

Pursuing National Interests Through Coalitions with Adversaries

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

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Over the last few years the threats facing the United States have adapted into two categories. Nation states like Russia and China aim to contest the United States' influence in their regions and further their own interests. Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) are proving to be broad threats that are operating throughout the world and require multinational collaboration to defeat them. While these may seem like novel circumstances facing the United States, the combination of a VEO threatening multiple nations requiring them to work together is not new. In 1900 eight nations formed a temporary alliance in Northern China to secure their besieged populations living abroad.

This monograph proposes that in eras of competition, coalitions formed with adversaries offer nations the ability to both further their own interests and counter their rivals. Motivated by common elements of fear, honor and interests both Japan and Russia joined a coalition to defeat their common foes: the Boxer Rebellion and the Qing Dynasty. While this coalition bound the groups together and strengthened their ability to achieve mutual goals, it also enabled parties to both pursue unique national interests and check rivals' ambitions. This is seen most in the operational art of the Japanese and Russian militaries. Their operational reach, lines of operations and effort, and end states were all enabled by the formation of the coalition.

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Acknowledgements

I initially did not know what I wanted to write about for my monograph. After much debating, I decided to investigate topics that I found peculiar or pondered why they are the way they are. One such topic was the US-Russian collaboration in Syria from 2015-2018. How did it come to be that two adversarial nations decide to cooperate with one another? What did they agree on? What did they disagree on? How did cooperating together in Syria enable each of the nations to pursue their own interests? The School of Advanced Military Studies has given me a deeper appreciation in how history can be a guide into understanding the current environment and help generate options for the future. As John Lewis Gaddis so succinctly put it, historians “interpret the past for the purposes of the present with a view of managing the future...” Thus, my ponderings about the strategic and operational environment of Syria in 2018 led me to China in 1900; a nation and culture that has been both a personal and professional interest for several years.

I would like to thank my monograph director, Dr. Amanda Nagel, for her multiple reviews of my working documents and helping me become both a better writer and communicator. Also, I would like to thank my wife, Katy, for her support and understanding as I squirrelled myself away for hours on end working on this project. Thank you for allowing me the time to gain a deeper understanding of my profession and for reading far more military-related papers than ever expected.

Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
FM	Field Manual

Illustrations

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Introduction

Two major trends dominated the decade prior to 1900 in China. First, foreign activity was on the rise. Whether it was missionaries looking to spread religion, businesses seeking to establish markets, or governments attempting to establish spheres of imperial influence, everyone sought involvement in China. During this period of imperialism, “domestic prosperity and national security depended on the possession of far-flung colonies or spheres of influence.”¹ Viewing a world consisting of ever-diminishing shares of wealth, the great imperial powers competed to ensure that they would control the dominant portions of the remaining parts of the world. This competition often bred mistrust in a realpolitik environment. While foreign influence and competition rose, the Qing Dynasty’s domestic influence declined. Due to increased corruption, ever expanding foreign influence in China, and natural disasters,² many Chinese people felt that their government was failing and that they were losing the mandate of heaven.³ These two trends created the perfect storm of conditions, which led to a twenty-four month uprising by the Boxer Rebellion, the subsequent invasion of a coalition of European, Russian, and Japanese militaries, and ultimately one further wound to the Qing Dynasty’s imperial rule over China.

To understand how these events occurred, one must first understand the environment in China. By 1900, various nations established spheres of influence in China (Figure 1). In the north,

¹ S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22.

² W.A.P. Martin, *The Siege in Peking: China Against the World* (New York: The Caxton Press, 1900), 13-68.

³ According to Confucian order, the Chinese emperor held “spiritual as well as the secular claims of social order” as the Son of Heaven. He was the “linchpin of the ‘Great Harmony’.” Should the emperor rule poorly, the world would fall into chaos and the dynasty would lose the “Mandate of Heaven” to govern. Rebellions would break out and a new dynasty would rise to rebalance the world. For more information on the mandate of heaven, see Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 15-16.



Figure 1. Foreign Concessions and Spheres of Influence in China, 1900. Robert Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition, Joint Coalition Warfare in China, Summer 1900* (Laurel, MD: John Hopkins University, n.d.), 6, accessed September 7, 2018, www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/China%20ReliefSm.pdf.

Russia invested heavily in Manchuria and outer Mongolia to pursue its strategic objectives. In central China, both Britain and Germany looked to extend their reach into the country to exploit markets. Finally, in the south, France and Japan looked to extend their empires and international prestige occupying territory rich in resources. Each of these nations had governmental legations⁴

⁴ Initially established following the conclusion of the Opium War in 1860, governmental legations were similar to embassies but lower in stature. The European tradition of diplomatic reciprocity insisted that countries exchange similar levels of diplomatic representation. However, China still considered themselves to be the Middle Kingdom, and all other nations either vassals or barbarians. Thus American, Japanese, and European nations did not establish embassies with ambassadors, but rather lower tier legations headed by ministers. For more information on legations and diplomacy in 1900's China see Debra J. Allen, *Historical Dictionary of U.S. Diplomacy From the Revolution to Secession* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012), 84; Kissinger, *On China*, 19-20.

located inside Beijing right next to the emperor's seat of power in the Forbidden Palace. These legations provided a diplomatic representative, headed by a minister, to represent their home countries. Each nation also had military troops guarding their legations, securing economic interests in various parts of the country, and afloat in navies located off the coast.

