Harbor and took two Dutch hostages on the orders of Stirling's predecessor, then-Captain Fleetwood Pellew. While Nagasaki official Matsudaira Yasuhira considered an armed rescue attempt, his countrymen instead pointed out that he "might as well try to batter down a stone wall with eggs."²³⁸ Although the situation was resolved when the *Phaeton* left two days later, it was matched by Russian activities further North and was an omen of a growing pressure to engage with the Western world as the 19th century wore on. By the time that the sickly Tokugawa Iesada became Shogun in 1853, the officials and hereditary stakeholders in the *bakufu*, or shogunate, were profoundly divided. Of 61 clans who offered opinions on how to deal with Westerners, for example, 22 favored opening the country while 19 advocated using force to expel the unwanted intruders; the remaining 20 remained anxious to avoid war or undecided.²³⁹ As the Shogun's senior council or *Rōjū* opined when noting "differences in the various statements" of its vassals, differences of opinion among those advocating opening Japan (*Kaikoku*) and expelling

²³⁵ Beasley, William G. *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan, 1834-1858*. (London, UK: Luzac, 1951. Re-issued in paperback by Routledge, 1995), 102. See also: Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, June 23rd, 1854. *Hansard's* Vol. 134, CC. 613-614.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 99.

²³⁷ ADM 1/5657 S10 [October 27th, 1854] (NA).

²³⁸ McOmie, William. *The Opening of Japan, 1853-1855*. (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2006), 20.

²³⁹ Lensen, George A. *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations 1697-1875*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 318.

foreigners (*Joi*) ‘generally boiled down to the words ‘war’ and ‘peace.’”²⁴⁰ By the time Crimean War-era British and Russian missions arrived off Japan in the early to mid-1850s, Japanese officials including Nagasaki Commissioner²⁴¹ Mizuno Tadanori were already arguing that, “given present trends, it is extremely difficult to forcefully refuse either nation what they are seeking.”²⁴² As he prepared to meet Stirling in early October, 1854 and commenced negotiations, Mizuno heeded a recommendation from the seat of government in Edo (Yedo, now Tokyo) that he must not be too uncompromising when refusing British requests because, given their “reputation for brutality...there is no telling what sort of unlawfulness and violence might result.”²⁴³ Ultimately, then, Stirling’s argument that an agreement was reached “without solicitation or menace” was thus valid only from a British perspective.²⁴⁴

After what one British historian unkindly dubbed “the usual oriental policy of delay,”²⁴⁵ Anglo-Japanese negotiations formally commenced in early October, 1854. Almost immediately, the “difficulty of negotiation where...habits of thought and language are so widely different” became apparent to both sides.²⁴⁶ With trained diplomatic interpreters or seasoned missionaries unavailable, the British mission instead relied on the services of a shipwrecked Japanese sailor, Otokichi, who was literate only in the phonetic *kana* script and not the more complex Chinese *kanji* characters employed in official documents and by Japanese diplomats. Consequently, both delegations instead settled on the temporary expedient of having the Superintendent of the Netherlands’ artificial island (Deshima or Dejima) in Nagasaki Harbor translate English Documents into Dutch ones, which could then be written in Japanese by senior interpreter Nishi Kichibei. Russian officers including Vice-Admiral Yevfimiy Vasilyevich Putyatin and the writer

²⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 319.

²⁴¹ The Japanese word “Bugyō” is often translated as “governor” or “magistrate” in addition to “commissioner.”

²⁴² Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 226.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, 227. According to the Chinese interpreter accompanying the Commodore Perry, for example, the Japanese were quite startled to learn from the Americans that Fleetwood Pellew of the *Phaeton*, far from having his career ruined, had been promoted to Rear-Admiral and had recently commanded Britain’s China and East Indies Station: *Ibid*, 225-226.

²⁴⁴ ADM 1/5657 [October 27th, 1854] (NA).

²⁴⁵ Fox, Grace. “The Anglo-Japanese Convention of 1854.” *The Pacific Historical Review*. Vol. 10, No. 4 (December, 1941). Pgs. 414.

²⁴⁶ ADM 1/5657 [October 27th, 1854] (NA). For a similar Japanese conclusion, see: Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 228. In one especially revealing episode, Stirling apologized to a crestfallen Daimyo of Tsushima that they were both old without realizing that his Lordship was disappointed that he was not even older than Stirling: [Japanese-language]. *Dai Nihon Komonjo - Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* (Vol. 12). “Public Records/Old Documents of Japan relating to Foreign Affairs/Relations during the late Tokugawa Shogunate.” (Tokyo: Shiryō Hensanjo, Multiple Dates), 372-373.

Ivan Goncharov had already complained about Nishi's tendency to misunderstand nuance and deliberately alter content during their round of negotiations in 1853,²⁴⁷ but even the most conscientious Japanese-language interpreters in the 1850s confronted a larger problem: specialized diplomatic terms such as "consul" had no specific counterpart in Japanese.²⁴⁸ Worse yet, entire Western diplomatic concepts including 'benevolent neutrality' had "no analogous meaning" in Japanese, even when transliterated.²⁴⁹ It is hardly surprising, then, that Stirling's original English-language request took an entirely unintended form when rendered into Japanese.

The British Rear-Admiral's original request seemed straightforward when posed in English. As one passage read: "it is absolutely necessary that he (Stirling) shall be informed of the views and intentions of the Japanese Government with respect to the admission into the ports of the ships of war of the belligerent parties in the present contest."²⁵⁰ The British query, however, was accompanied by an assurance that "in the execution of the duties imposed on him by a state of war," Stirling "anxiously desired...to avoid as far as possible the commission of any act which may justly give offence to his His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Japan or his subjects."²⁵¹ Japanese translation, however, transformed this seemingly banal reassurance into the threatening phrase "any act of war against the Emperor of Japan or his nobles."²⁵² Other phrases, such as "the ships of war of the belligerent parties in the present contest," meaning those of Britain and Russia during the Crimean War, were also substantially altered, becoming "those concerned in the present affair."²⁵³ In conjunction with Otokichi's original mistranslation of British demands in oral form, Japanese officials misunderstood Stirling's Mission as a "request that Great Britain and its Allies in the present conflict be permitted to visit the ports of your country...not only Nagasaki, but other ports and locations with Japan's territory."²⁵⁴ Worse of all for the cause of Japanese isolationism, though, was the omission of "not" from Stirling's request that warships "in time of war are not to effect repairs, obtain supplies of munitions, bring

²⁴⁷ Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 225.

²⁴⁸ Auslin, Michael. *Negotiating with Imperialism: the Unequal Treaties and Culture of Japanese Diplomacy*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004), 25.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁰ FO 881/541 Enclosure 2 [October 26th, 1854] (NA).

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² Beasley, William G. "The Language Problem in the Anglo-Japanese Negotiations of 1854." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. Vol. 13, No. 3 (1950), 750.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 224.

in prizes, or remain over 14 days.”²⁵⁵ In response to what they incorrectly perceived as British demands to open all Japanese ports to not only warships but also merchant vessels, Tokugawa bureaucrats in Edo instructed their frontline negotiators in Nagasaki to offer a compromise and ‘open’ two ports, Nagasaki and Hakodate, to British ships. Determined not to “meddle with war,” Commissioner Mizuno ignored his understated realization that he saw “some little difference” between inaccurate written exchanges and more correct spoken translations of Stirling’s forthright explanation of his squadron’s purpose in coming to Japan.²⁵⁶ On October 14th, 1854, British and Japanese representatives signed an agreement now known as the Anglo-Japanese Convention.

In addition to the concessions that it obtained, Britain’s 1854 naval mission to Japan was also noteworthy for a passenger that it did not carry, French Minister to China Alphonse de Bourboulon. Although Stirling had mentioned the possibility of including his French allies in the agreement’s provisions on several occasions,²⁵⁷ nothing came of these requests during the Crimean War after Japanese authorities summarily dismissed the idea.²⁵⁸ De Bourboulon, granted full plenipotentiary powers in March, 1854,²⁵⁹ declined to accompany Sir John Bowring’s proposed trade mission on the grounds that it would be humiliating for France to appear “as the humble protégé of a great foreign Power (Britain).”²⁶⁰ De Bourboulon was already dependent on the support of France’s naval “Division of Réunion and Indochina,” under Rear-Admiral Adolphe Laguerre, which gave French diplomats in East Asia even fewer options. Laguerre’s handful of available warships was widely scattered and ill-equipped to withstand the loss of the frigate *Jeanne d’Arc*, which required lengthy repairs after running aground off Shanghai.²⁶¹ With tensions in that city threatening to once again explode “at any moment” and a powerful Russian squadron supposedly lurking off the Chinese coast, French Foreign Minister Drouyn de Lhuys instructed de Bourboulon to request that warships protect French interests in

²⁵⁵ Beasley, William G. *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan, 1834-1858*. (London, UK: Luzac, 1951. Re-issued in paperback by Routledge, 1995), 123.

²⁵⁶ Beasley, William G. “The Language Problem in the Anglo-Japanese Negotiations of 1854.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*. Vol. 13, No. 3 (1950), 751.

²⁵⁷ See, for example: ADM 1/5657 [October 19th, 20th, and 27th, 1854] (NA).

²⁵⁸ Okuhira Takehiko. [Japanese-Language] “The Crimean War and the Far East, Part 1 [Kurimiya sensō to kyokutō (ichi)].” *Kokusaihō Gaikō Zasshi*. Vol. 35, No.1 (1936), 65.

²⁵⁹ *Correspondance Politique: Chine*, Vol. 15 [March 6th, 1854] (AAE) and Sims, Richard. *French Policy towards the Bakufu and Meiji Japan 1854-1895*. (Richmond, UK: Japan Library, 1998), 15.

²⁶⁰ See Page 81 of this work.

²⁶¹ BB4 706 70 [November 16th, 1854] (SHD).

China.²⁶² This pressing imperative was joined by reports that the achievements of American and Russian missions to Japan from 1853 onwards had been less successful than previously reported.²⁶³ These reasons combined to ensure that the French naval officers who did visit Japan shocked Tokugawa officials by simply offering polite greetings, which prompted the Magistrate of Hakodate to ask leading questions such as “isn’t there anything you want to discuss?”²⁶⁴ Organized French effort to negotiate with Japan would have to wait until after the Treaty of Paris in 1856.²⁶⁵

Russia’s approach towards building a relationship with Japan during and even preceding the Crimean War was the polar opposite of Stirling’s improvised efforts and France’s abortive ones. News that the United States was preparing an expedition to Japan, in fact, had already motivated Nicholas I to order the dispatch of an official mission in August, 1852, several years prior to British and French declarations of war on Russia. On August 14th of that year, Vice-Admiral Yevfimy Vasilyevich Putyatin received “Secret Instructions” from Russia’s Navy Ministry informing him that he had “been chosen to represent our government’s position in establishing political and trade relations between Russian and Japan” and that he would “receive detailed instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the ways and means with which to achieve this goal.”²⁶⁶ The Russian naval commander accordingly left Cronstadt on October 19th, 1852 in the aging frigate *Pallada* followed by three smaller vessels, arriving off Nagasaki in late August, 1853 after having circumnavigated Europe, Africa, and much of Asia. The Russian Government’s choice of Nagasaki differed from the American choice of Uraga, significantly closer to the Tokugawa administrative center at Edo (Tokyo), and resulted from the influence of the noted Dutch Japanologist Philipp Franz von Siebold. As “Additional Instructions” from the Russian ministry of Foreign Affairs informed Putyatin, Siebold, connected to Nicholas I through Muravyov’s patron Anna Pavlovna, had “offered...his ideas on the best approach to our negotiations with the Japanese government and the best way to succeed in our ambition to

²⁶² BB4 706 53 [June 21st, 1854] (SHD).

²⁶³ BB4 706 43, 45, and 47 [April 17th, May 4th, and April 7th, 1854] (SHD)

²⁶⁴ [Japanese-language]. *Dai Nihon Komonjo - Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* (Vol. 12). “Public Records/Old Documents of Japan relating to Foreign Affairs/Relations during the late Tokugawa Shogunate.” (Tokyo: Shiryō Hensanjo, Multiple Dates), 64-66.

²⁶⁵ See Medzini, Meron. *French Policy in Japan during the Closing Years of the Tokugawa Regime*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971) for a discussion of Baron Gros’ later efforts.

²⁶⁶ Franz, Edgar. *Philipp Franz von Siebold and Russian Policy and Action on Opening Japan to the West in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. (Munich, Germany: Iudicium Verlag, 2005), 59.

establish trade relations between Russian and Japan.”²⁶⁷ Determined to avoid what Siebold had diplomatically deemed the “inexplicable misunderstandings” and a “lack of mutual comprehension” which had previously doomed Russian efforts to negotiate with Japan,²⁶⁸ Russia assembled a well-prepared mission. Its officers included Dutch and Chinese-language linguists²⁶⁹ in addition to figures such as Lieutenant Voin Rimsky-Korsakov (older brother of the famed composer Nikolay) and writer Ivan Goncharov, author of the influential travelogue *Frigate Pallada*.²⁷⁰

During the 15th months that separated his squadron’s October, 1853 arrival and the February, 1855 Treaty of Shimoda that formally established Russo-Japanese diplomatic and trade relations, Putyatin made four separate visits to Japan. While British and French officials gloated over Russia’s initial departure without a treaty²⁷¹ their Japanese counterparts had a different view: as Intendant Egawa Hidetatsu noted in a letter:

“the Russians are likely to be every bit as persistent as they have been polite; if they are refused, it will put them in the same position as the Americans, and our sacred land will have enemies both before and behind. Since this is unacceptable, we should conclude a pact with Russian permitting trade...these are my humble thoughts based on the current world situation.”²⁷²

Putyatin’s men, thanks to the guidance of experts such as Siebold, enjoyed a much greater understanding of Japanese culture than did their British rivals, and took steps that included having Archimandrite Avakum “not dress differently from the secular people” on account of Japanese authorities’ dislike of Western missionaries.²⁷³ Both sides had also located capable interpreters including Hori Tatsunosuke, a translator whose previous work with Americans enabled him to leak a Dutch-language copy of the Convention of Kanagawa in return for a Russian bribe.²⁷⁴ Nevertheless, cultural misunderstandings abounded throughout multiple rounds of negotiation, prompting the writer Goncharov to allude to the fable of a fox and crane

²⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 129.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 145.

²⁶⁹ Captain Konstantin Posyet and Iosif Antonovich Goshkevich, respectively.

²⁷⁰ For an English-language version, see: Goncharov, Ivan Aleksandrovich and Klaus Goetze [Translator]. *Frigate Pallada*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987).

²⁷¹ See, for example: BB4 706 47 [April 7th, 1854] (SHD).

²⁷² Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 159.

²⁷³ Franz, Edgar. *Philipp Franz von Siebold and Russian Policy and Action on Opening Japan to the West in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. (Munich, Germany: Iudicium Verlag, 2005), 132.

²⁷⁴ Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 243-244.

frustrating one another at dinner.²⁷⁵ Ultimately, however, the extended duration of Putyatin's mission had little to do with issues including Russian officers' inability to use chopsticks. It was instead related to the scope of Russian demands, which went far beyond those formalized in Stirling's agreement and included provisions for the division of the Kurile Islands (Article II), the appointment of a Russian consul to Japan (Article VI), and guaranteed extraterritoriality for subjects of both countries (Article VIII). Putyatin was willing to wait out Japanese objections that they required time to consider "numerous and complicated problems that cannot be decided in a day"²⁷⁶ and, in the end, Britain and France's inability to locate Russian warships in the Pacific afforded him the option of doing so successfully.