As foreign nations looked to extend their influence within China, Empress Dowager Cixi, ruling from the Forbidden Palace in Beijing, attempted to maintain Chinese authority through several mechanisms. To manage the Qing Dynasty's foreign affairs, the Zongli Yamen⁵ acted as the liaison between the empress and the foreign legations. While China's seat of power was in Beijing, there was a network of subordinate governments throughout each of the provinces, cities, and towns. Powerful viceroys and warlords who swore allegiance to the empress were imbued with power in the autocratic dynasty and thus allowed to rule over sections of the country. Imperial troops served at the behest of Empress Cixi, but many warlords also raised troops at the provincial level. The Chinese military, though it had made some technological, organizational, and professional reforms following the Sino-Japanese War,⁶ was still by no means a peer to its European counterparts. These were the organizations that were supposed to maintain law and order in China.

Growing enmity over the balance of local power, encroachment of Christianity, and perceived injustices led to the Boxer movement.⁷ This group, which was originally a social

⁵ The Zongli Yamen (总理衙门) was established in January of 1861. Zongli Yamen is an abbreviation of the official title of the organization Zongli Geguo Shiwu Yamen (总理各国事务衙门) or The Office in Charge of Affairs for all Nations. As foreign presence in China increased following the 1840's Opium War, the Qing government realized they needed an organization that could deal with foreigners who wanted to conduct business and cultural exchanges rather than just pay tribute to the Central Kingdom. For more information on the Zongli Yamen see Jinsheng Li, "Zongli geguo shiwu yamen (1861-1901)" National University of Singapore, accessed January 19, 2019, https://libportal.nus.edu.sg/media/lib_ch/databank-zongli_geguo_shiwu_yamen.pdf.

⁶ Douglas Reynolds, *China, 1898-1912: The Xinzheng Revolution and Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1993), 34-38.

⁷ Officially called the Yihetuan Yundong (义和团运动) or Fists of Righteous Harmony Movement. The group would practice Taiqi, a Chinese form of martial art, to imbue them with strength and protection from their enemies. Witnessing these sparring actions, the foreign community simplified their

organization, became politicized and militant. The Boxers targeted everything western, terrorized and executed local missionaries, destroyed railroads and telegraphs, and sought to remove the “foreign devils” from China. In the spring of 1900, the Boxer Rebellion moved from a local movement in Shandong to a regional one that was swarming throughout northern China.⁸ Over 70,000 Boxers operated almost uncontested within a 330 mile radius of Beijing.⁹ The growing resentment over foreign intrusions, the effects of the severe drought and food shortages, and inaction by the Qing government led to attacks on missionaries and railway workers.¹⁰ By the middle of May, Boxers destroyed three villages and killed dozens of ethnically Chinese Roman Catholic converts.¹¹ As the movement expanded, the Boxers laid siege to foreign diplomatic legations in Beijing beginning in late May.¹²

Following an emergency request for support from the British legation on June 9 and the subsequent cutting of the telegraph line between Peking and Tianjin, British Vice Admiral Edward Seymour, commander of the British Navy’s China station, created a hasty multinational coalition to advance, following the rail lines, to Peking. Sugiyama Akira, *shokishi*¹³ of the Japanese legation in Beijing, traveled to the Yamen to inquire about the status of Seymour’s column. During this trip he was captured, killed, and decapitated by Chinese rebels.¹⁴ Though Seymour’s relief column was able to advance roughly 109 kilometers, it ultimately returned to the

name and referred to them as the Boxer Movement. David Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2013), 35-44; Henry Keown-Boyd, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony: A History of the Boxer Uprising in China in the Year 1900*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), 27.

⁸ Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*, 66.

⁹ Arnold Henry Savage Landor, *China and the Allies* (New York: Scribner, 1901), 5-6.

¹⁰ Ian Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War* (London: Longman, 1985), 70; Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*, 66-67.

¹¹ Landor, *China and the Allies*, 49.

¹² Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*, 76.

¹³ *Shokishi* is equivalent to a chancellor or senior clerk.

¹⁴ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 72.

safety of Tianjin on June 22 due to the overwhelming Boxer attacks on the column and their disruption of the rail lines.