Given that the feudal lord (daimyo) of Mino's first inclination to the Russians' arrival was to propose filling a small boat with gunpowder and ramming Putyatin's flagship,²⁷⁷ it would be an understatement to argue that negotiations began inauspiciously. Cooler heads soon prevailed, however, as Japanese plenipotentiary and Commissioner of Finance Kawaji Toshiakira explained that:

"What the daimyo of Mino proposes makes good sense. Attacking and burning the Russian barbarian ships would free us at once from a number of enemies... However, by doing this we would be creating for the court a new enemy, a big country, and this would not be appropriate. That is why I have decided that no one should die."²⁷⁸

Kawaji, along with the other lead Japanese negotiator for Russians, acting Inspector-General Tsutsui Masanori, co-signed a petition to the Tokugawa senior council (*Rōjū*) indicating that "it would be a great disservice to the shogun... if we were to advise him to play the hero and engage in rash acts that he will later regret and will throw the country into turmoil."²⁷⁹ These two perceptive diplomats reminded their superiors that "we would do well to consider the case of the Qing official Lin Zexu, who asserted his country's honor and for a time put on quite a brave show, but who swiftly brought his nation to ruin [by helping initiate the First Anglo-Chinese, or Opium, War of 1839-1842]."²⁸⁰ Both Japanese negotiators thus felt compelled to continue their attempts to reach acceptable compromises, such as leaving Sakhalin (*Karafuto*) undivided for the

²⁷⁵ Goncharov, Ivan Aleksandrovich and Klaus Goetze [Translator]. *Frigate Pallada*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 267.

²⁷⁶ Lensen, George Alexander. *The Russian Push Toward Japan: Russo-Japanese Relations, 1697-1875*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 328.

²⁷⁷ Keene, Donald. *Travelers of a Hundred Ages: the Japanese as Revealed through 1,000 Years of Diaries*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 390.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

²⁷⁹ Hiroshi, Mitani and Nihon R. Gakkai (Ed.) [David Noble, Translator]. *Escape from Impasse: the Decision to Open Japan*. (Tokyo, Japan: International House of Japan, 2006), 165.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 165.

time being (Article II), as negotiations continued. An agreement was only finalized on February 7th, 1855 after Putyatin's lone remaining warship, the frigate *Diana*, had already sunk as a result of incurring considerable damage the tsunami that destroyed Shimoda in December, 1854.

Seemingly confirming the observation of another Japanese negotiator's observation that "the will of Heaven really cannot be understood,"²⁸¹ the tragedy brought both sides closer together. From that point forward, for example, Kawaji's diary began referring to "Russian people" (*rojin*) instead of "Russian barbarians" (*rojū*).²⁸² The Russian mission accordingly assumed the character, in Kawaji's words, of "a famished tiger or wolf," who, upon "encountering a man, drooped its tail and asked for something to eat."²⁸³ By the time British warships captured a portion of the *Diana's* crew attempting to reach Petropavlovsk on the chartered Bremen brig *Greta* in August, 1855, it was too late to prevent Russia from obtaining a treaty that appeared, in the words of one British observer on the frigate *Sibylle*, "to be the most useful yet made."²⁸⁴ Russia's limited East Asian resources had once again sufficed to win substantial concessions from a neutral power rather than Britain or France, but this particular diplomatic victory came in spite of the Crimean War instead of because of it.

The Crimean War in the Pacific and East Asia was not the First World War or even the First Pacific War, however vast an area it involved. Britain, France, and Russia were only some of the protagonists involved in a much broader drama playing out in that part of the world during the mid-1850s. Yet the conflict is critically important precisely because it impacted far more than the immediate surroundings of Petropavlovsk. By the War's outbreak in 1854, the threat of British expansion in the Northern Pacific finally sufficed to convince key Russian figures that a long-awaited opportunity to completely re-write the balance of power in Northeastern Asia had arrived. Anglo-Russian conflict in Chinese waters further to the South and Sir James Stirling's initiative, meanwhile, pushed the British government to confirm an agreement obtained from the Anglo-Japanese negotiations that it had previously intended to avoid on account of instability in neighboring China.

²⁸¹ McOmie, William. *The Opening of Japan, 1853-1855*. (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2006), 360.

²⁸² Keene, Donald. *Travelers of a Hundred Ages: the Japanese as Revealed through 1,000 Years of Diaries*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 393-394.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 394.

²⁸⁴ Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition Against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 202.

The fighting that did occur in the Pacific, specifically the Allied attack on Petropavlovsk in late August and early September, 1854, was far more revealing than its few hundred casualties would seem to indicate. Just as they had in the Baltic, poor planning and outdated intelligence once again thwarted Britain and France's naval superiority. American politician Thomas Hart Benton, in fact, even saw Petropavlovsk as an example of how courage and dedication were more important than substantial military forces when it came to defending a long and vulnerable coastline.²⁸⁵ The disastrous Allied assault there also highlighted the faults inherent in a divided command that acted under the vaguest of orders and allowed aggressive officers to push ahead with ill-advised attacks. Unlike in the White Sea, however, the result was not an embarrassing bombardment of a fortified monastery or the incineration of a small wooden town, but a stinging defeat that could not be fully disguised by even the most optimistic of public relations efforts. The clash at Petropavlovsk was also especially revealing because of its setting and participants. Its setting indicated the extent to which Rear-Admirals David Price and Febvrier-Despointes valued Anglo-French whaling operations, just as their severely depleted complement of warships off Kamchatka proved that the British and French governments were determined to protect their economic interests in Latin America and China as well as off the North American coast. Another Pacific campaign would follow in 1855, but events in 1854 had already firmly set the tone for the Crimean War's outcome in the Pacific.

²⁸⁵ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. *Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)*. (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 228.

Chapter Seven

The Crimean War in the Baltic and Pacific, 1855

As Allied warships withdrew from the Baltic in December 1854 ahead of rapidly-forming winter ice, it became apparent that additional campaigns would be necessary once spring arrived in 1855. By the time the first British warships steamed into the Baltic in April 1855, however, Nicholas I's death and the Aberdeen Ministry's dissolution had altered the political structure of both Russia and Britain. Although Alexander II and Lord Palmerston were very different men than their predecessors, their initial months as heads of government saw surprisingly few changes to either country's strategy. The Russian Empire once again prepared to defend its coastlines, while Britain continued to assemble a powerful fleet to campaign against them. Sir James Graham would no longer directly lead these efforts after tendering his resignation to Palmerston on February 22nd, 1855; but still managed to indelibly shape the Allies' ensuing campaign in the Baltic. The former First Lord had assembled a powerful all-steam battlefleet and selected a weak commander in Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Saunders Dundas while limiting the available number of flotilla craft. In conjunction with Napoleon III's focus on taking Sevastopol, this meant that the Allied Baltic Fleet of 1855 had to limit itself to a low-risk bombardment of Sweaborg. This prospect did not fully satisfy the British public, but the weak cabinet that Palmerston inherited from Aberdeen saw little point in capturing Russia's Baltic strongholds at great cost only to abandon or destroy them for want of sufficient troops with which to garrison them against Russian counterattacks.¹ Setting aside Allied improvements in blockading and the rediscovery of decades-old techniques for mortar bombardment, the Russian fleet was even less willing to offer battle at sea. The Allies would thus have to wait until 1856 before they could credibly threaten Cronstadt and destroy Russia's resolve to continue fighting the Crimean War.

In January 1855, pressure exerted by an angry British public, press, and parliamentary opposition toppled the Aberdeen Government and forced that Prime Minister's resignation along with those of his Peelite supporters, including Graham.² Before his departure, however, the erstwhile Admiralty First Lord took time out from his embarrassingly public feud with Sir

¹ See, for example: FO 519/4 347 [March 15th, 1855] (NA).

² For a review of British political dynamics in the mid-1850s, see Chapter Two of this work.

Charles Napier to ensure Britain's next Baltic commander would be more docile. With Sir Thomas Cochrane making it a point not to volunteer for service in 1855 and Rear-Admiral Henry Byam Martin "a man of distinct views and opinions," Graham was drawn to the amiable and politically well-connected Sir Richard Saunders Dundas.³ The personal reserve and professional caution of this second son of a former Admiralty head stood in stark contrast to Napier's disposition and made Dundas an especially attractive candidate to manage a campaign that did not require a 'Nelson Touch.' Significantly, Dundas and his French counterpart, Rear-Admiral Charles-Eugène Pénaud, were too young to have served throughout the Napoleonic Wars and had instead gained modest experience in smaller conflicts such as the First Anglo-Chinese (Opium) War.⁴ Primary documents indicate that, even after Graham's departure, key figures including Palmerston and Foreign Secretary Lord Clarendon expected little more than a strict blockade and a possible long-range bombardment of Sweaborg, which is precisely what ensued.⁵

The fleet that Dundas was appointed to command in 1855 was greatly superior to the one available to Napier in 1854, thanks to the early results of a long-running naval construction program aimed largely at France (and vice-versa). The number of Allied steam-propelled battleships in the Baltic was not a subject of debate, though, so much as their accompaniment. Britain's Crimean War squadrons in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific were consistently handicapped by a lack of steam-propelled vessels of sufficiently shallow draft to assault Russian coastal fortifications. Although the word "gunboat" entered the English language in the 1790s, early examples were often just small boats launched from larger warships and fitted with a cannon in front.⁶ It was only during the Crimean War that purpose-built vessels mounting a handful of large-caliber guns appeared in the Baltic alongside older oar-powered craft employed by Russian and Sweden. The former group were the result of British planners', especially Graham's, belated realization that even the most powerful line-of-battle ships built would not suffice to destroy the largest Russian shore emplacements. These small ships were also joined on station by other specialized craft, including small sail-powered mortar vessels, which could be

³ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 207.

⁴ Taillemite, Etienne. *Dictionnaire des Marins Français*. (Paris, France: Editions Maritimes et d'Outre-Mer, 1982), 263 and Laughton, John Knox and Andrew Lambert. "Sir Richard Saunders Dundas" in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8255>>, 1.

⁵ See, for example: FO 519/4 347 [April 16th and 17th] (NA) and Baxter, James Phinney. *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 81.

⁶ Osborn, G.A. "The Crimean Gunboats, Part I." *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1965), 103.

towed into action by larger warships. The fundamental problem, however, was that these new flotilla craft and the machinery and armament they carried took time to construct, especially in conjunction with the British Royal Dockyards' continued emphasis on producing larger warships and France's still-limited industrial capacity. This meant, for example, that even in late June 1855, marine painter and *Illustrated London News* correspondent John Wilson Carmichael noted in his diary that reinforcements from Britain only numbered "two mortar vessels instead of 50 at least."⁷ These figures rose considerably by the time the Allies bombarded Sweaborg in mid-August of that year,⁸ but even the collection of 21 mortar vessels and 22 gunboats indicated that more time was needed before a 'Great Armament' of gunboats, mortar vessels, and newly-developed floating batteries could threaten Cronstadt and St. Petersburg.

Floating batteries were a solution to the fatal vulnerability of large wooden-hulled warships to well-aimed projectiles. As Napoleon III wrote to Théodore Ducos after the Crimean War's outbreak:

"In war, the chances must be even. You cannot venture against a wall of little value, armed with only a few cannons, manned by a small number of gunners, a ship carrying 1,200 men, armed with 80 cannons, the construction of which lasted for years and cost the State many millions."⁹

A French committee had been attempting to create suitable armor protection since 1843, testing materials including rubber, coal, and layered metal sheets.¹⁰ Yet the French, and even to a lesser extent British metallurgical industries in the mid-19th century, were still developing the capability to produce substantial amounts of high-quality steel or wrought iron necessary to clad wooden hulls. Regardless, Napoleon III took a personal interest in constructing a specialized iron warship capable of assaulting coastal fortifications without incurring massive damage¹¹ because they would allow his navy and its ally to take Cronstadt "by the throat" with minimal casualties and expense.¹² Accordingly, His Imperial Majesty harassed Ducos into prioritizing the construction

⁷ XJOD/7 [June 27th, 1855] (NMM).

⁸ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 167.

⁹ BB4 710 151 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁰ Battesti, Michèle. "La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 95.

¹¹ See, for example: Battesti, Michèle. "La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 95-96.

¹² BB4 710 51 [June 27th, 1854] (SHD).

of ten floating batteries for April 1855, the earliest possible date for a second Baltic campaign.¹³ Although France had the ability to produce only half of the number originally intended, Anglo-French collaboration furnished Britain with the plans for these vessels, in return for details on a 68-pound cannon and Queen Victoria's yacht, which Napoleon III hoped to emulate.¹⁴ Although the most notable operational use of floating batteries during the Crimean War came at the Ukrainian port of Kinburn in 1855, the conflict's Baltic theatre had already made a profound impact on the development of warship technology.

On the same day that Sir James Graham resigned (February 22nd, 1855), a memorandum from Captain Bartholomew James Sullivan arrived at Admiralty House in London.¹⁵ This experienced navigational officer had already spent 1854 as chief surveyor in the Baltic after Graham passed him over for a battleship command, though the outgoing First Lord decided to employ Sullivan to plan a Baltic Campaign for 1855. Just as Captain John Washington had done in late 1853, Sullivan set to work outlining the "different Methods that may be adopted in conducting the Operations in the Baltic" in 1855.¹⁶ Unlike preceding strategic consultants including Washington, Lord Dundonald, and Admiral Sir Thomas Byam Martin, however, Sullivan had the benefit of a year's worth of recent combat experience in the Baltic Region to draw upon. Accordingly, his memorandum comprised "three distinct plans:" a close blockade of Russian coasts; injuring or destroying Sweaborg and Cronstadt; and, finally, combining naval operations with a land attack by a "strong military force."¹⁷ In addition to outlining how best to supply the fleet with coal, Sullivan also recommended tightening the blockade, even at the expense of Finnish civilians, on the grounds that it was "very desirable to make all parties feel the evils of war as much as possible."¹⁸ Ultimately, though, Sullivan devoted the bulk of the document to a detailed outline of his plan to ruin Sweaborg by a long-range bombardment rather than a costly close-quarters affair involving the Allies' wooden battleships. The document also strongly and repeatedly hinted that its author wished to attack Cronstadt as well, but that possibility appealed to neither Graham, Wood, nor Dundas and was consequently shelved until

¹³ Battesti, Michèle. "La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 96.

¹⁴ 4DD1 6 [August 24th, 1854] (SHD).

¹⁵ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 382-398.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 382.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 384.

planning commenced for a large-scale effort in 1856. As the first British warships approached the Baltic in April 1855, Dundas received orders to investigate Sweaborg only as a possible target for long-range bombardment. He was instead to impose a strict blockade, carrying out minor coastal raids, and conducting routine reconnaissance and monitoring operations off Cronstadt.¹⁹ The orders that French authorities furnished to Pénaud and his modest squadron, meanwhile, were almost identical,²⁰ and an advanced squadron of French vessels met their British counterparts on June 1st.²¹

Graham's vision for the Baltic in 1855 was based on Sullivan's memorandum and called for a 'flying' squadron of steam-propelled frigates to quickly establish a blockade in advance of the main battlefleet. Both formations' respective arrivals were delayed by residual winter ice and the flagship *Duke of Wellington's* collision with an American Merchant vessel whose navigational officer had been confused by the British fleet's multitude of lights and signals. In response, Sir Charles Wood privately wrote to Dundas urging him to "for heaven's sake make matters of this importance go at a better pace or we shall come to grief."²² Following a response by Dundas in which the Rear-Admiral offered to resign, Wood softened his original tone and let the commander and his fleet make their way to the Region by April. They were joined the following month by a modest French squadron of a half-dozen steam battleships and large frigates. The French warships were the result of Napoleon III's promise to Prince Consort Albert that the French Navy would join the British in accomplishing "whatever might be done," though British "prestige" was more at risk during naval campaigns in the Baltic and other, more distant regions.²³

The Allied fleet's advanced guard of screw-propelled frigates had two immediate tasks: imposing a tight blockade and conducting early reconnaissance of Russian ports including Reval, Estonia and nearby Port Baltic. Accordingly, the commander of Britain's advanced squadron, Captain Rundle Burgess Watson, issued a notification of blockade in mid-April for the Baltic

¹⁹ Additional Manuscript 49533, Folios 9-13 [April 7th, 1855] (BL).