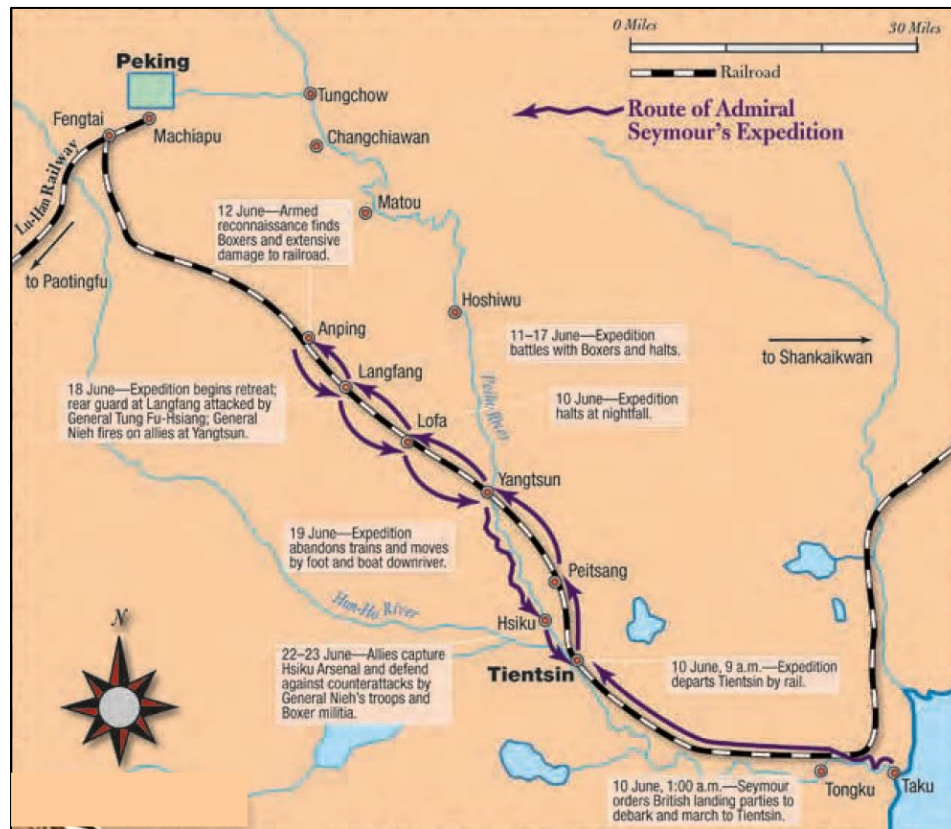


Figure 2. Seymour's Expedition, 10-23 June 1900. Robert Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition, Joint Coalition Warfare in China, Summer 1900* (Laurel, MD: John Hopkins University, n.d.), 16, accessed September 7, 2018, www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/China%20ReliefSm.pdf.¹⁵

While Seymour advanced to Beijing, the multinational navy forces in the Gulf of Zhili acted to secure the Vice Admiral's lines of communication. On June 15, Russian Vice Admiral Yakov Hildebrandt gathered the other leaders aboard the *Rossia* to discuss the developing situation. Not only were 2,000 Chinese imperial troops concentrating in the vicinity of Dagu but

¹⁵ This map, as well as all of the primary sources in this monograph, uses names of Chinese places using the postal romanization system as a way to transliterate Chinese into English. The system was replaced in the 1980s using the Hanyu Pinyin system. This monograph uses the aforementioned system to better inform the reader. In this monograph Peking is referred to as Beijing (北京), Tientsin is referred to as Tianjin (天津), Tongku is referred to as Tanggu (塘沽区), Taku is referred to as Dagu (大沽), and the Peiho river is referred to as the Hai River (海河).

also mines and torpedoes were being laid in the harbor.¹⁶ At this moment, the Qing government and Imperial troops still had not taken any offensive actions against the coalition, however the commanders assessed this to be a threat in their ability to maintain contact with both military units and civilians already in Beijing and Tianjin. On June 17, following a request to local authorities to abandon the area, British, German, Russian, French, and Japanese ships and soldiers attacked the Dagu Forts at the mouth of the Hai River on the Gulf of Zhili. Within hours, the

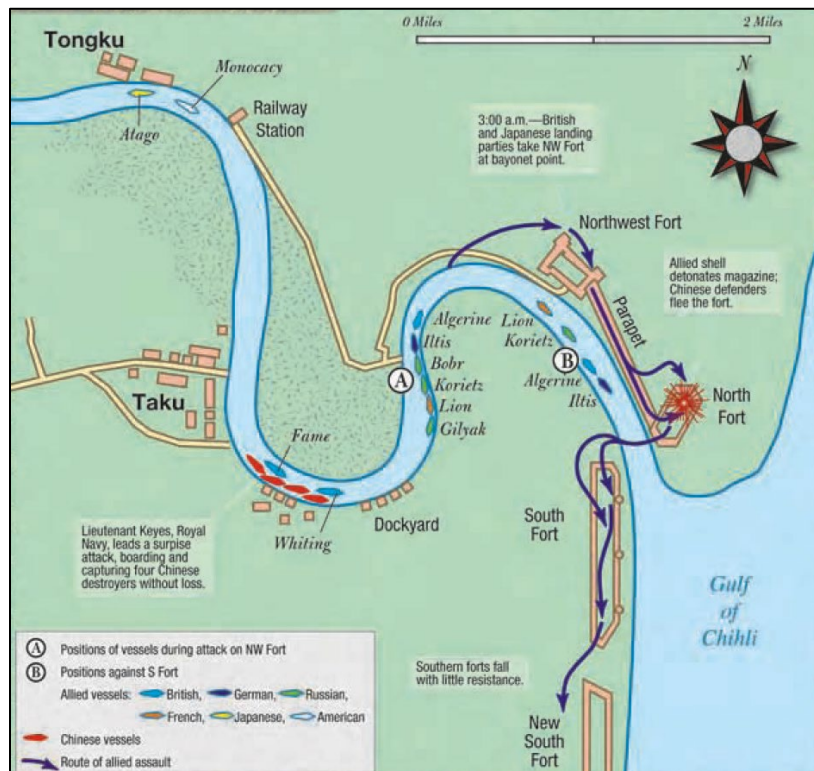


Figure 3. The Battle of the Dagu Forts, 17 June 1900 2:00-8:00 a.m.. Robert Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition, Joint Coalition Warfare in China, Summer 1900*, (Laurel, MD: John Hopkins University, n.d.), 21, accessed September 7, 2018, www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/China%20ReliefSm.pdf.