²⁰ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L'expédition de Crimée*. (Paris: Librairie D'Amyot, 1858), 330-331.

²¹ BB 4 727 43 [June 4th, 1855] (SHD).

²² Additional Manuscript 49558, Folio 42 [April 7th, 1855] (BL) and Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK. King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 217.

²³ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 5.

coast in advance of French warships' arrival.²⁴ In contrast to earlier Allied blockades of the Baltic and White Sea in 1854, the declaration was made in a timely manner and in accordance with legal advice provided by the Queen's Advocate.²⁵ This time, there would be no disputing the effectiveness of British-led efforts to disrupt maritime commerce as more numerous and larger merchant vessels were intercepted. Off the Finnish port of Nystad (Uusikaupunki) alone, for example, the screw-propelled sloop *HMS Harrier* burnt or scuttled dozens of trading vessels as large as 600 tons on July 23rd and 24th.²⁶ Earlier that month, the British frigate *Magicienne* and gunboat *Ruby* discovered a large granite quarry in the Gulf of Finland along with 29 Russian vessels laden with granite blocks, which they summarily "destroyed by fire."²⁷ The real issue with the Allied blockade, then, was not its effectiveness but rather its impact on the coastal populations of Finland and Russia's other Baltic territories. As Sullivan learned during a surreal supper ashore as the guest of an English-speaking Estonian noble family in late July:

"He (Baron Sternberg) said that the rich did not feel the blockade, as all necessities, such as coffee, sugar, tea, etc. and particularly all luxuries, were only increased a small percentage in cost by the land carriage from (Prussian) Memel and Austria, but that salt could not be brought that way, the carriage being so large a proportion to the price, and therefore the poor on the coasts were the sufferers."²⁸

In response to the Baron's plea that "poor fisherman" on Estonian islands be allowed to trade salt, Sullivan regretfully pointed out to Sternberg "the difficulties of making such an exception to the blockade."²⁹ Given France's reluctance, initially shared by Wood and Clarendon,³⁰ to grant even politically-expedient exceptions to Finmark and the Aland Islands,³¹ life would only get worse for those most directly impacted by the Allied blockade before the Crimean conflict's end in 1856.

Neglecting to establish a timely blockade was one thing, but, in Sullivan's words, the "chief point" lodged by Sir James Graham against Napier at the end of 1854 was that the Vice-Admiral had "lost" a great deal of time in personally examining Sweaborg and submitting a plan of attack based on those observations.³² Contemporary figures agreed with this assessment, with

²⁴ ADM 1/5647 HA25 28 [April. 19th, 1855] (NA).

²⁵ ADM 1/5647 109 [May 22nd, 1855] (NA).

²⁶ ADM 1/5648 293 [July 9th, 1855] (NA).

²⁷ ADM 1/5647 224 [July 1st, 1855] (NA).

²⁸ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 312.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Additional Manuscript 49563, Folio 73 [July 24th, 1855] (BL).

³¹ See, for example: BB2 332 102 [November 11th, 1854] (SHD).

³² TRN/65 4 [September 17th, 1855] (NMM).

historian Charles Yonge noting in 1866 that Dundas was “eager” to avoid Napier’s earlier mistakes.³³ In Dundas’ own word, he was “determined to lose no time” in first inspecting Reval and then Sweaborg as a passenger on the *Merlin*, Sullivan’s new paddle-steamer.³⁴ The British Rear-Admiral also dispatched fleet units to reconnoiter Reval and the Gulf of Riga, with the latter task falling to Captain Erasmus Ommanney. Newly redeployed after commanding Britain’s 1854 campaign in the White Sea, Ommanney and the *Hawke* entered the Gulf of Riga in August 1855, and began examining Russian defenses after conferring with the British ships already maintaining a blockade off the coast of modern Latvia. In keeping with his aggressive actions a year earlier, Ommanney recommended destroying the coastal town of Pernau (Pärnu, now in Southwestern Estonia). The suggestion came in spite of the fact that larger British warships could not “approach within two miles of the place,” which was “surrounded by a regular fortification mounting several guns” and could only be taken through a “sudden dash.”³⁵ Dundas, on the other hand, “did not consider it expedient” to adopt Ommanney’s ambitious proposal for a small boat attack up a shallow channel.³⁶ As the cautious Rear-Admiral informed Wood and the Admiralty, he, unlike commanders such as Captain Sir Frederick Nicholson in the Pacific, was “not prepared to sanction the landing of force” in areas strongly defended by Russian troops.³⁷ After Ommanney found Riga “inaccessible” and protected by a fortress at Dwinaminde, Allied attention once again became fixated on the largest fortified harbors of Sweaborg, Cronstadt, and Reval. More detailed reconnaissance, though, again confirmed that Sweaborg was the only realistic target for a fleet that was not accompanied by an expeditionary force of ground troops.

Before Sweaborg could be bombarded in force, Dundas and Pénaud felt obligated to inspect Cronstadt’s defenses again. Allied warships ventured so close to shore that sketch artists on their decks could observe the “dark green jackets, white trousers, and caps” of Russian troops and ominously note that timber houses were “nearly all built of wood” and “would burn like tinder if a fire should take place.”³⁸ Even in early July, however, more perceptive officers such as Sir Astley Cooper Key, Captain of the frigate *Amphion* and a close friend of Sullivan, were

³³ Yonge, Charles Duke. *The History of the British Navy from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Volume III). (London, UK: Richard Bentley, 1866), 358.

³⁴ ADM 1/5647 85 [May 28th, 1855] (NA).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ XJOD/7 [June 30th, 1855] (NMM).

reporting their “fear” that “Cronstadt is given up for want of a sufficient gunboat flotilla.”³⁹ These apprehensions were proven correct on June 4th, when the *Merlin* ferried senior officers to inspect Cronstadt’s Northern Channel. The Rear-Admirals’ journey confirmed that the passage remained blocked to larger ships by submarine pylons of stone and wood that appeared “even more substantial” in the channel’s deeper passages.⁴⁰ Pénaud complimented the speed of Russia’s ongoing defensive preparations⁴¹ and Dundas agreed, concluding that:

“Under these circumstances and in the absence of a powerful and numerous flotilla...no effectual attempt could be made to remove such obstructions; and no serious attack appears to me to be practicable with the means at my disposal.”⁴²

Sullivan’s musings on how to destroy these barriers with a canoe and swimmers in wool-lined oilskin suits aside,⁴³ the “very great...difficulty and danger of attacking such a place” was even apparent to a young Scottish medical student, William Gerard Don.⁴⁴ This volunteer from the University of Edinburgh’s School of Medicine added that it was “therefore clearly our function to imprison the Russian fleet and paralyse (*sic*) all commerce.”⁴⁵ Allied reconnaissance in 1855 provided helpful updates for Sir Charles Wood’s planned attack through the Northern Channel with a grand fleet of flotilla craft in 1856,⁴⁶ but at the price of exposing Allied warships to fields of Russian ‘infernal machines,’ or early submarine mines.

The submarine mines that Czarist forces installed off Cronstadt in the 1850s were not unprecedented innovations in naval warfare,⁴⁷ unlike the program surrounding them. An earlier chapter of this work discussed the initial efforts of the Swedish-born engineer Immanuel Nobel and his German-born counterpart, Moritz Hermann Jacobi (Yakobi, etc.). Allied forces first encountered both inventions in 1854 when the British paddle-sloop *Driver* discovered one’s moorings, but Sullivan reported the fleet having “hitherto rather joked about them.”⁴⁸ Rear-

³⁹ Colomb, Philip Howard. *Memoirs of Admiral the Right Honorable Sir Astley Cooper Key*. (London, UK: Methuen and Company, 1898), 258.

⁴⁰ ADM 1/5647 142 [June 4th, 1855] (NA).

⁴¹ BB 4 727 47-50 [June 11th, 1855] (SHD) and Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L’expédition de Crimée*. (Paris: Librairie D’Amyot, 1858), 340-341.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 273-274.

⁴⁴ Don, William Gerard. *Reminiscences of the Baltic Fleet of 1855*. (Brechin, UK: D. H. Edwards, 1894), 68.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Additional Manuscript 49563, Folio 100 [August 7th, 1855] (BL).

⁴⁷ See, for example: Roland, Alex. *Underwater Warfare in the Age of Sail*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978).

⁴⁸ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 292.

Admiral Pénaud initially feared the British steamer *Merlin* was destroyed and would soon sink,⁴⁹ but continued his reconnaissance mission after realizing that the damage was less severe than initially suspected. The first reaction of senior British commanders, on the other hand, was to ‘play’ with specimens their sailors fished out of the water. Just as Rear-Admiral Michael Seymour remarked “this is the way it would go off” and activated a device, it exploded and blinded one of his eyes while injuring a number of key figures on the *Exmouth*. Dundas, meanwhile, lost his sight for a few hours after a separate incident.⁵⁰

Czarist historians cited French correspondence in claiming that the mines “forced” British and French warships to abandon their reconnaissance,⁵¹ but the reality was that these mines carried too small a charge to penetrate even wooden hulls. Pénaud, for one, overcame his initial apprehensions to mention that the infernal machines were too weak to cause serious damage and were laughed at by his sailors.⁵² Naturally, Soviet historians blamed Swedish émigré businessman Alfred Nobel and not the Russian practice of deliberately neglecting to arm Nobel’s mines in order to protect the crews tasked with installing the devices.⁵³ A lack of serious damage actually disappointed one *Illustrated London News* sketch artist who felt it was insufficiently “picturesque” and had to settle for an image of “broken tea-cups.”⁵⁴ The weakness of these mines also allowed Dundas and Pénaud, assisted by Sullivan, to get an excellent view of Russian efforts to strengthen Cronstadt’s defenses. This led Ferdinand Hamelin, who became France’s Navy minister after Théodore Ducos died in April 1855, to conclude days after taking office that “there is nowhere with a more complete ensemble of fortifications than that of Cronstadt.”⁵⁵

Even the smallest coastal raids or the Allied fleet’s mere presence in the Baltic had a profound impact on the War’s overall course due to the hundreds of thousands of Russian troops required to oppose them. The smallest contemporary estimates of Russian troop strength in the

⁴⁹ BB4 727 47 [June 11th, 1855] (SHD).

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 303; PRO 22/68/4 [June 22nd, 1855] (NA); and BB4 727 75 [June 25th, 1855] (SHD).

⁵¹ Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856*.” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 38, Pg. 2.

⁵² Battesti, Michèle. “La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1).” (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 130 and BB4 727 75 [June 25th, 1855] (SHD).

⁵³ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 1, Page 3.

⁵⁴ Reproduced in Greenhill, Basil and Ann Giffard. *The British Assault on Finland 1854-1855: A Forgotten Naval War*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1988), 310. See also: Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 296.

⁵⁵ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L’expédition de Crimée*. (Paris: Librairie D’Amyot, 1858), 333.

region easily exceeded 200,000,⁵⁶ or twice the size of all Russian forces in the Crimean Peninsula.⁵⁷ Even more frustrating for Russian leaders was the inability of these huge formations of the Empire's best troops to protect lengthy stretches of coastline. British artist John Wilson Carmichael, for instance, recounted walking through the forest on Nargen Island (Naissaar Island) "calling at House after House for milk" without fear of being ambushed or captured.⁵⁸ Months earlier in May, Captain Bartholomew Sullivan added his description of a surreal cricket match between the officers of the *Cressy* and the *Royal George* within sight of Reval, leading him to wonder "can this be wartime?"⁵⁹ The Russian strategy of defending only key strongpoints in the face of overwhelming Allied naval superiority, however, was problematic for Finland's coastal populations due to the aggressive impulses felt by British officers in particular. As Sullivan continued:

"The fact is, there is a kind of unfeeling, senseless anxiety to fire at anything that gives a chance, for the sake of firing, and some, I fear, for the sake of notoriety, or the chance of bringing about the pretence of a fight, so that they may write a letter."⁶⁰

Small scale raids continued throughout the remainder of the 1855 campaign season, but less severe than the Royal Navy's efforts in the Gulf of Bothnia a year earlier.

A major reason for British moderation was the close watch that Rear-Admiral Dundas kept over the operations of his subordinates, which contrasted to Napier's approach during the preceding Baltic campaign. Consider, for example, a dispatch Dundas sent to the Admiralty in reaction to the sloop *Harrier's* actions against the town of Raumo (Rauma) in which he politely but firmly criticized the actions of Commander Henry Story and

"Directed Captain Warden to inform him (Story) that it will be a subject of deep regret to Her Majesty's Government if it should appear that needless severity has been inflicted upon the defenceless portion of the town."⁶¹

When the coastal town of Lovisa (Loviisa) caught fire in July, even Czarist historians exonerated British forces of any involvement.⁶² This corroborated Dundas' report to the Admiralty, in which the British Rear-Admiral emphasized that Captain Nicholas Vansittart had informed him "that the

⁵⁶ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 1, Page 4.

⁵⁷ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 255.

⁵⁸ XJOD/7 [August 13th, 1855] (NMM).

⁵⁹ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 284.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 353-354.

⁶¹ ADM 1/5648 346 [August 2nd, 1855] (NA).

⁶² HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 139.

authorities of the town have themselves admitted and explained the accidental origin of the fire.”⁶³ Reverend Robert Edgar Hughes admitted looting a silver locket from a deserted island village of Kotka, but added that other “irregularities...were very slight and were immediately repressed by the officers.”⁶⁴ Civilians living near the coast were also fortunate that Dundas, advised by Sullivan, saw fit to overrule Ommanney’s suggestion for a “sudden dash” at the town of Pernau (Pärnu).⁶⁵ Sullivan, in fact, took Ommanney’s suggestion as evidence of how “few of our men...can really be trusted in command, or are fit to decide on what should and should not be done,” while mocking the former White Sea commander’s “flaming” dispatch and reporting that he heard Ommanney was “not celebrated for brains.”⁶⁶ In spite of references to the importance of remembering “what occurred last year at Gamla Carleby,”⁶⁷ however, British raiding parties did not always cautions when approaching seaside towns. This became especially apparent at Hango (Hanko) on June 6th, 1855.

Early in the afternoon on that June day, a boat from the British steam corvette *Cossack* approached the Finnish coast to land a group of captured Finns. Instead of comprising yet another routine mission, the events that transpired next produced one of the most heated controversies of the whole Crimean War. Although many of the surrounding circumstances were disputed both by British and Russian sources, a basic outline was soon transmitted around the world. A mission commanded by Lieutenant Louis Geneste landed under a flag of truce without receiving any acknowledgement from shore and while carrying arms at the bottom of their boat, both practices that went “against the normal conventions.”⁶⁸ Immediately upon landing, the British detachment and its Finnish prisoners were met by hundreds of Russian troops. Following a brief verbal exchange, Russian forces captured all the British who had disembarked and opened fire on their counterparts who remained in the small boat. Hours later, another small craft sent in search of the

⁶³ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 112. See also: Captain Bartholomew Sullivan’s note that the town’s mayor, or burgomaster, had explained “that the fire was caused by a woman throwing out hot ashes or some such accident.” Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 311.

⁶⁴ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the “Pet” yacht*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 222 and 224.

⁶⁵ ADM 1/ 5648 405 [August 21st, 1854] (NA).

⁶⁶ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 354.

⁶⁷ ADM 1/5648 293 [July 9th, 1855] (NA).

⁶⁸ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 469.

first one discovered the results of what Dundas described as “a most severe loss, under circumstances of extreme cruelty.”⁶⁹ Some British politicians initially thought that it would be “impossible to say what the real facts of the case are...until Lieutenant Geneste and the survivors are set at liberty, or allowed freely to communicate.”⁷⁰ Opinions changed rapidly, however, due to the testimony of ordinary seaman John Brown, “a young man of colour.”⁷¹ Brown was “dangerously wounded” by the Russia’s initial volley of musket fire, but survived by feigning death and then attracting the attention of a rescue party sent three hours later. Brown’s initial reaction was “they are all killed,”⁷² and he added a more detailed account from the *Cossack’s* sickbay indicating that his assailants spoke English, were dressed as riflemen, and were led by someone who “from his dress and appearance, seemed to be an officer.”⁷³ Henceforth, one native Prussian observer noted that:

‘In England, inside and outside of the Houses of Parliament, angry clamor arose and the actions of one inferior Russian officer were used to condemn the whole Russian government and population. The events were treated as evidence for the diehard and abhorrent barbarian (behavior) of the Russians, while the Press forgot that the British *Parlamentär-flag* had been misused in many cases before and that the Press had reported on them with pleasure.’⁷⁴

In response to vehement British protests, Russian authorities quickly launched an investigation into what newspapers had already labeled ‘Hango Massacre.’ The investigative committee concluded Russian forces fired upon the British boat after its crew disobeyed an order to surrender and instead attempted to “hurriedly” row away from shore.⁷⁵ Finnish Governor-General Friedrich Wilhelm Berg wrote Rear-Admiral Dundas that “it was quite natural” that Russian forces “should attack the cutter and its crew as soon as the latter landed” given Britain’s previous use of white flags to cover the approach of small boats that burned Finnish villages.⁷⁶ Dundas then began an exchange with the Russian Minister of War, who methodically dissected the arguments of Brown and Geneste in arguing that the British expedition was “neither regular, nor avowed” and therefore deserved its fate.⁷⁷ This did nothing to pacify Dundas or the wrath of a

⁶⁹ FO 881/478 [June 9th, 1855] (NA).

⁷⁰ Great Britain. House of Lords Debate, July 10th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 139, CC645-652. .

⁷¹ “Operations in the Baltic, Alleged Massacre.” *The Nation* (June 28th, 1855), 4.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ FO 881/478 [June 6th, 1855] (NA).

⁷⁴ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 469.

⁷⁵ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 132. Chertkov later served as Governor-General of Poland.

⁷⁶ *The Annual Register, or a View of the History and Politics of the Year 1855*. (London, UK: J. Rivington, 1856), 224.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 225-226.

British public exposed to lurid illustrations of what marine painter Carmichael described as the “slaughter” of a group including “poor Blacky,” the lone survivor to escape either death or captivity.⁷⁸

During the Parliamentary debates that followed the incident at Hango, even the most outraged British politicians found themselves “bound to say that there were circumstances connected with this flag of truce which ought not to have occurred.”⁷⁹ Yet this mattered little in the court of worldwide public opinion. Unlike events at Petropavlovsk and the Solovetsky Monastery in 1854, the incident at Hango was a public relations disaster for Russia, even in the neutral United States.⁸⁰ Irrespective of the actual circumstances surrounding the incident at Hango and an alleged British misuse of a white flag off the Crimean port of Kerch, Western public opinion mostly joined Sir Charles Wood and the British admiralty in choosing to “utterly disbelieve” Russian assertions that British officers routinely “abused the privilege of a flag of truce.”⁸¹ British forces took greater care when approaching shore under flags of truce thereafter, but the lesson came at a price for both sides.

Little more than a month after the incident at Hango, an Anglo-French flotilla bombarded Sweaborg. Allied commanders realized that the fortress could not be captured without the assistance of a substantial army, but nevertheless hoped to inflict damage on Russian warships in the harbor as well as wooden support facilities left unprotected by the fortresses complex’s low ramparts.⁸² With Cronstadt’s defenses too strong for the Allied fleet and cities such as Reval also well-defended by Russian troops, “the wish to do something” became, in Dundas’ words, “the principal inducement” for attacking Sweaborg.⁸³ Captain Sullivan’s plan for a long-range bombardment by gunboats, mortar vessels, and mortars landed on small islands promised to balance the caution of Dundas and Sir Charles Wood with the prospect of damaging something other than Russia’s maritime trade and coastal villages.

The prospect of a limited attack did not appeal to Britain’s battleship captains, and men such as Sir Astley Cooper Key of the *Amphion* felt their exclusion from a process that did “not

⁷⁸ XJOD/7 [June 7th, 1855] (NMM).

⁷⁹ Great Britain. House of Lords Debate, July 10th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 139, CC645-652.

⁸⁰ See, for example “The Massacre at Hango.” *The New York Daily Times* (July 6th, 1855). Unpaginated.

⁸¹ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 111.

⁸² BB4 727 109 [July 17th, 1855] (SHD).

⁸³ Additional Manuscript 49533, Folios 115-120 [July 24th, 1855] (BL).

look for much result” to be “very trying.”⁸⁴ Another fleet observer mentioned that the “sanguine” anticipated a great confrontation, but “others were of a different opinion” and thought that a long-range bombardment “would be one of those d---d demonstrations” that “might as well” expend the ammunition carried by the Allied fleet.⁸⁵ Upon final analysis, both sets of opinions had merit. Although the assault had no prospect of capturing the fortress itself or the City of Helsingfors in the background, it demonstrated to the Russians that even a modest force of gunboats and mortar vessels could inflict huge damage while suffering few or no casualties in return. The destruction of Sweaborg’s exposed wooden barracks, storehouses, and docked gunboats was not a crippling blow for Russian forces in the Baltic in 1855, but was instead an ominous indication of what a larger Allied force was capable of doing to Cronstadt in 1856.

Sullivan’s plan for bombarding Sweaborg was straightforward. While most of the Allied fleet’s line-of-battle ships patrolled off Cronstadt,⁸⁶ the rest of the fleet proceeded to Sweaborg in early August. Once in position, the idea was for British and French gunboats and mortar vessels to circle several thousand meters from the Russian fortifications, which would make hitting these small vessels at great range as difficult as hitting a fast-moving sparrow with a pistol at a distance.⁸⁷ The prospect of minimal casualties greatly appealed to Dundas, who hastened to assure the Admiralty that it “formed no part of my plan to attempt a general attack” on Sweaborg and that “the operations contemplated...were limited to such destruction of the fortress and arsenal as could be accomplished by means of mortars.”⁸⁸ Royal Marine Artillery Major John Maurice Wemyss noted the difficulties inherent in his task of ‘organizing a new service with a long forgotten weapon,’⁸⁹ but the main problem that plagued the Allied bombardment was neither the weapons’ age nor Russian return fire. Instead, the inability of Britain’s newer equipment to withstand the rigors of a prolonged bombardment was, Pénaud’s words, the “unofficial reason” for the attack’s end.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Colomb, Philip Howard. *Memoirs of Admiral the Right Honorable Sir Astley Cooper Key*. (London, UK: Methuen and Company, 1898), 259.

⁸⁵ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the “Pet” yacht*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 246.

⁸⁶ BB4 727 135 [August 7th, 1855] (SHD).

⁸⁷ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 275.

⁸⁸ ADM 1/5648 367 [August 13th, 1855] (NA).

⁸⁹ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 342.

⁹⁰ BB4 727 146 [August 14th, 1855] (SHD).

The Allies' adoption of Sullivan's plan seemed to indicate that the navigational officer would be the one directing combat operations, but Rear-Admiral Dundas instead gave his friend and Fleet Captain Sir Frederick Thomas Pelham a prominent role. This infuriated Sullivan, but was squarely in line with Dundas' observation that "everybody wants to be fighting and my business must be control."⁹¹ Sullivan soon gained significantly more control over the bombardment by deliberate exceeding his orders, but observed that:

"The experience gained at Sweaborg should be a lesson to any officer who, having proposed a plan of attack finds it is to be adopted. No delicacy to others, or hesitation in being firm with his superior officer, should prevent his insisting that he should be allowed to conduct the proceedings he was responsible for."

Initial confusion, in fact, led Sullivan to conclude "that if an attempt on Cronstadt had been made in the same manner...we should have been defeated."⁹² This was not the case with Sweaborg, however. In spite of Dundas' fears, Russian shore defenses were simply unable to effectively respond to a long-range bombardment, especially after the outbreak of what Governor-General Friedrich Wilhelm Berg described as "appalling" fires throughout the island fortress complex.⁹³

Sweaborg was by protected stone emplacements built on rocky granite outcrops, but, like Cronstadt, housed an extensive wooden dockyard, storage facilities, barracks, and other structures. Equally as flammable was an "immense" stockpile of wood intended to supply fuel for Russia's few steamers.⁹⁴ Soon after the Allied bombardment commenced on August 9th, 1855, Sweaborg, according to one especially blunt British children's book, 'presented the appearance of a vast fiery furnace.'⁹⁵ Projectiles rained down not only from 21 Allied mortar vessels and 22 gunboats, but also from a battery of five mortars that the French landed on the small Abraham Island (Abraham Holm).⁹⁶ As the bombardment continued into night, gunboats and mortar vessels withdrew to replenish their stocks of ammunition, small ship's boats mounting Congreve rockets closed inside of 2,000 yards of the fortress complex and had, in the words of one

⁹¹ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 237.

⁹² Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 326.

⁹³ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 170.

⁹⁴ "Sweaborg Bombarded." *The Nation* (August 25th, 1855), 4.

⁹⁵ *Our Children's Times, or Sketches of the Past and Present*. (London, UK: Charles Haselden, 1856), 203.

⁹⁶ Battesti, Michèle. "La Marine de Napoléon III: Une Politique Navale (Tome 1)." (Savoie, France Université de Savoie PhD Dissertation, 1997), 132 and Lambert, Andrew. "Under the heel of Britannia, the Bombardment of Sweaborg August 8-10 1855" in Peter Hore (Ed.). *Seapower Ashore: 200 Years of Royal Navy Operations on Land*. (London, UK: Chatham, 2001), 108.

participant, “such capital fun blazing away at the Russians,” who “never returned a single shot.”⁹⁷ Ultimately, though, even figures such as Reverend Robert Hughes, who seldom missed an opportunity to celebrate Russian casualties in graphic detail, dismissed newspaper accounts describing “limbs and fragments of human beings...careening through the skies” as nonsense.⁹⁸ As the bombardment continued throughout August 10th and into August 11th, exaggerated details were not necessary to prove that Sweaborg’s interior was “ruled by disorder.”⁹⁹ The sheer volume of projectiles fired by the Allies simply overwhelmed Russian attempts to extinguish fires, which “enveloped all port buildings” by August 10th.¹⁰⁰

In spite of the considerable damage inflicted on unprotected structures and vessels during the Allied bombardment, Russian forces averted disaster by successfully protecting their main powder magazines. British and French observers reported multiple series of explosions within the islands’ confines, but both Czarist and Soviet historians corroborate each others’ claims that the blasts emanated from Swedish-built warehouses housing repaired projectiles, rather than magazines serving the main batteries.¹⁰¹ The wooden roof of a magazine on the Island of Gustavsvard (Gustavssvärd, etc.) did catch fire after being left exposed to Allied bombardment, but Russian volunteers extinguished the blaze before an explosion could destroy a whole section of the fortifications.¹⁰² As one German commentator light-heartedly added, ‘a magazine for weapons with a wooden roof remains a good proof for libertinism’ because this arrangement was not conducive to remaining alive.¹⁰³ Flames also threatened the gunpowder storage room on board the battleships *Rossiia*, moored in position to block the main harbor entrance, but the ship was saved thanks to the efforts of its crew.¹⁰⁴ Six Russian battleships, two frigates, and a corvette were not as lucky, however, as a postwar commission deemed them not worth repairing.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁷ KMB 905/1 [August 12th, 1855] (WYAS).

⁹⁸ Hughes, Robert Edgar. *Two Summer cruises with the Baltic Fleet in 1854-55, being the log of the “Pet” yacht.* (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1856), 249.

⁹⁹ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L’expédition de Crimée.* (Paris: Librairie D’Amyot, 1858), 367.

¹⁰⁰ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II).*” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 2, Page 4.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* and Bogdanovic, Modest Ivanovic. [Russian Language]. “*Eastern War 1853-1856.*” (St. Petersburg: Sushchinskii, 1876), Chapter 38, Pg. 4.

¹⁰² *Ibid*

¹⁰³ Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854.* (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 480.

¹⁰⁴ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II).*” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 2, Page 4.

¹⁰⁵ Bazancourt, César Lecat. *L’expédition de Crimée.* (Paris: Librairie D’Amyot, 1858), 373.

The Anglo-French bombardment of Sweaborg ceased on the morning of August 11th, 1855, although fires continued to rage for days afterwards.¹⁰⁶ Dundas privately reported to the Admiralty that a major reason for that cessation was the deteriorating condition of the more recently cast British mortars, whose defects had been poorly covered with soft metal by a private contractor focused on profits instead of quality.¹⁰⁷ Dundas alluded to the issue in reporting that “no proportionate advantage was to be gained by continuing the fire during another day with fewer mortars.”¹⁰⁸ Pénaud, on the other hand, was more direct in asserting that the real reason for the bombardment’s end was the precarious condition of Britain’s remaining mortars and not Dundas’ estimation that the attack had accomplished all of its goals.¹⁰⁹ After 45 hours of bombardment that hurled projectiles weighing thousands of tons,¹¹⁰ Allied naval forces attempted to assess the damage they had caused and, in the British case, remove references to mortar failure from dispatches before releasing them for publication.¹¹¹ Yet British officials also declined to publish the details of Rear-Admiral Pénaud’s misadventure during the early morning darkness of August 11th, when French gunboats ran aground dangerously close to Russian shore defenses during a misbegotten attempt to attack the Russian battleship *Hezekiel*.¹¹² Irrespective of several such close calls, Allied warships suffered more from stress and accidents than from Russian counterfire.¹¹³ Sir Charles Wood was especially pleased with his commanders’ success at “injuring your enemy most seriously at little cost to yourself,”¹¹⁴ while the normally “undemonstrative” Dundas began crying and almost choked when expressing his gratitude to Captain Bartholomew Sullivan.¹¹⁵ Captain Astley Cooper Key, Sullivan’s good friend, enjoyed recounting this scene and felt “the wonderful part” of Sweaborg’s bombardment to be its accomplishment “without the loss of a (British or French) life.”¹¹⁶ Key’s assessment mirrored

¹⁰⁶ Lambert, Andrew. “Under the heel of Britannia, the Bombardment of Sweaborg August 8-10 1855” in Peter Hore (Ed.). *Seapower Ashore: 200 Years of Royal Navy Operations on Land*. (London, UK: Chatham, 2001), 118.

¹⁰⁷ “Correspondence with reference to the Contract of Mssrs. Grissell for Mortars.” [Multiple Dates in March, 1856]. *British House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*, 391.

¹⁰⁸ ADM 1/ 5648 367 [August 13th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁰⁹ BB4 727 146 [August 14th, 1855] (SHD).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*.

¹¹¹ Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 248.

¹¹² Additional Manuscript 49533, Folios 137-140 [August 21st, 1855] (BL).

¹¹³ XJOD/7 [August 11th, 1855] (NMM).

¹¹⁴ Additional Manuscript 49536, Folio 2 [August 21st, 1855] (BL).

¹¹⁵ Colomb, Philip Howard. *Memoirs of Admiral the Right Honorable Sir Astley Cooper Key*. (London, UK: Methuen and Company, 1898), 261.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 260.

Dundas' in acknowledging that Britain's "mortars were nearly all split or unfit for service" before arguing that it would be "useless" and of 'doubtful success' to destroy Sweaborg's batteries given the damage already inflicted on the complex's buildings.¹¹⁷

British and French forces accurately assessed the damage to Sweaborg's structures, but wildly overestimated the number of casualties they had inflicted on Russian forces. Pénaud and other French officers took the lead in gathering intelligence by dispatching Finnish spies on intelligence-gathering missions. Russian authorities were already restricting access to the islands, and Finnish informants' estimates of over 2,000 Russian fatalities were approximately ten times too high.¹¹⁸ Local fisherman repeated these estimates three weeks later to Captain Richard Hewlett of the *Edinburgh*,¹¹⁹ though Sullivan wrote "quite impossible" in parentheses after a similar casualty figure.¹²⁰ Based on conflicting claims, a new struggle played out in the pages of major European newspapers, with Nesselrode complaining to Governor-General Berg that "our enemy has been celebrating his victory and, as usual, filling all Europe with his lies."¹²¹ The initial French contention that "Sweaborg stopped existing" morphed into a more precise "Sweaborg destroyed up to the walls of its fortress," but Russian and critically-inclined neutral observers considered Sweaborg's stone emplacements more important than its logistical facilities.¹²² Regardless of the ongoing battle for public opinion or the degree of importance assigned to the island fortresses' actual batteries versus support facilities, however, the Anglo-French bombardment of Sweaborg was critically important. It definitively proved that even a modest complement of flotilla craft left unsupported by armored floating batteries could inflict significant damage on a heavily fortified Russian arsenal while suffering minimal casualties in return. Although Dundas vetoed his French counterpart's immediate urge to launch a similar bombardment against Reval with long-range rockets that had just arrived from France,¹²³ Sir

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ BB4 727 176 [August 28th, 185] (SHD). See also: Don, William Gerard. *Reminiscences of the Baltic Fleet of 1855*. (Brechtin, UK: D. H. Edwards, 1894), 209.