¹⁶ Landor, *China and the Allies*, 112-113.

ad-hoc naval coalition overpowered the Qing defenders and gained control of a vital piece of key terrain.¹⁷ With the forts under foreign control, the coalition used a lodgment to securely build and project combat power up the Hai River to Tianjin.

The attack on the Dagu forts and the Qing soldiers manning them changed the political situation drastically between the Chinese government and the other nations. Subsequent to the multinational assault on the Dagu forts, Empress Cixi ordered the legations of all foreign countries to depart the Forbidden City on June 19. The legations debated on whether to accept the empress' offer to have Chinese troops escort them to Tianjin. While deliberating this issue, the German minister Baron August Freiherr von Ketteler was ambushed and killed under mysterious circumstances en route to discuss the situation with the Zongli Yamen. Following this action, the legations decided to remain in place until their respective troops could maneuver to Beijing and secure them.¹⁸

Fearing every passing day resulted in a greater chance that the legations would be slaughtered, the coalition needed to make another attempt to rescue their diplomatic representatives. Having enough time to build up forces at Tientsin, a second relief column departed on August 4 to relieve the diplomatic legations in Beijing. Spurred into action by British General Sir Alfred Gaselee, the multinational coalition faced the combined defense of Qing soldiers and Boxer rebels. Following numerous battles along the route, the coalition finally arrived outside the besieged legations in Peking on August 14, 1900. Before the day ended, Empress Cixi fled the Forbidden City with her government and the coalition blasted through the gates to finally secure the legation.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robert Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition: Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900* (Laurel, MD: John Hopkins University, n.d.), 14-16, accessed September 7, 2018, www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/China%20ReliefSm.pdf.

¹⁸ Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*, 79-80.

¹⁹ Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition: Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900*, 69.

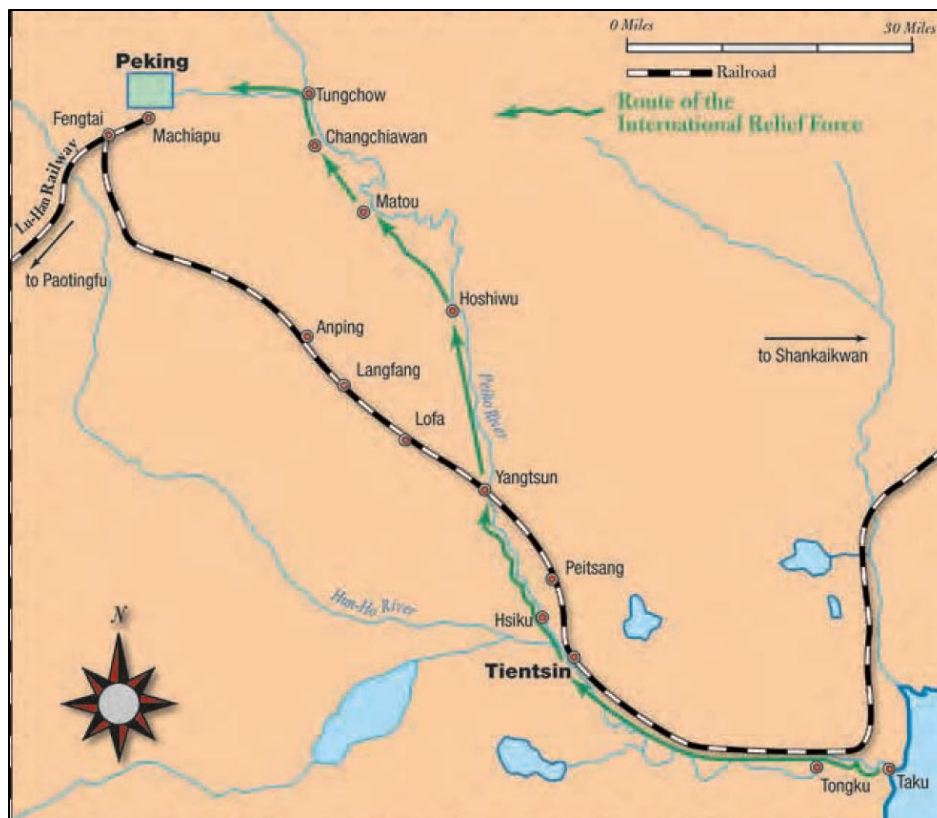


Figure 4. The China Relief Expedition, 4-14 August 1900. Robert Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition, Joint Coalition Warfare in China, Summer 1900* (Laurel, MD: John Hopkins University, n.d.), 42, accessed September 7, 2018, www.jhuapl.edu/Content/documents/China%20ReliefSm.pdf.

With their primary objective accomplished, the coalition took measures to secure the end state they wanted. While occupying Beijing with martial law and securing their lines of communication back to Tianjin and Dagu, the coalition convinced Empress Cixi and her government to return to Beijing to secure a peace.²⁰ The conflict ended with diplomatic negotiations and the signing of “The Boxer Protocol” on September 7, 1901.²¹ The Boxer Protocol laid out several terms to the peace negotiations. The Qing government was forced to pay 450 million taels²² over the course of thirty-nine years to the coalition members. To prevent

²⁰ Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition: Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900*, 51-53.

²¹ Ibid., 55-56; Keown-Boyd, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony: A History of the Boxer Uprising in China in the Year 1900*, 223.