¹¹⁹ Bonner-Smith, David (Ed.). *Correspondence between the Admiralty and Rear-Admiral the Hon. R.S. Dundas respecting naval operations in the Baltic, 1855* (Vol. 84). (Colchester, UK: Printed by Spottiswoode, Ballantyne Printers for the Navy Records Society, 1944), 259.

¹²⁰ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 345.

¹²¹ HIS/39 English Translation (Louis Mackay, Translator) in [NMM] of Borodkin, Mikhail. *The War on the Finnish Coast*. (Stockholm, Sweden: Söderström and Company, 1905), 131.

¹²² Rüstow, Wilhelm. *Der Krieg gegen Russland im Jahre 1854*. (Zurich: F. Schulthess, 1855), 485.

¹²³ BB4 727 188 [August 29th, 1855] (SHD).

Charles Wood and the British Admiralty were already planning for an enormous attack on Cronstadt in 1856.¹²⁴

The August bombardment of Sweaborg was the indisputable highlight of the Allies' 1855 Baltic campaign. After ruling out further large-scale activities for the year, British warships continued their longstanding approach of coastal raiding, which appealed neither to Pénaud nor circumspect British officers such as Sullivan.¹²⁵ Four days after the bombardment ceased, Sullivan already hoped that "all hostilities are over for the season, because there is nothing that could be done with a prospect of success that is worth the risk of loss and failure."¹²⁶ Before returning to Britain to assist in planning the 1856 assault on Cronstadt, however, Sullivan again visited with an Estonian noble family, Baron and Baroness Starkleberg. The Baroness was ethnically Russian, which led to the only tense moment of their breakfast when Sullivan began discussing current events:

"When I said I hoped the fall of Sevastopol might lead to peace soon, she quite fired up, struck her little fist on the table, and the fire seemed to flash out of her bright eyes, as she said 'What! Peace now? *No, never* till we have driven you out of the Crimean again.'¹²⁷

Even prior to this conversation, Allied warships had begun leaving the Baltic for their home ports¹²⁸ after locating a fleet anchorage in Biorko Sound during preparatory reconnaissance for the 1856 assault on Cronstadt.

The net results of British and French efforts in Baltic during 1855 were modest, but shone in comparison to the futility of their efforts to frustrate Russian designs in the Pacific. Despite receiving massive reinforcements, new commanders, and specific orders to coordinate the efforts of squadrons based in Chinese and South American waters, Allied forces utterly failed to accomplish their goals for the campaign. Russian forces successfully evacuated Petropavlovsk right under the noses of patrolling British warships, leaving a deserted provincial town instead of an attractive target. Allied forces were then unable to intercept and destroy heavily-laden Russian warships and transports even after briefly locating them at De Castries Bay (De Kastri Bay). Finally, and in spite of their massive naval superiority and the shipwreck of the Russian frigate *Diana*, British and French warships were powerless to prevent the successful conclusion of

¹²⁴ See, for example: Additional Manuscript 49644, Folios 2 and 11 [August 21st and 28th, 1855] (BL).

¹²⁵ BB4 727 216 [September 25th, 1855] (NA).

¹²⁶ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 344.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 349.

¹²⁸ BB4 727 216 [September 25th, 1855] (SHD).

Russo-Japanese negotiations or locate and breach Russian defenses at the Amur River's entrance. The same "apparently aimless movements and ill success of our naval forces on the north-eastern shores of Asia" that had marred the previous year's campaign characterized the Allied powers' experiences in 1855. The game of military hide-and-seek on a grand scale played throughout the Western Pacific during that year represented a significant victory for the Russian Empire, which otherwise gained little from the Crimean conflict.

In the aftermath of the disastrous conclusion of their countries' 1854 efforts in the Pacific, British and French authorities were left to grapple not only with embarrassing press coverage, but also the necessity of appointing new commanders and drafting more specific orders. After endearing himself to San Franciscans by emphasizing his father's participation in the American Revolution, an exhausted Febvrier-Despointes died at sea in early March 1855.¹²⁹ This meant that both the Allies' South American squadrons would have new commanders for their upcoming campaign. Rear-Admiral Henry William Bruce had already arrived from Britain to replace Price in February 1855, accompanied by the battleship *Monarch*. Febvrier-Despointes' successor Martin Fourichon, on the other hand, took longer to reach his squadron's home port of Callao. By the time Fourichon arrived and prepared the *Forte* for a long voyage, a British squadron and the French frigate *Alceste* had already sailed for Petropavlovsk, leaving the other French vessels 18 days in their wake.¹³⁰ In addition to larger warships, more of them powered by steam, the Allied squadrons were also armed with a new set of more specific instructions from Sir James Graham and Sir Charles Wood. Determined to avoid the "hard lessons" learned at Petropavlovsk and Sevastopol in 1854,¹³¹ French authorities instructed their commanders to obey British orders to proceed to Petropavlovsk and capture or destroy Russian warships without mounting another amphibious assault.¹³² In the event that Russian warships had already left Kamchatka, Bruce and Fourichon were to proceed towards New Archangel (Sitka), though an Anglo-Russian neutrality agreement was still in force. Allied warships from Chinese waters, meanwhile, received orders to rendezvous with their South American-based counterparts off Petropavlovsk and support a

¹²⁹ BB2 332 857 [October 15th, 1854] (SHD) and BB4 702 532 [March 11th, 1855] (SHD).

¹³⁰ BB4 702 545 [May 25th, 1855] (SHD).

¹³¹ BB4 684 430 [April 16th, 1854] (SHD).

¹³² BB4 332 880 [November 28th, 1854] (SHD). See also: Additional Manuscript 49562, Folio 4 [March 9th, 1855].

renewed effort to destroy Russian naval power in the Pacific.¹³³ Despite their larger size and better coordination, though, both forces were destined to ignominiously fail to accomplish their primary mission of capturing or destroying Russian warships during the months that followed.

On March 14th, 1855, a courier arrived in Petropavlovsk bearing decorations for its defenders and secret instructions from Governor-General Nikolay Muravyov. They commanded Rear-Admiral Vasily Zavyoko to “move everything in Petropavlovsk” to Nikolayevsk, at the mouth of the Amur River.¹³⁴ The impetus for these orders came not from Muravyov, who hoped to protect Petropavlovsk “to the very last,” but rather from Grand Duke Constantine, who informed his Governor-General that Russia would be better-served defending the Amur in 1855.¹³⁵ Even in the immediate aftermath of their early September victory, Russian commanders in Petropavlovsk correctly anticipated that the Allies would “return with much greater forces” the following year and began preparing accordingly.¹³⁶ The results of their efforts, which continued unabated throughout the holidays, had produced impressive results by the time they were abandoned. In place of the exposed batteries that had confronted Allied warships in 1854, Russian forces constructed an elaborate system of breastworks, trenches, hidden storehouses, and even a small fort designed to repel another Anglo-French landing.¹³⁷ These preparations were never tested, as Russian ships had already embarked everything that could be moved from the port by the time the first Allied vessels arrived off the port in late May. By the time the first British warships steamed or sailed into Avacha (or Avatcha) Bay in late May, the eerie sight of a deserted town greeted them and drove home a lonely American resident’s comment to Admiral Bruce that the Allies were “rather late.”¹³⁸ Six weeks earlier, a Russian squadron of a frigate, corvette, and three transports¹³⁹ had sailed through passages cut through the ice that still enclosed

¹³³ Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 89 and ADM 1/5657 26 [December 8th, 1855] (NA).

¹³⁴ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. “*Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 208.

¹³⁵ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 32.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, 85.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 86-87 and Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 103.

¹³⁸ Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 94.

¹³⁹ The *Aurora*, *Olivutza* (*Oliwudez*, *Oliovutsa*, etc.), *Dvina*, *Irtys*, and *Baikal*, respectively.

the port and slipped past an advance force of two British warships from Chinese waters¹⁴⁰ ordered to watch Petropavlovsk until Bruce's squadron could arrive. To his credit, the British Rear-Admiral behaved graciously, giving a box of cookies and marmalade to his Russian counterpart's pregnant wife Yulia and her children, who had been left behind in a nearby village because of their delicate health.¹⁴¹

The first indication of Petropavlovsk's evacuation reached Bruce courtesy of Commander Frederick Henry Stirling of the paddle-steamer *Barracouta*. The son of Britain's Chinese naval commander Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, Henry made an early reconnaissance visit to Petropavlovsk only to find it deserted. Invited for a breakfast meeting with other captains on the morning that a full Allied fleet arrived off the port, the younger Stirling summoned his courage when Bruce asked where he had been the night before. The answer of "Petropavlovsk!" stunned the Rear-Admiral, who reportedly dropped his knife and fork and asked if the Commander was "crazy."¹⁴² Captain Sir Frederick Nicolson then attempted to justify his conduct the previous year by proving that Stirling had mistaken another site for Petropavlovsk, a "second Sevastopol."¹⁴³ Forced laughter and incredulity aside however, Nicolson lost the argument once Stirling produced a map that clearly showed the Avacha Bay's unique features. Although this incident remained relatively private and did not inspire public criticism in Britain, this combination of poor judgment and geographical ignorance soon had far more serious consequences further to the south. The British did succeed in recovering two Allied prisoners of war from the previous year's assault by employing American intermediaries to contact Russia's token forces in Petropavlovsk's hinterlands,¹⁴⁴ which was especially fortunate because Fourichon had given up on contacting a hidden population in such a forbidding landscape.¹⁴⁵ Once the French Rear-Admiral and his remaining warships arrived off Kamchatka, most of the Allied fleet left for New Archangel (Sitka) only to find that it too did not harbor any Russian warships.¹⁴⁶ Bruce then

¹⁴⁰ The screw corvette *Encounter* and the steam sloop *Barracouta*.

¹⁴¹ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. "In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 91.

¹⁴² Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. "(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*" and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 74.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ ADM 1/5656 Y83 [July 17th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁴⁵ BB4 702 551 [June 18th, 1855] (SHD).

¹⁴⁶ BB4 702 552 [June 18th, 1855] (SHD).

visited Vancouver Island, a “territory of immense distance from England, and contiguous to envious, grasping neighbours”¹⁴⁷ before joining Fourichon in monitoring San Francisco, then South America.¹⁴⁸ British and French warships based in Chinese waters thus assumed the burden of carrying on active operations against Russia, but were no more successful in locating and destroying Russia’s presence in the region.

The fundamental problem with these operations, from an Anglo-French perspective, was that the Sea of Okhotsk and the Strait of Tartary¹⁴⁹ were “a part of the world of which very little is known,” according to Sir Charles Wood.¹⁵⁰ Even in 1855, British and French commanders had to heavily rely on surviving records of 18th century explorers, especially the Count of Lapérouse. The issue with this source of intelligence was not its age, but rather its incompleteness. Although Lapérouse’s journal was the “constant companion” of British officers in the Northern Pacific, they still felt “selfish regrets at the loss of the fuller and completer details of his voyage”¹⁵¹ after the Count’s two vessels were lost at sea. Early European explorers including Lapérouse, William Broughton, and Adam Johann von Krusenster (Ivan Fyodorovich Kruzenshtern) all assumed that Sakhalin was a peninsula rather than an island, and the difference was more than semantic. Given Sakhalin’s position near the Amur River’s junction with the Pacific, at stake was whether oceangoing ships could reach the River’s mouth. British and French commanders in 1855 were unaware that, six years earlier, Russian explorer and naval officer Grennady Nevelskoy (Nevelskoi) had definitively proved that the Amur’s entrance was accessible from either the north or south.¹⁵² The consequences of Russia’s superior geographic knowledge soon became readily apparent in mid-May, when a British detachment of three ships under Commodore Charles Elliot briefly located Russian vessels at De Castries Bay, less than 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of the Amur.

Crammed into the frigate *Aurora* and an accompanying corvette and transports, Russian evacuees were not immediately safe after slipping out of Petropavlovsk in mid-April bound for

¹⁴⁷ Additional Manuscript 49549, Folio 22 [April 16th, 1855] (BL) and Lambert, Andrew. *Trincomalee: Last of Nelson’s Frigates*. (Barnsley, UK: Chatham Publishing, 2002), 98.

¹⁴⁸ HD 1898 [May 24th, 1856] (AHO).

¹⁴⁹ Also known as the Tartar Strait, Tartar Gulf, Gulf of Tartary, etc.

¹⁵⁰ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, February 8th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 140, CC453-461. .

¹⁵¹ Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 71.

¹⁵² Paine, Sarah. *Imperial Rivals: China, Russia and Their Disputed Frontier*. (Armonk, New York and London, UK: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), 38. Furthermore, and despite Philipp Franz von Siebold’s awareness of his efforts, the discoveries of Japanese explorer Mamiya Rinzō were also unfamiliar to British and French forces.

the Amur. The next step was eluding roving Allied patrols when passing through the Kurile Islands. By chance, the Russian squadron made the correct decision to disobey Muravyov's orders and sail through the 4th rather than the 6th strait separating the archipelago, thereby avoiding a large Allied patrol searching for them in the latter passage.¹⁵³ After separate journeys lasting between three weeks and a month, Russian vessels regrouped south of the Amur at De Castries Bay, which Lap  rouse had named for the Marquis de Castries, Secretary of the French Navy during the 1780s. After dispatching messengers and a large boat to make contact with Rear-Admiral Nevelskoy and ascertain whether the narrow passage of Cape Lazarev further to the North was free of ice, Zavyoko and his commanders used May 19th to position the frigate *Aurora*, corvette *Olivutsa*, and armed transport *Dvina* behind islands sheltering the bay's rear. In the event of an attack, these vessels could move so close to shore that *Dvina* crewmember Theodore Nikitich Alekseev observed them floating on only a foot of water at low tide.¹⁵⁴ The timing of these preparations was especially fortunate for Russian forces. As a thick morning fog cleared the May 20th, lookouts sighted three approaching vessels that were "no doubt military" and "no doubt English."¹⁵⁵ These observations were accurate, and the British frigate *Sybille*, screw sloop *Hornet*, and brig *Bittern*, had learned the Russian location thanks to indigenous Ainu people, with whom British officers communicated "by the aid of rough drawings on the sands and signs."¹⁵⁶ Amidst what observers on both sides described as intense excitement subdued by discipline, both groups prepared for battle.¹⁵⁷

The sudden appearance of British ships surprised Petropavlovsk's former defenders, who "had not expected such activity" on the Allied side and did not think British warships would appear earlier than June.¹⁵⁸ Zavyoko was furious not only with the negligence of shore-based Russian lookouts, but also with Governor-General Muravyov and Grennady (i/ii) Ivanovich

¹⁵³ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. *"In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents."* (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 92.

¹⁵⁴ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. *"Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 223.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia.* (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 81.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁵⁸ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. *"Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 223.*

Nevelskoy. The Russian Rear-Admiral criticized both his superiors' decision to evacuate Petropavlovsk for placing his small squadron in a precarious position, remarking "so let them (Muravyov and Nevelskoy) come now and decide what to do with vessels which have no advantage over the enemy even in a defensive position. What a rescue!"¹⁵⁹ Russian sailors resigned themselves to burning both transports and blowing up the corvette *Olivutsa* before withdrawing ashore in the face of a determined British assault that never materialized. Zavyoko's counterpart, Commodore Charles Elliott, was content to cautiously reconnoiter and try the range of his squadron's guns before sending for reinforcements. Elliott initially ordered the *Bittern* observe Russian warships, but the brig's crew mistook Russian transports for additional corvette-sized warships and promptly withdrew.¹⁶⁰

After a short conference among British commanders, the *Hornet* then steamed into the bay to try the range of its longest guns at 2,000 yards. A brief exchange of fire with the corvette *Olivutsa* saw both sides' projectiles fall hundreds of yards short of their intended targets, and soon ceased.¹⁶¹ *Hornet*, meanwhile, hit an unmarked rock in spite of its shallow draught, which drove home the realization that these waters were "perfectly unknown" to British forces.¹⁶² An improvised map of the bay and Russian ships drawn by the British sloop's commander (Charles Forsyth), for instance, included the notations "dangerous rock," "apparently not a clear passage," and "grounded ice."¹⁶³ As darkness fell, Commodore Elliot sent Commander Edward Vansittart and the *Bittern* on an urgent mission to seek reinforcements from Rear-Admiral Stirling.¹⁶⁴ Rather than face Russian broadsides through a "narrow approach," Elliot took the *Sybil* and the *Hornet* to patrol the Gulf of Tartary on the assumption that it was "highly probable that the Russian Squadron (would) immediately attempt to escape to the Southward."¹⁶⁵ By the time the two British warships returned eight days later on May 28th, they found the harbor "apparently deserted."¹⁶⁶ Although Stirling immediately dispatched reinforcements when Elliot's message

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 223.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 224 and Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 87.

¹⁶¹ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. *Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)*. (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 211.

¹⁶² Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 134.

¹⁶³ MR 1/2012 [May 20th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁶⁴ ADM 1/5657 S109 [May 23rd, 1855] (NA).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁶ ADM 1/5657 S109 [June 7th, 1855] (NA).

reached him on the 30th, it was far too late:¹⁶⁷ Allied forces never again sighted a Russian squadron in the Pacific.

The circumstances attending this Russian escape, especially in conjunction with the “singularly unsatisfactory” remainder of the Allies’ 1855 Pacific campaign,¹⁶⁸ attracted scathing criticism in Britain’s press and Parliament. By January 1856, publications including British India’s *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* were providing enumerated lists of “points on which Commodore Elliot has to be brought to a Court Martial.”¹⁶⁹ The *Times* had already weighed in on the subject, directly commenting that “Elliot gave the Russians the opportunity most coveted, and he must be held responsible to his country for their escape.”¹⁷⁰ Worse yet for the British Admiralty’s public image, the criticism was not confined to Elliot. Rear-Admiral James Stirling and Sir Charles Wood, and even “the Government at home” came under attack from publications such as the conservative *Fraser’s Magazine*. As late as 1861, this publication was icily pointing out that the Admiralty “had take no pains” to supply Elliot with “excellent charts of both entrances into the Amoor which have been for some time in possession of the Dutch Admiralty,” and had also neglected to provide “even La Perouse’s chart of the Gulf of Tartary!”¹⁷¹

Sir Charles Wood was also forced to defend his subordinates’ conduct on the floor of the House of Commons from criticism by politicians including Benjamin Disraeli’s close friend Henry Baillie, whose verbal attacks gained momentum following the publication of *Notes on the Late Expedition Against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*.¹⁷² Baillie’s speech, dripping with sarcasm, criticized Elliot for appearing “to have been surprised to find that he Russians had refused to wait for the convenience of himself and the gallant Admiral (Stirling).”¹⁷³ Sir Charles Wood rose in defense of Elliot and Stirling, though the First Lord was unable to counter Baillie’s assertion that British officers remained in an ‘unaccountable, blamable, and lamentable state of ignorance’ regarding Russian forces in the region.¹⁷⁴ Much to official Britain’s relief, however,

¹⁶⁷ ADM 1/5657 S10 559 [July 2nd, 1855] (NA).

¹⁶⁸ “Naval Operations in the Pacific.” *The Observer* (October 28th, 1855), 3.

¹⁶⁹ “The Affair of Castries Bay.” *Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* (January 9th, 1856), 22.

¹⁷⁰ “Escape of the Russians from Castries Bay.” *The Times* (October 29th, 1855), 10.

¹⁷¹ Marx, Francis. *The Pacific and the Amoor: Naval, Military and Diplomatic Operations from Fraser’s Magazine*. (London, UK: Robert Hardwicke, 1861), 8.

¹⁷² Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856).

¹⁷³ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, February 8th, 1856. *Hansard’s* Vol. 140, CC453-461.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Wood's defense sufficed to save Elliot from a court martial, and the Crimean War ended soon after this heated parliamentary exchange.

The Russian escape from De Castries Bay was especially galling to British observers because of their naval forces' inability to locate worthy targets of attack thereafter. Although he had publicly defended Rear-Admiral Stirling's conduct, Sir Charles Wood privately informed his commander that "my Lords cannot conceal the expression of the disappointment (they) had felt" at his conduct in the Gulf of Tartary, which caused them "surprise and regret."¹⁷⁵ Their Lordships went on to angrily opine that it was "clearly and obviously necessary" that Stirling and Elliot should have vigorously searched for the Russian's escape route to the north, just as it was "equally clear that this was not done."¹⁷⁶ Stirling and Eliot rapidly abandoned this effort after one of their steamers ran aground "because of insufficient precautions,"¹⁷⁷ but Sir Charles Wood and his advisors did not "understand" how a large sailing frigate such as the *Aurora* could disappear through a passage that was somehow inaccessible to the shallow-draught, screw-propelled steamers.¹⁷⁸ By the time that British and French warships discovered a passage leading to the Amur's Mouth from the North in late October, it was "too late in the season" for any further investigation, much less decisive action.¹⁷⁹

Amidst British hesitation and confusion, Zavoyko and his squadron left De Castries Bay for Cape Lazarev, further north towards the Amur's Mouth. The Russian Rear-Admiral knew that the situation was "becoming dangerous," especially because "the weather and terrain did not allow" his forces to construct shore batteries to defend De Castries Bay.¹⁸⁰ On May 24th, however, Zavyoko and Russian commanders including his senior Captain, Ivan Izylmetiev (*Aurora*) received word from the small boat they had dispatched that Cape Lazarev was clear of ice.¹⁸¹ This had already become apparent earlier that day, when Rear-Admiral Nevelskoy appeared in person after an overland journey in order to explain that, based on three years of

¹⁷⁵ ADM 1/5657 26 [December 8th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. "(Russian-language) *Memories of an Old Sailor*" and (German-language) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 67.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 166.

¹⁸⁰ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. "*Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition)*". (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 211-212.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 212.

observations, the Amur's entrance would be clear of ice by early June.¹⁸² By the middle of that month, all of the vessels from Petropavlovsk were safely ensconced past the Amur River's bar, joined by an unexpected vessel known as the *Heda*. This newly-built schooner, named for the Japanese town where it was launched in April, represented the combined efforts of Japanese carpenters and the shipwrecked crew of the *Diana*. Scarcely a day after his frigate sank in January 1855, Vice-Admiral Putyatin set to work building the *Heda* from a nautical journal's description of the Cronstadt commander's yacht *Opyt*.¹⁸³ Far from opposing the Russian project, Japanese officials were eager to assist and learn the art of Western shipbuilding in the process. The three hundred carpenters involved were so successful at later applying their skills to Japanese-built vessels that noted naval historian Mizuno Hironori dubbed them "the fathers of the shipbuilding industry in modern Japan."¹⁸⁴ Although well-crafted, the schooner could not hope to hold all of the *Diana*'s former crew, most of which left Japan on the American merchant vessel *Caroline Foote* and the Bremen brig *Greta*, originally intended to supply American whaling ships. Both the *Heda* and *Caroline Foote* narrowly eluded patrolling Allied vessels and reached Petropavlovsk in May, whereupon they found the port deserted and successfully continued on to the Russian mainland.¹⁸⁵ The Russian sailors hidden on board the *Greta* were not as lucky, however, and their capture in the Sea of Okhotsk by the British steam sloop *Barracouta* was the only large-scale Allied success in the Pacific during the Crimean War's second year.

On August 1st, 1855,¹⁸⁶ morning fog cleared to reveal a British steam warship bearing down on the *Greta*, which hid almost 300 Russian sailors in its hold. British suspicious were immediately aroused by the brig's evasive behavior, and Commander Frederick Stirling dispatched a lieutenant and an armed boat to board and search the German ship, which had hoisted an American flag as a disguise. Lieutenant Robert Gibson, in command of the boarding party, judged the German Captain's cover story that the ship was supplying American whalers as "unsatisfactory," which led the British officer to 'suppose something was wrong.'¹⁸⁷ His suspicious were shortly confirmed after Gibson saw "a number of men laying about on the main

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ McOmie, William. *The Opening of Japan, 1853-1855*. (Kent, UK: Global Oriental, 2006), 361.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Kiseleva, Natalia. [Russian-language]. "In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents." (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 89.

¹⁸⁶ Bernard Whittingham incorrectly gives this date as July 29th, 1855.

¹⁸⁷ ADM 1/5657 S76 [August 1st, 1855] (NA).

deck under the open hatchways” and forced the German captain to muster his crew, discovering the *Diana* fugitives in the process.¹⁸⁸ Baron (and Lieutenant) Nikolay von Schilling, one of Russia’s two most senior officers in the group, felt that “this fairy tale was given little credence as a Chinese member of the (*Greta*’s) crew had, through fear, already given us away.”¹⁸⁹ Although Schilling and the other Russian lieutenant, Alexander Pushkin, “made strong remonstrates against the capture of shipwrecked men,”¹⁹⁰ the younger Stirling felt that he had no alternative except to bring them to his father at Hakodate. Schilling, however, convinced the British commander to instead sail for the abandoned Russian port of Ayan (Aian, Ajan) along the Sea of Okhotsk in order to meet Commodore Elliott and obtain his approval for the Russian prisoners’ release.¹⁹¹ The Commodore, however, was already in a foul mood and had other plans entirely.

After several tense conversations with the English-speaking Schilling, Elliott finally offered to exchange the prisoners only by delivering them to a Russian warship.¹⁹² Schilling seized the opportunity to mock Britain’s inability to locate any Russian warships while carefully offering details that would mislead the British as to how to reach the Amur River.¹⁹³ In response to Schilling’s counter-proposal that the Russians be landed at De Castries Bay, however, the British Commodore began to lose his composure. Elliott initially informed Schilling that this was impossible because De Castries was “not a Russian but a Chinese territory.”¹⁹⁴ The Russian Baron immediately challenged this conclusion, which led to the revealing exchange that follows:

“Schilling: De Castries belongs to the Russian occupiers, and even if it were Chinese, I believe the heavy responsibility that you say that your Admiral (Stirling) will take with our release would be lessened by landing us at a neutral location.

Elliott: No you cannot be landed at De Castries, because this could be taken as recognition by us of a Russian claim to this area.

Schilling: This right has been recognized on the part of England for a long time.

Elliott: England has never given and will never give such a recognition.

Schilling: On what ground then have you fired shots in de Castries at a storehouse and the woods.

Elliott: That means nothing!

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. “(*Russian-language*) *Memories of an Old Sailor*” and (*German-language*) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 63.

¹⁹⁰ Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Cost of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 140.

¹⁹¹ Schilling, Nikolay [Erich Schilling and Peter Girard, Translators]. “(*Russian-language*) *Memories of an Old Sailor*” and (*German-language*) *Seeoffizier des Zaren*. (Originally published in 1892. Cologne Germany: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1971), 64.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Schilling: It may appear so to you, but nevertheless with the bombardment you have proved the coast to be Russian. On neutral territory, you would certainly have not damaged the forest by gunfire.

Elliot (murmurs): The shots were fired accidentally.

Schilling: We are still unfamiliar with the official regulations on English ships, but I can assure you that with us not even a single blind shot can be given in error and that an accidental bombardment is totally unimaginable

Eliot: You stay in captivity!

Schilling: You have the law of the jungle, but I hope you will not refuse to pass on to your Admiral our view that he is far from being a gentleman.

...

Schilling: Do you really think we would not have noticed from the first word where this whole conversation was heading? You obviously reckoned that we would betray the whereabouts of the Russian ships. When that failed, you tried with our help to get knowledge of the fairway to the Amur. No your admiral is certainly not a gentleman, and, had you been, you should have refused to transmit such degrading details.

Elliott: Do not forget that I can tie you up!

Schilling: This you can do of course, but the Admiral is still not yet a gentleman.

Elliott (leaving angrily): You stay in captivity!"¹⁹⁵

Schilling and his countrymen remained prisoners throughout the Crimean War, and were eventually returned to England: they left Portsmouth in time to note the impressive number of British warships assembled for the post-war review at Spithead.¹⁹⁶

Elliot and a reinforced squadron were patrolling the Sea of Okhotsk as the result of a flawed plan that Sir James Stirling hatched on July 2nd, only a few days after the Russian escape from De Castries Bay. Still focused on negotiating with Japanese officials, Stirling dispatched Elliot and a reinforced complement of warships into the Sea of Okhotsk. The British Rear-Admiral envisioned three possible courses for Russian warships: sailing in the Sea of Okhotsk, doubling back to Petropavlovsk; or moving south towards the coasts of Japan and China.¹⁹⁷ Unbeknownst to Stirling, however, there were several immediate and ultimately fatal flaws with his plan. Allied warships had left the approaches to Petropavlovsk for North American waters weeks earlier, while the *Heda* and other Russian vessels that did venture into the Sea of Okhotsk could not be "followed" by Elliot's forces as Stirling had intended due to Allied geographic ignorance.¹⁹⁸ Even more frustrating for British forces in particular, however, was how close they came to the Amur's Mouth by approaching from the north.

In late July, British and French warships sighted the Russian American company's brig *Okhotsk*, named for the sea it so often traversed. The *Okhotsk* had successfully escaped from the deserted fur-trading post of Ayan and was attempting, like so many Russian vessels before it, to

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ ADM 1/5657 S109 [July 2nd, 1855] (NA).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

reach the safety of the Amur's sheltered waters. Within a few miles of its intended destination, however, the *Okhotsk* stalled during a stretch of windless weather and was sighted by British forces searching for a passage to the Amur. The Russian, or more accurately Finnish, German, and Swedish crew abandoned their ship after setting it on fire and attempted to reach the River in their ship's rowboats. The ensuing pursuit by British forces resulted in the unusual spectacle of a small boat chase, which eventually yielded 14 prisoners; many of whom volunteered a considerable amount of intelligence.¹⁹⁹ Royal Engineers Captain Bernard Whittingham, a guest of Commodore Elliot throughout the campaign, thought these prisoners "valuable prizes, in our lamentable state of ignorance, geographical and political."²⁰⁰ British officers believed that the information they obtained was accurate, but a plan of the alleged position of Russian warships outside the Amur's mouth drawn by Captain William Hoste of the *Spartan* was, in reality, completely incorrect.²⁰¹ Russian warships more than 'seemed' to have already entered the Amur by late July:²⁰² by July 28th, Russian warships had already reached Nikolayevsk (Nikolaevsk, etc.) 80 kilometers (50 miles) upriver.²⁰³ They were never pursued.

A month later it was the turn of one of the Russian American Company's territories, rather than merchant vessels, to fall victim to Allied forces. In late August, an Allied force of two frigates arrived off the Kurile Island of Urup (Uruppu).²⁰⁴ The island was especially significant because the February 1855 Treaty of Shimoda had awarded Urup and all the islands to its north to Russia, whereas the Russo-Japanese boundary had previously been in dispute.²⁰⁵ Even in July 1855, though, Rear-Admiral James Stirling confessed to Japanese officials that he was "at a loss to know whether I am to consider the island of Urup as Japanese or Russian."²⁰⁶ Yet Urup and its modest harbor at Tavano indisputably functioned as storage depot for the Russian American

¹⁹⁹ ADM 1/5657 S141 [August 4th, 1855] (NA) and Tronson, John M. *Personal Narrative of a Voyage to Japan, Kamtschatka, Siberia, Tartary, and Various Parts of the Coast of China in HMS Barracouta*. (London, UK: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1859), 137-138.