²² A tael was a form of currency used in China during the Qing Dynasty. It was made of silver and weighed approximately 1.3 ounces. In 1900, the average annual price of an ounce of fine silver, based upon internationally recognized London markets was \$.62007 per ounce. This translated to about \$362 million in

further hostilities by the Chinese, the coalition required several tenants to be accepted. The coalition emplaced a two-year ban on weapons imports, made the Chinese agree to ban all anti-foreign societies, and destroyed the forts at Dagu. To secure continued presence of foreigners in China the coalition required that, “allies were to be permitted the right to station garrisons in [Beijing and Tianjin while]... Foreign diplomatic missions were to have exclusive use of the Legation Quarter.”²³ Thus, the various foreign parties emplaced measures to extend their pre-conflict influence over China in order to protect and further their future interests.

Though the various coalition members viewed each other with suspicion, they were able to secure a peace that benefited them all to some degree. Of all the countries that saw each other with misgivings, Russia and Japan had the greatest cause to not trust one another.²⁴ These tensions, which found their roots in the Sino-Japanese War five years prior, would come to a head in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-05. With this in mind, this monograph will answer the following question: what influenced Japan and Russia to work together in the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and how did this affect operational design to achieve individual national objectives? To achieve unity of effort in the Boxer Rebellion, rival powers, motivated by fear, honor, and interest,²⁵ created a command structure that influenced the campaign’s operational art and design. This monograph will support this hypothesis first by analyzing the strategic context of both

1900, or over \$10.8 billion today. For more information on the tael and the current value of this indemnity payment today, see “CPI Inflation Calculator” Official Data Foundation, 2019, accessed January 13, 2019, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1900?amount=362740950>; “Movement of the Price of Silver” in *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, November 1, 1917, 842, accessed January 13, 2019, https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/files/docs/publications/FRB/pages/1915-1919/24568_1915-1919.pdf; “Tael” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed January 13, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tael>.

²³ Leonhard, *The China Relief Expedition: Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900*, 62.

²⁴ According to scholar Ian Nish, both Russia and Japan “eyed one another’s intention to send an expeditionary force with suspicion throughout the [Boxer Rebellion] crisis.” John W. Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2005), 46.

²⁵ The Greek historian Thucydides first proposed this concept. During the Peloponnesian War, the nation state Sparta, the dominant power of the time, declared war on the rising power Athens. Thucydides used a dialogue between the Athenians and Lacedaemonians to propose that the forces driving the inevitable war in the region were fear, honor, and interests. Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2008), 72-76.

Japanese and Russian influence and interests within China. Then, the monograph will investigate the command structure that Japanese and Russian forces entered into to achieve their national objectives. Next, the paper will examine how this affected the operational art of the campaign, namely in terms of end state and conditions, lines of operations, and operational reach. Finally, the monograph will conclude with a discussion on how this campaign informs future decision making.

Russian and Japanese Strategic Context

To understand the decisions Russia and Japan made in the Boxer Rebellion, it is important to first understand the strategic context each of these nations found themselves in leading up to 1900. Various factors including each nation's worldview, policies, strategic aims, and political objectives guided their military strategy and operational approach.

Russian Strategic Environment

Caught amongst the spheres of Europe and Asia, Russia had a unique worldview entering the 1900s. Compared to other powers in the late nineteenth century, Russia had a "great-power syndrome [that] masked a deep and abiding sense of insecurity concerning its place in the international pecking order."²⁶ Other European powers were able to grow in power leveraging national resources, economies and militaries to achieve their national objective. As their supremacy rose, they started "checkmating Russia in Eastern Europe and the Middle East."²⁷ This in turn drove Russia to expand influence on the Eastern regions of its vast country, which was "remote from the interests and activities of other European powers."²⁸ In doing so, Russia sought a unique relationship with China. Russian leaders believed that "there was a special relationship between Russia and China and that Russia's position... [in China] was different from, and more

²⁶ Paine, *The Sino Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, 65.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

favorable than that of other powers.”²⁹ This special relationship was therefore something that Russia sought to protect and leverage in pursuit of its national interests. As the Boxer Rebellion spread throughout Northern China, and European fear and enmity grew of the uncontrollable masses, Russians “claimed that they were not the target of the anti-missionary zeal of the Boxers,” and thus were not concerned about intervening in the security matters.³⁰ In fact, the Tsarist government’s “great concern was that the powers, in attempting to suppress the Boxers, would intervene in China’s domestic affairs to such an extent as to bring down the regime of empress dowager, who, in the Russian view, represented the stable element in Chinese society.”³¹ Securing equal treatment from the Europeans and Chinese alike became “a powerful motivating force for both the Russian and Japanese governments.”³²

The Tsarist government pursued two overarching policies in the Far East to achieve their objective of a more prominent Russia in the world order. Following the Sino-Japanese War, Russian media recorded the rapid victory of the Japanese military. This success drove security concerns which then caused the Russian people to demand “that Japan be prevented from securing territory on the Asian mainland.”³³ Russia was able to stop Japan from securing territory in 1895. To further its strategic advantages, Russia had to ensure Japan could not obtain additional territories when it entered the Boxer Rebellion Relief Coalition in 1900. To guarantee

²⁹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 70-71.