²⁰⁰ Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 132.

²⁰¹ ADM 1/5657 S141 [August 4th, 1855] (NA).

²⁰² Grainger, John D. *The First Pacific War: Britain and Russia, 1854-1856*. (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2008), 124.

²⁰³ Polevoi, Boris P. [Russian-language]. "Defenders of the Fatherland: The Heroic Defence of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii in 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Letters, and Official Document (Second Edition). (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Dalipzdan, 1989), 215-216.

²⁰⁴ Alternate spellings include Uruppu, Ouroup, Ouroupe, etc. ADM 1/5657 S141 [Multiple Dates] (NA).

²⁰⁵ Russia and Japan still disagree over the legitimacy of the Soviet Union's 1945 occupation of Iturup and the three other southernmost Kurile Islands.

²⁰⁶ ADM 50/278 [July 17th, 1855] (NA).

Company, further legitimizing Stirling's resolution "that if Russian it will be my duty to take it from them."²⁰⁷ The British did learn from Japanese officials that "all the Kuriles north of and including Urup are Russian territory on June 5th,"²⁰⁸ but the British Rear-Admiral was unable to learn what had motivated Japan to concede the island to Russia. Regardless, Stirling refused to let ambiguity prevent him from pressing ahead. After a confusing exchange with Hakodate Inspector Chikaraishi Katsunosuke, the British commander simply concluded, according to Japanese records, that:

"Urup, which used to be yours, for some reason has sadly become both Russia's territory and your loss. The reason wh the took over these territories, as well as Turkey, and why they initiated this war, is probably because they were looking for good ports."²⁰⁹

Accordingly, Allied detachments from the frigates *Pique* and *La Sybille* landed to apprehend Urup's three Russian residents, only to discover that the latter had already departed in a small boat.²¹⁰

In spite of their disappointment at another Russian escape, Captains Frederick Nicolson and Simonet de Maisonneuve went ahead with a strange ceremony. Amidst much fanfare, including ceremonial flag-raising, cannon salutes, and cheers, these British and French officers jointly annexed the island, which Maisonneuve suggested christening "*L'Isle de L'Alliance*."²¹¹ After installing Alcausti Artemi (Aleousti Artemi), a "native of the Island...chosen by his countymen" as Provisional Governor and "having satisfied (themselves) that there was nothing more in the neighbourhood," the Allies sailed back to Japan.²¹² The only official record of their visit to remain on Urup was an inscription left on the principal residence in Tavano, the text of which indicated that the *Pique* and *La Sibylle* had "taken possession of this island."²¹³ Urup's

²⁰⁷ *Ibid* and [Japanese-language]. *Dai Nihon Komonjo - Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* (Vol. 12). "Public Records/Old Documents of Japan relating to Foreign Affairs/Relations during the late Tokugawa Shogunate." (Tokyo: Shiryō Hensanjo, Multiple Dates), 10-11.

²⁰⁸ [Japanese-language]. *Dai Nihon Komonjo - Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* (Vol. 12). "Public Records/Old Documents of Japan relating to Foreign Affairs/Relations during the late Tokugawa Shogunate." (Tokyo: Shiryō Hensanjo, Multiple Dates), 14-15.

²⁰⁹ [Japanese-language]. *Dai Nihon Komonjo - Bakumatsu Gaikoku Kankei Monjo* (Vol. 11). "Public Records/Old Documents of Japan relating to Foreign Affairs/Relations during the late Tokugawa Shogunate." (Tokyo: Shiryō Hensanjo, Multiple Dates): transcript of July 13th, 1855 conversation between Katsunosuke and Stirling.

²¹⁰ ADM 1/5657 S141 [Multiple Dates] (NA). In order to avoid confusion between the French frigate "Sybille" and a similarly-sized British warship with the same name, the prefix "La" denotes the French warship.

²¹¹ ADM 1/5657 S141 [September 2nd, 1855] (NA). See also: Stone, Ian R. "The Annexation of Urup, 1855." *Polar Record*, Vol. 28, No. 164 (1992), 61 and Mormanne, Thierry. "La Prise de Possession de l'île d'Urup par la Flotte Anglo- Française en 1855." *Cipango: Cahiers d'études Japonaises*. No. 11 (2004), 225.

²¹² *Ibid*.

²¹³ BB4 735 42 [September 2nd, 1855] (SHD).

tenure as a joint Anglo-French colony lasted only a few months, as Article IV of the Treaty of Paris mandated the return of any Russian territory seized during the Crimean conflict. Instead of comprising “one of the few successes off the coast of Japan for France and England,”²¹⁴ the annexation was a source of annoyance for governments at home. The French Government, for example, had to deal with the Russian American Company’s protest that the island should have been covered by its neutrality agreement with the British Government and Hudson’s Bay Company, while the ‘official’ British Admiralty reaction consisted of a series of disapproving exclamation points: “!!!”²¹⁵

Sir James Stirling, meanwhile, faced more serious problems than a lack of enthusiasm for his initiative to annex Urup. The Rear-Admiral was ultimately correct in his anticipation that the Japanese would eventually relax the rigid restrictions codified in their 1854 agreement with his squadron,²¹⁶ but this did little to satisfy commercially-inclined critics.²¹⁷ Sir Charles Wood, though, succeeded in shielding his commander’s conduct by opining in Parliament that he did “not think it desirable- at any rate” to allow critics to inspect the commanders dispatches “relative to the proceedings of Her Majesty’s fleet in the China Seas.”²¹⁸ The British Foreign Office also came to Stirling’s defense by objecting to the Board of Trade’s “flippant” observation that the Anglo-Japanese convention had “very little to do with trade.”²¹⁹ Publications representing the British mercantile community, on the other hand, freely expressed their opinion that the Rear-Admiral had achieved “nothing creditable to the arms of his country, and something rather discreditable to his own diplomacy.”²²⁰ Yet even the limited product of Stirling’s improvised diplomacy was a vast improvement over the other miserably humiliating incidents that characterized the Allies’ Crimean War efforts in the Pacific. Although Stirling’s November 1855 “Memoir on the Maritime Policy of England in the Eastern Seas” focused on the value of the Amur River Valley and Northern China in addition to Japan,²²¹ the Crimean War proved that

²¹⁴ Mormanne, Thierry. “La Prise de Possession de l’île d’Urup par la Flotte Anglo- Française en 1855.” *Cipango: Cahiers d’études Japonaises*. No. 11 (2004), 209.

²¹⁵ BB4 733 [October 5th, 185-] (SHD) and ADM 1/5657 S141 [October 1st, 1855] (NA).

²¹⁶ See, for example: ADM 1/5657 S109 [May 18th, 1855] (NA).

²¹⁷ See, for example: Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, December 21st, 1855, *Hansard’s* Vol. 138, CC834.

²¹⁸ Great Britain. House of Commons Debate, February 14th, 1856, *Hansard’s* Vol. 140, CC718.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Beasley, William G. *Great Britain and the Opening of Japan, 1834-1858*. (London, UK: Luzac, 1951. Re-issued in paperback by Routledge, 1995), 145.

²²¹ Statham-Drew, Pamela. James Stirling: *Admiral and Founding Governor of Western Australia*. (Crawley, Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 2003), 500-501.

Russian forces under Governor-General Muravyov rather than British warships had the means to effectively act on their commanders' larger designs for Northeastern Asia.

Shortly after he realized that Allied warships would not push through to attack the Amur River, Royal Engineers Captain Bernard Whittingham came to a startling realization. Gestures and drawings on beachfront sand allowed indigenous inhabitants to express how they were already dividing the Amur River between "Lorchas" (Russians) and "Manchus" (Chinese).²²² These crude visuals, in fact, were simply a graphic representation of Anglo-French failures in the Pacific during the Crimean War. Russia willingly abandoned any attempt to defend Petropavlovsk and settlements associated with the Russian American Company's fur trading activities, but only to focus on the Amur and its immense surrounding territories. Britain and France's inability to even locate the Amur River's mouth, coupled with the incidents at Petropavlovsk and De Castries Bay in 1854 and 1855, respectively, were thus far more significant than the scale of actual fighting in the region initially suggests. The first year of the Crimean conflict finally gave Russian expansionists their long-awaited, pressing justification for expansion at Chinese expense while the 1855 campaign proved that Britain and France were unable to prevent the Russian Empire from consolidating its hold over a vast swath of Northeastern Asia. When Russian expansion in the Region was finally checked a half century later, it was by Japan rather than Britain, France, or the 1856 Treaty of Paris that ended what had become more than a 'Crimean' War.

²²² Whittingham, Bernard. *Notes on the Late Expedition against the Russian Settlements in Eastern Siberia*. (London, UK: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1856), 110.

Conclusion

On January 1st, 1856, Czar Alexander II summoned his most influential advisors to the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg for an early-morning meeting. At issue was a single question: should the Russian Empire accept an Austrian-mediated peace proposal or continue fighting an expanding Allied coalition? The arguments offered in response to Austria's proposal were complex. Regardless of whether they emphasized military, economic, diplomatic, or territorial concerns, however, all those present unambiguously concluded that Russia's position was fast becoming untenable.¹ In emphasizing that their Government should seek lenient peace terms while it still could, senior ministers and diplomats did not even mention the September, 1855 fall of Sebastopol.² Instead, their focus on Russia's economic exhaustion and mounting diplomatic isolation, coupled with potential defection of Poland and Finland, proves that even contemporary Russian decision-makers saw the struggle as more than a 'Crimean' War. So did Lord Palmerston; and the Czarist Empire was especially fortunate that it decided to obtain peace only a day after an Allied Committee met in Paris to discuss how to proceed in 1856. Although the Paris Meeting considered a variety of theatres including the Black Sea, the British Prime Minister had already determined months earlier that

“we can make our Plan of Campaign as well without the Black Sea Leaders as with them. The outline is clear. We must send Fleets & Troops to the Baltic. Take Cronstadt & Helsingfors and Finland & threaten Petersburg.”³

Napoleon III, meanwhile, considered “another campaign in the Crimea unworthy even of consideration” as, in the words of Britain's ambassador to Paris, “his whole thoughts (were) now turned towards the North.”⁴

Diplomatic histories are an especially strong subset of Crimean War historiography, and there are no shortage of accounts concerning why Napoleon III eagerly embraced Austrian

¹ See, for example: Meyendorff, Peter von and Otto Hoetzsc (Ed.). *Peter von Meyendorff, ein Russischer Diplomat an den Höfen von Berlin und Wien (Volume III)*. Baumgart, Winfried [Ann Pottinger Saab, Translator]. *The Peace of Paris 1856*. (Santa Barbara, California and Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1981), 68-72; and Mosse, W. E. “How Russia Made Peace September 1855 to April 1856.” *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1955), 307-312.

² *Ibid.*

³ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs (AGKK): Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 147, Pg. 297.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 236, Pg. 445.

mediation and why Alexander II and his cabinet were reluctantly willing to accept it.⁵ It is extremely important to note, though, that in the eyes of contemporary observers, Russia's capitulation was intimately related to the broad struggle described in this study rather than an isolated siege in southern Ukraine. According to one "top secret" Russian report from 1854, "Sustaining a defeat on the Bay of Finland's shores and by the Neva (River) estuary would be disastrous for Russia, more so than losing Sevastopol and the Crimea."⁶ This perspective was shared by Lord Palmerston, who believed that Russia would accept Austria's terms because it had "been every where worsted in the war," adding:

"Her Finances are greatly embarrassed, Her munitions of war much exhausted, & Parts of her Territory occupied by her Enemies while her Population has been most inconveniently drained to fill up the gaps in her army. Such is her present Condition, and what is her future Prospect? She expects that next year Cronstadt will be destroyed and Petersburg menaced & possible Finland Invaded."⁷

The prospect of Allied campaigns in distant regions such as the Caucasus remained ephemeral even in 1856, but "Grand preparations" for the Baltic were already well underway in British dockyards.⁸ In the aftermath of a successful Allied bombardment of Sweaborg in August 1855, Sir Charles Wood "was building flotilla craft as fast as he could."⁹ By the early months of 1856, Britain's private shipyards were launching flotilla craft by the dozen while the Royal Dockyards applied the finishing touches to these vessels but remained focused on constructing larger warships. British industrial capacity allowed contractors and subcontractors to produce large numbers of steam engines, but timber for hundreds of wooden hulls was problematic. The temporary expedient of employing unseasoned green timber sufficed for the projected Baltic campaign of 1856, but Crimean War-era gunboats had to be scrapped within a decade.¹⁰ In order to meet a self-imposed deadline of March 1st 1856, Surveyor of the Navy Baldwin Wake Walker halted construction of all vessels not intended for the Baltic.¹¹ Consequently, Britain alone could plan to send 300 gunboats and mortar vessels to assault Cronstadt in mid-1856, compared to the

⁵ See, for example: Footnote One of this chapter and the primary documents in Senner, Martin (Ed.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Französische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 3 [3. März 1855 bis 19. Mai 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001).

⁶ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. "*Crimean War (Volume II)*." (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 1, Pages 4-5.

⁷ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 193, Pg. 371.

⁸ Lambert, Andrew. "Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856." (London, UK: King's College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 291.

⁹ *Ibid*, 278.

¹⁰ Osborn, G.A. "the Crimean Gunboats, Part II." *Mariner's Mirror*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1965). Pgs. 213-215.

¹¹ ADM 2/1682 434 [February 19th, 1856] (NA).

32 British and 11 French flotilla craft available for the bombardment of Sweaborg more than seven months earlier.¹² As two visiting French naval engineers reported to their government, the British effort was “prodigious.”¹³

While British dockyards scrambled to complete work on the Baltic assault force and Russian ministers advised their sovereign to immediately seek peace, an Allied Council of War met in Paris. With Napoleon III presiding, this assembly of senior Allied politicians and military commanders met to consider 19 war-related questions divided into three categories: attacking “Russia in the Crimean; in the Baltic; and in Bessarabia or on the Danube with Austria.”¹⁴ Accordingly, Rear-Admirals Pénaud and Dundas joined French generals Niel and Canrobert in discussing six questions:

- “1. How to burn Cronstadt.
2. How to take St. Petersburg
3. The time necessary and the number of vessels required to transport to Finland 60,000 men...
4. Can Riga be taken?
5. Can Revel be taken?
6. Can Sweaborg be taken?”¹⁵

The French engineer Adolphe Niel emphasized that “regular” sieges were necessary to reduce Riga and Revel, while Sweaborg could only be approached by a fleet after a naval bombardment had ruined the islands’ fortifications.¹⁶ General François Canrobert’s proposal for an elaborate ground assault on St. Petersburg supported by Swedish troops “was considered to be impracticable,” but “the general conclusion” was that “success might be hoped for by means of a flotilla decidedly superior to that of the enemy.”¹⁷ Regardless of this conclusion, however, the Committee’s verdict meant very little, as the British Government had been preparing to attack Cronstadt for months prior to the Paris meeting.¹⁸ Before these plans could be implemented, though, Russia decided to accept an Austrian-mediated peace proposal and was eagerly joined by

¹² Lambert, Andrew D. “Under the heel of Britannia, the Bombardment of Sweaborg August 8-10 1855” in Peter Hore (Ed.). *Seapower Ashore: 200 Years of Royal Navy Operations on Land*. (London, UK: Chatham, 2001), 126.

¹³ FO 519/172 [November 16th, 1855] (NA).

¹⁴ Senner, Martin (Ed.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Französische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 3 [3. März 1855 bis 19. Mai 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2001).

¹⁵ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 342, Pg. 600.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 599.

¹⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸ For further details, see: Lambert, Andrew. “Great Britain, the Baltic, and The Russian War: 1854-1856.” (London, UK: King’s College London PhD Dissertation, 1983), 286 and Baumgart, Winfried [Ann Pottinger Saab, Translator]. *The Peace of Paris 1856*. (Santa Barbara, California and Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1981), 14.

Napoleon III. This left Britain and smaller powers including Sweden-Norway to reluctantly follow suit, and negotiations began in late February. The Crimean War formally ended on March 30th, 1856.

In a post-war conversation, Bartholomew Sullivan told London-based attaché Count Nikolay Pavlovich Ignatyev that “the fear of [Britain] succeeding at Cronstadt had much to do with [Russia] consenting to make peace.”¹⁹ Instead of disputing the British commander’s assertions, Ignatyev “allowed that it might have influenced their decision to accept the terms” before revealing that he had been instructed to ask Sullivan’s advice on how to replace navigational markers because the British surveyor “knew more about the subject than the Russians themselves!”²⁰ Ironically, in fact, the most adamant skeptic of the ‘Great Armament’ was Rear-Admiral Dundas, which frustrated Sullivan and, more importantly, by then Prime Minister Palmerston to no end. Even more aggravating for the British public, however, was the manner in which the Crimean War ended. As Queen Victoria noted in her journal on March 11th, 1856: “I own that peace rather sticks in my throat, and so it does in that of the *whole* nation.”²¹ In short, the terms finalized at Paris were as anticlimactic to Britain as they were gratifying to Napoleon III and humiliating for Russia.

The 1856 Treaty of Paris was based on four points, supplemented by a separate convention concerning the Aland Islands and maritime law. In stark contrast to Vienna in 1815 and Versailles in 1919,²² no sweeping territorial redistributions or regime changes were involved in the Crimean War’s end. Instead, Russia ceded modest portions of Bessarabia to the Principality of Moldavia, agreed to demilitarize the Black Sea, and accepted a multinational guarantee ensuring the free commercial navigation of the Danube River. Other powers joined the Crimean War’s belligerents in further guaranteeing the Ottoman Empire’s integrity and requiring Sultan Abdülmecid I to join them to protect his realm’s Christians. Napoleon III and Palmerston, meanwhile, dropped their pet projects for tearing away Poland and the Southern Caucasus from the Russian Empire. This left their plenipotentiaries to focus on technicalities and participate in a “full range of social engagements- banquets, dinners, concerts, balls and receptions.”²³ Taken at

¹⁹ Sullivan, Bartholomew James and Henry Norton Sullivan (Ed.). *Life and Letters of the late Admiral Bartholomew James Sullivan, K.C.B., 1810-1890*. (London, UK: John Murray, 1896), 367.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 467.

²² And related Post-World War One agreements such as the Treaties of Trianon and St. Germain-en-Laye.

²³ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 417.

face value, this hardly seemed a fitting end to a conflict that had cost millions of money and hundreds of thousands of lives, especially after Russia abrogated most of the terms within two decades.

Ironically, the most enduring terms agreed upon in 1856 were not found in the Treaty of Paris, but rather in the April 16th “Paris Declaration Respecting Maritime Law.” This agreement stemmed from three problems Britain and France faced at sea during the Crimean War. The first involved a fundamental difference in both countries’ legal approach to maritime conflict. To quote the *British Yearbook of International Law* “the British captured enemy goods on a neutral ship but released neutral goods on an enemy ships, while the French...” reversed the process.²⁴ “In other words, for the French the test was the flag, for the British [the test was] the nationality of the goods” in question.²⁵ A common policy was absolutely necessary as Anglo-French naval forces acted in concert, and was achieved through the decision to, in the words of Queen Victoria and Napoleon III, “waive a part of the belligerent rights” that each country claimed in favor of a common policy.²⁶ The second and third problems, however, were more difficult to solve. The first involved the British and French desire to “lessen, as much as possible, the disastrous consequence to commerce resulting from a state of warfare” by renouncing the time-honored practice of issuing letters of marque to privateers.²⁷ Although Queen Victoria could justifiably argue that “privateering is a kind of Piracy which disgraces our Civilisation,”²⁸ the most important motivating factor is readily apparent in the correspondence examined in this work’s preceding chapters. These documents repeatedly emphasize that, by the 1850s, Britain and France had worldwide maritime commercial interests that could fall victim to Russian privateers. Lastly but no less importantly, Sir James Graham, Théodore Ducos, and their respective political superiors were adamant that Allied commercial warfare efforts not antagonize key neutral powers, especially the United States and Sweden-Norway. In conjunction with Russia’s grudging decision not to outfit privateers, Britain and France succeeded in satisfactorily resolving each of these three issues. Critics, though, charged that resulting blockade efforts were robbed of their

²⁴ Malkin, H.W. “The Inner History of the Declaration of Paris.” *British Yearbook of International Law*. Vol. 8 (1927), 13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

efficacy to the point that the Crimean conflict had been “a military war and a commercial peace.”²⁹

The issue at stake in Paris relating to the legality of commercial warfare practices was whether Britain and France’s temporary compromise solutions should be formalized and permanently adopted. French Foreign Minister Alexandre Walewski and Napoleon III overruled their Navy Ministry’s objections and suggested to British representatives that the Treaty of Paris be accompanied by a declaration on maritime law.³⁰ British politicians gave the matter more thought, but most ultimately concurred with Lord Clarendon’s assessment that:

“It is quite clear that we can never again re-establish our ancient doctrine respecting neutrals, and that we must in any future war adhere to the exception to our rule which we admitted at the beginning of the present war, under pain of having all mankind against us. I am, therefore, for making a merit of necessity...”³¹

Once it became clear that the American Government would reject the agreement by reserving the right to outfit privateers, however, British concerns were assuaged by a provision that the Declaration would “not and shall not be binding” in cases involving Powers that had not acceded to its terms.³² With the exception of isolated holdouts including the United States and Spain, almost all European states and a number of South American ones had accepted the Declaration by 1857. Henceforth, the agreement added four “fixed principles” to international law: including the abolition of privateering; a neutral flag covering enemy goods except contraband; vice-versa; and the understanding that “blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective(ly)” maintained by a sufficient force.”³³ Clarified and expanded through subsequent conventions in Geneva and the Hague, these principles remain enshrined in international maritime law.

The other 1856 compromise to have a remarkably durable impact on international law was a convention among Russia, Britain, and France that required Russia to demilitarize the Aland Islands. This demilitarization represented the sole remnant of Swedish-Norwegian King Oscar I’s once lofty goals for the Paris Conference, which initially included limiting Russian naval forces in the Baltic and White Sea, prohibiting Russian fortifications northwest of

²⁹ Stockton, Charles H. “The Declaration of Paris.” *The American Journal of International Law*. Vol. 14, No. 3 (1920), 361.

³⁰ Hamilton, Charles Iain. “Anglo-French Seapower and the Declaration of Paris.” *The International History Review*. Vol. 4, No. 2 (1982), 180.

³¹ Malkin, H.W. “The Inner History of the Declaration of Paris.” *British Yearbook of International Law*. Vol. 8 (1927), 26.

³² “The Declaration of Paris” in *Conventions and declarations between the Powers Concerning War, Arbitration, and Neutrality*. (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Mijhoff, 1915).

³³ *Ibid.*

Sweaborg, and restoring the Åland Islands to Sweden.³⁴ Oscar and his head delegate, Baron Ludwig Manderström, soon learned that Sweden-Norway's belated acceptance of Allied diplomatic overtures largely negated their country's claims. Britain was interested in demilitarizing the Åland Islands for its own strategic purposes, but Napoleon III and Walewski were intent on mending relations with Russia and were consequently unwilling to force the issue. Britain instead turned to Austria and the expedient of concluding a separate convention addressing the Åland Islands' demilitarization that could be annexed to the main Treaty of Paris in Article 33.³⁵ Russia did not even consider repudiating the Article's terms until the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian Union in 1905, and the pre-World War One efforts of Czarist Foreign Minister Alexander Isvolsky failed to alter the island group's post-1856 status. Exigent circumstances during the First World War saw a brief remilitarization, but a postwar legal decision by a nascent League of Nations ensured that the Islands would remain an officially demilitarized province of Finland, albeit with special autonomous status.

The Crimean War's influence on broader post-1856 events in European History is examined in detail by works such as diplomatic historian A.J.P. Taylor's *The Struggle for Mastery in Modern Europe: 1848-1918*,³⁶ not to mention the conclusion of Orlando Figes' more recent monograph on the conflict.³⁷ These and other accounts of the Crimean conflict's impact issue a simple challenge to the present work. It is as follows: given that a defeat of Russia in any form temporarily robbed that Empire of its ability to influence European events, why did the conflict's more distant theatres matter? More specifically, why should historiography examine events in the Baltic, White Sea, or Pacific when any defeat coupled with the strains of fighting industrialized powers alone would have led to similar diplomatic arrangements? The immediate temptation is to emphasize the endurance of agreements that demilitarized the Åland Islands and abolished privateering. One could also examine developments in the history of technology and medicine, including the development of armored warships and French advances in naval hygiene. Ultimately, though, the preceding study of the Crimean War's more distant theatres reveals that the conflict had global consequences of equal significance to European ones such as the

³⁴ Barros, James. *The Åland Islands Question: Its Settlement by the League of Nations*. (New Haven, Connecticut and London, UK: Yale University Press, 1968), 7.

³⁵ Ibid, 11. See also: Hübner, Alexander von. *Neuf Ans de Souvenirs d'un Ambassadeur d'Autriche à Paris sous Le Second Empire, 1851-1859 (Volume I)*. (Paris, France: Plon-Nourrit, 1904), 405-410.

³⁶ Taylor, A.J.P. *The Struggle for Mastery in Modern Europe: 1848-1918*. (Oxford, UK and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).

³⁷ Figes, Orlando. *The Crimean War: A History*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010).

unification of Italy or the abolition of serfdom. The conflict's Pacific Theatre alone, for instance, allowed Russia to expand in East Asia at China's expense while deliberately leaving possessions in North America to stagnate in the face of their inevitable sale or seizure. Japan, meanwhile, was abruptly confronted with more than an American mission, while Britain and France demonstrated the considerable value they placed on protecting their economic interests in China and South America. Yet in order to arrive at these conclusions, it is necessary to look far beyond not only the Treaty of Paris but also the Black Sea and its environs and consider the conflict's other naval theaters.

A formidable body of historiography demonstrates beyond any possible doubt that the 1854-1856 conflict between the Russian Empire and a growing Allied coalition was important in both European and World History. Rather than challenge this broad and irrefutable conclusion, the present study seeks to not only outline historical events in the Baltic, White Sea, and Pacific between 1854 and 1856, but also to connect them with significant themes of enduring value. Consider, for example, the White Sea, to which the Allies dispatched the smallest naval forces. The specific details of Britain and France's northernmost naval blockade interested few key decision-makers in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg, but the political, legal, and moral challenges inherent in effectively coordinating and implementing blockade policy were obviously a different story. Similarly, Finmark was a small and obscure region of Northern Norway that had to wait until the Crimean War for its transformation by Palmerston and others into a key diplomatic issue that attracted a previously-neutral Sweden-Norway to the Allied cause. The impact of developments in the Baltic was even more apparent. Russian delegate Philipp von Brunnow, for instance, informed Lord Clarendon that he "was perfectly aware of the feeling which existed in England, and that John Bull would not be satisfied without burning Cronstadt" before asking how this could be "prevented."³⁸ By their own admission, when senior Russian decision-makers such as Nesselrode and Kiselev urged Czar Alexander II to end the conflict before it tore apart his Empire, they looked far beyond the Crimean Peninsula or portions of Southern Bessarabia (Bujak, etc.). Instead of Sevastopol's fall, they saw their Baltic provinces,

³⁸ Baumgart, Winfried and Martin Senner (Eds.). *Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs* (AGKK): *Englische Akten zur Geschichte des Krimkriegs*, Band 4 [10. September 1855 bis 23. Juli 1856] (Munich, Germany: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), No. 445, Pg. 771.

Finland, Poland, and even St. Petersburg itself threatened by a growing coalition of enemies.³⁹ In the eyes of the Russian military:

“All the computations demonstrate that even using the enormous Russian strength, there is no chance to safely protect the shores of both seas against the decisive actions of both maritime powers, and at the same time have two armies strong enough to fight against the Western neighbors (Austria and Prussia) at the land borders.”⁴⁰

As Count Dmitry Bludov argued by quoting the renowned 18th century French Foreign Minister the Duke of Choiseul: “because we do not know how to make war; let us make peace.”⁴¹

The peace that the Russia made in Paris shattered its image as a first-rate power and wholly discredited institutions such as serfdom. Yet Alexander II elected to end the Crimean conflict before it could destroy Russia’s capacity for recovery and expansion. Instead of coming at the expense of Sweden, Poland, and the Ottomans as it had in the past, Russia’s late-19th century territorial gains were located in Asia. The ‘Great Game’ between Russia and Britain for power and influence in Central Asia has already been addressed in detail by other historical works:⁴² the present study instead highlights the Crimean War’s impact on Russia’s expansion in East Asia and the Northern Pacific. Far from attempting to “round out” its position in Alaska,⁴³ the Russian Government instead viewed these possessions as a strategic and economic liability and looked to jettison them as efficiently as possible.⁴⁴ This culminated in the 1867 sale of Alaska to the United States, and was accompanied by a shift in focus from the Kamchatka Peninsula to newly-acquired territories along the Amur. As Grand Duke Konstantin Nikolaevich wrote Governor-General Muravyov at the end of 1854, however, “the Siberian stronghold where all the fleet can find shelter and which we can defend is Amur, not Kamchatka.”⁴⁵ The Crimean War alone did not complete the rapid process of Russian Expansion in East Asia, but was the

³⁹ See, for example, the first page of this chapter.

⁴⁰ Tarle, Yevgeny Viktorovich. [Russian-language]. “*Crimean War (Volume II)*.” (Moscow and Leningrad/St. Petersburg: Izdatel’svo Akademii Nauk, 1950), Chapter 16, Section 1, Page 5.

⁴¹ Baumgart, Winfried [Ann Pottinger Saab, Translator]. *The Peace of Paris 1856*. (Santa Barbara, California and Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1981), 70; and Mosse, W. E. “How Russia Made Peace September 1855 to April 1856.” *Cambridge Historical Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (1955), 312.

⁴² See, for example: Meyer, Karl and Shareen Blair Brysac. *Tournament of Shadows: the Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia*. (Berkeley, California: Counterpoint, 1999) and Hopkirk, Peter. *The Great Game: the Struggle for Empire in Central Asia*. (London, UK: John Murray, 2006).

⁴³ Baumgart, Winfried [Ann Pottinger Saab, Translator]. *The Peace of Paris 1856*. (Santa Barbara, California and Oxford, UK: ABC-CLIO, 1981), 200.

⁴⁴ See, for example: Bolkhovitinov, Nikolai N. “The Sale of Alaska in the Context of Russo-American Relations in the 19th Century” in Ragsdale, Hugh and Valerii Ponomarev (Eds.). *Imperial Russian Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press and the Woodrow Wilson Center, 1993).

⁴⁵ Kiseleva, Natalia “*In the Forefront of Memory: About the Siege of Petropavlovsk of 1854: Collection of Memoirs, Articles, Correspondence, and Official Documents*.” (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii: Kamchatpress, 2010), 32.

catalyst for its effective beginning and integral to the Sino-Russian agreements of the late 1850s, which remained contested into the 20th and 21st centuries.⁴⁶ It is thus fitting that one has to look over 7,000 kilometers (4,400 miles) from Sevastopol and the Crimean Peninsula in order to locate one of the conflict's most significant and geopolitical consequences.

⁴⁶ See, for example: Fravel, M. Taylor. *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008). For an overview of Sino-Russian relations over a longer term, see: Quested, Rosemary K. *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*. (London, UK: Routledge, 1984).

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