³⁰ Lanxin Xiang points out that while Russians had some missionaries in China, they were of the Russian Orthodox church. Their methods of proselytizing did not provoke the same degrees of hostilities as the Protestant missionaries of other nations. Protestant missionaries focused not only on converting Chinese citizens to their religion but also on “strong social reform ambitions.... [that] were often encountered with vehement resistance from the traditional Scholar-Gentry elite.” David Schimmelpenninck Van Der Oye adds to this stating that “For Mikhail Giers at the Russian mission such matters were doubly irrelevant, since the Orthodox Church had never really joined the Western Competition for Chinese souls.” David Schimmelpenninck Van der Oye, “Russia’s Ambivalent Response to the Boxers,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 41, no. 1 (Jan- Mar 2000): 65, accessed March 21, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20171168>.; Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (London: Routledge, 2003), 122-125; Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 71.

³¹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 71.

³² Paine, *The Sino Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, 68.

³³ *Ibid.*, 283.

this policy, Russia established a supporting approach on June 3, 1896 when it entered into a secret treaty with China, “promising jointly to resist any further aggression by Japan.”³⁴ Though this treaty explicitly named Japan as the expected hostile nation, it did not preclude Russia from intervening should any other nation launch an attack on China. If Russia saw another country’s attack on China resulting in Russian loss of influence, then that incident would justify Russia coming to the Qing Dynasty’s defense.

Russia’s policies supported and guided their strategic aims and political objectives. Finance Minister Sergei Witte “saw good relations with China as essential for his ambitious plans to develop Russia’s Far East.”³⁵ Russia invested substantial funds into building the Trans-Siberian railway so that it could take advantage of new markets and connect both east and west Russia. China assisted Russia by allowing them to extend the Trans-Siberian railroad through Manchuria.³⁶ Thus, when hostilities commenced in Shandong and spread north to Beijing, “Russia’s prime concern was not with China proper but with Manchuria and her railway there.”³⁷ Russia’s strategic aim centered on securing its own interests to extend economic reach through the railway. They pursued these strategic aims through multiple political objectives, with a primary objective of “keep[ing] [Beijing] as the centre of Chinese administration and to ensure the safe return of the emperor and empress dowager to their capital as soon as possible.”³⁸ Russia had developed favorable relationships with the Qing Dynasty; any disruption would threaten their economic interests. If Empress Cixi lost power, authority would pass “to the Yangtse viceroys, then Russia would be the prime sufferer.”³⁹ Consequently, Russia’s initial political objective was

³⁴ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 30.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁷ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 72.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 78.

to take a distanced approach to dealing with the Boxer threat to dissuade other foreign powers from intervening. Some foreign observers were not influenced, as they saw this “dovish stance as a clever feint to distract the world from its own occupation of Manchuria in summer 1900.”⁴⁰ It was only once the Boxers threatened Russia’s Chinese Eastern Railway in July of 1900, that the Russian leadership wholeheartedly supported military intervention.⁴¹ Manchuria contained large Russian foreign investments and numerous Russian communities, it therefore had to be protected.⁴² This is the setting that would eventually put Russia in conflict with Japan.

Japanese Strategic Environment

Two major events dominated Japan’s worldview at the onset of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900: the Meiji Reformations and the Sino-Japanese War of 1895. Following centuries of seclusion, Japanese reformers worked to reduce the relative superiority of Europeans, who were quickly dominating Asia, by adopting a philosophy of “enrich the country, strengthen the army” and fusing eastern thought with western technology.⁴³ Whole of government reforms coupled with the rise of nationalism created both a modern westernized army and a government that could support it. The Sino-Japanese War put this new military to the test. Between July 1894 and April 1895, Japan dominated Chinese forces in Korea. China’s defense of Korea and Manchuria rapidly crumbled, consequently removing its status as hegemon in Asia. The Qing Dynasty’s subsequent “prostration meant a free for all for the foreign powers in China.”⁴⁴ Looking to curb Japanese power in Asia, Russia encouraged Germany and France to protest the Treaty of Shimonoseki and therefore force the Japanese military to withdraw from the Liaodong Peninsula.⁴⁵ This loss of

⁴⁰ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 34.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴² Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 83.

⁴³ Paine, *The Sino Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy*, 80.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁴⁵ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 29.

face,⁴⁶ caused by European and Russian powers, after such a significant victory would be kept in the collective memory of the Japanese people on the outset of the Boxer Rebellion five years later.

Japan's strategic aim during this time period was to be recognized as a peer by other world powers and also to establish themselves as the regional hegemon. European powers recognized Japan's sudden climb as an influential player in the imperial world, however Europeans still saw them as part of the "yellow peril" threatening the white race.⁴⁷ The Japanese government saw the Chinese-created world order crumbling. Their narrow-minded approach to dealing with European powers created the opportunity for foreign nations to take advantage of the Asian world. Perceiving themselves to be the most enlightened of the Asian nations of the time, Japan wanted to assume a leadership role similar to the "white man's burden" and help Asia progress to future advantages.⁴⁸ These strategic aims drove their political objectives during the Boxer Rebellion. Though rebels in China murdered missionaries and destroyed railways, Japan initially saw no reason to interdict in the situation. However, the murder of Sugiyama Akira "forced the Japanese cabinet to consider intervention in an enterprise which was only marginally of interest to their people."⁴⁹ While this war may have been of little interest to the Japanese people, it did offer the opportunity to support strategic aims. First, by aligning with European

⁴⁶ In Asian cultures, face is a concept very similar to respect and honor. Cultural norms direct that interactions are governed by ensuring others are not embarrassed and thus prevent an individual or collective group from losing face.

⁴⁷ In 1899 the *Atlantic Monthly* published that "the expansion of Japan.... seized the press and politicians... The Yellow Peril bogey was transferred [from China] to Japan." For more information on the "yellow peril," see David Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 122; Gregory Moore, *Defining and Defending the Open Door Policy* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 20.

⁴⁸ A term adopted from Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem of the same name that became "a characterization for imperialism that justified the policy as a noble enterprise." For more information on the "white man's burden" and Japan's ambitious role in Asia, see USC US-China Institute, "The White Man's Burden 1899," accessed January 19, 2019, <https://china.usc.edu/white-mans-burden-1899>; Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power and Primacy*, 95.

⁴⁹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 72.

powers, namely a beleaguered Great Britain that was being tied down by the Boer War, Japan could advance their status as an equal amongst world powers. British leaders had offered to pay Japan to send forces to secure the legation.⁵⁰ However, the Japanese insisted “that the main consideration with them was not money but support of the powers.”⁵¹ In projecting this message, Japan aimed to protect whatever gains they might achieve during this war. They did not want their victory to be contested and denied by a “hostile three-power coalition of Russia, Germany and France.”⁵² That being said, deploying forces to combat the Boxer Rebellion offered the Japanese an opportunity to put themselves on a more favorable footing to reestablish leadership over Korea. *Man-Kan kokan*⁵³ “had become one of the island empire’s leading foreign policy imperatives by the late 1890s.”⁵⁴ A victory over China could put them in position to negotiate with both China and Russia for a reestablished sphere of influence over Korea.

Mission Command Structure of the Boxer Rebellion Coalition

Theory of Coalition Formation

The eight foreign militaries located in China during June 1900 formed a coalition to save their besieged communities in Beijing. To understand what motivated Japan and Russia, the primary contributors of forces, to enter this coalition instead of advancing on their own to Beijing, one must first understand what coalitions are and how they traditionally form.

According to Scott Wolford, in *The Politics of Military Coalitions*, “a military coalition is a group of two or more states that makes a threat to use force together against another state (or states) in an international crisis.”⁵⁵ Those that do enter into the coalition must agree upon two

⁵⁰ Robert Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 81.

⁵¹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 74.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵³ Manchu for Korea.

⁵⁴ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 39.

⁵⁵ Scott Wolford, *The Politics of Military Coalitions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), accessed November 1, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central, 15.

ideas: what are their military objectives and what will be “the distribution of the costs and benefits of joint action.”⁵⁶ This socialization of both aims and responsibilities allows for greater unity of effort once the coalition is called to action and less potential for friction. These partner nations can contribute varying levels of support, as “coalition partners may differ in their preferred levels of mobilization due to domestic constraints, exposure to the physical costs of war, or even their relative valuation of the issues at stake.”⁵⁷ As not every nation will be willing to provide the same amount of support towards the common aim, there will have to be negotiations amongst the various parties. The party with the most interest in achieving the common goal leads the negotiations amongst the group until a common purpose can be agreed upon amongst all vested parties. Those that do not accept the agreed upon terms of the coalition and remain outside of it “are quite often concerned with the aims that coalitions cannot promise not to pursue in the event of victory”⁵⁸ These non-belligerents are external to the decision making with no immediate way of influencing the internal discussions amongst the group.

There are both advantages and disadvantages for a nation to agree to join a military coalition. The coalition creates an international institution that binds nations together and reduces “the role and consequences of power in their relationship.”⁵⁹ Consensus, not strength drives action. While this can be an unintended effect of the coalition, it can also be a calculated reason to join one. In *pacta de contrahendo*, “potential rivals tie themselves to each other- alleviating suspicions, reducing uncertainties and creating institutional mechanism for reach to influence the policies of the other.”⁶⁰ These coalitions create “‘voice opportunities’ for states, mechanisms to

⁵⁶ Wolford, *The Politics of Military Coalitions*, 15-16.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁵⁹ John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 64.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

influence what other states think and do.”⁶¹ Coalition member benefits can only last for so long. Those coalitions that initially form with parties pursuing various political and military objective are likely to “break down into intramural conflict sooner after military victory than more homogeneous coalitions do. Thus, coalitional politics... can have lasting effects on patterns of war and peace even after the initial impetus for military cooperation has passed.”⁶² Knowing the theory behind coalition formation, the next step is to see what factors motivated Japan and Russia to join the multinational coalition in China.

Fear, Honor and Interests Influence Japan and Russia to Join the Coalition

Fear, honor, and interests drove the various nations of the Boxer Relief Expedition to create a coalition. By the middle of June 1900, Japanese Foreign Minister Viscount Aoki believed "that the Chinese government was now in sympathy with the Boxer movement, which led him to the conclusion that the Powers would have to face a conflict with the whole of the Chinese nation.”⁶³ In mid-April 1900, French diplomat Stephen Pichon reported that Boxer strength in the surrounding provinces of Zhili and Shandong exceeded 100,000. ⁶⁴ If the coalition just opposed the Boxers, hastily organized and armed with rudimentary weapons such as swords, spears and tridents,⁶⁵ the militaries of individual nations might have been able to advance on their own to relieve their respective diplomats. That being said, the Qing Dynasty commanded multiple units in and around Beijing, totaling over 100,000 soldiers and police.⁶⁶ Unlike the weakly armed rebels, the Chinese army posed a more substantial threat as it was outfitted with modern German rifles, machine guns, and Krupp artillery.⁶⁷

⁶¹ John G. Ikenberry, *After Victory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 67.

⁶² Wolford, *The Politics of Military Coalitions*, 197.

⁶³ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 238.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁵ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 63.

⁶⁶ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 248-249.

⁶⁷ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 68.

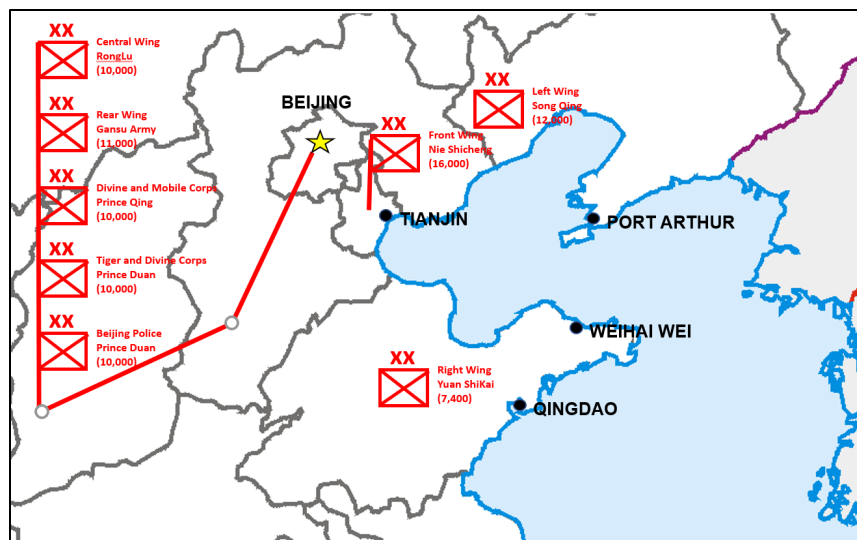


Figure 5. Qing Army Disposition, June 1900. Graphic created by the Author from information in Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (London: New York, 2003), 248 map from “Printable Map China Provinces” Printable World, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://worksheets-library.com/print/printable-map-china-provinces-16.html>.⁶⁸

The Qing Army was much more organized and could mass power on specific locations. Because this fight would take place in China, the loyal village population surrounding Beijing could easily act as an intelligence network reporting on coalition troop locations, numbers, and movement. The ever-present intelligence network, large disruption force of Boxers, and numerically superior striking force of the Qing Dynasty presented a severe problem to the Imperial Powers. Having no illusions of the overwhelming size of the enemy force, “Prime Minister Yamagata’s... decision was that it was unwise to send a large force on its own and sensible to wait for an invitation from the powers.”⁶⁹ When American, English and Japanese military leaders decided they could wait no longer and needed to march they pressed the still

⁶⁸ According to Chafee, “estimates of the Chinese forces were widely divergent, and ranged from 8,000 to 30,000....” While this graphic shows one array of force disposition according to Major Norie, Qing forces consisted of: 13,00 troops under General Nie vicinity Tientsin, Lutai, 10,000 under Tung-lu, south of Peking, 12,000 under Sung-Ching at Shan-hai-kuan, 6,000 under Tung-fuhsiang, east of Beijing, 2,200 under Ma at Ho-kien-fu, and 1,000 under Hsin-Cheng. Adna R. Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*. (Peking: 1900), 557, accessed September 7, 2018, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll7/id/599>.; Major E. W. Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1903), 30.

⁶⁹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 72.

trepid Russian and French commanders to join them. Against their protests the Russian and French generals were told “they would be given the alternative of going with us now, or alone at their own pleasure”⁷⁰ by the other military leaders. The Russian general knew they could not advance against this massive threat alone, and so they joined the coalition in action. Fear of being overwhelmed by the enemy drove the countries to work together, but so did interests.

Each country had their own individual national objectives to pursue. While Japan and Russia both were initially uninterested in war in China, they could not be left out of a coalition if the other countries operating in the region chose to take action. Japanese foreign minister Aoki Shuezo “worried that after the Beijing legations were relieved all the powers would give free play to their territorial ambitions in China.”⁷¹ Prior to hostilities commencing, the *corps diplomatique* in China had a traditional manner of negotiating with the Chinese government. When a point of contention arose with the Qing Dynasty, the diplomats gathered together and then addressed the issue in a united front with the Zongli Yamen.⁷² Hence, those who participated in the debate had the ability to shape the outcomes. Those who abstained did not influence the argument in favor of their respective national interests, and thus received the decision from the Manchu Courts, which were generally applied across the board to all countries under the most favored nation principle.⁷³ That is not to say that secretive deals were not negotiated between individual nations and the Manchu Court, but these were the exception, not the norm. This same logic applied to military

⁷⁰ Frederick Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1902), 57.

⁷¹ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 46.

⁷² Landor, *China and the Allies*, 26, 29, 46.

⁷³ The most favored nation clause was “automatically granted to all Treaty Powers the rights which China was compelled to allow to any one nation, expanding the influence of the Treaty Powers as a block. It also made it unnecessary for each foreign country to sign new bilateral treaties as the powers as Treaty countries expanded.” For more information on the most favored nation clause, see Wolfgang Keller and Carol H. Shiue, “Capital Markets and Colonial Institutions in China” January 2014, accessed January 13, 2019, http://allucgroup.ucdavis.edu/uploads/5/6/8/7/56877229/keller_and_shiue_capital_markets_and_treaty_port_institutions_january_30_2014.pdf, 27.

actions. Military commanders could advance their own nation's strategic aims if they both participated in the coalition and insisted that the other nations also operated within it. Protecting its strategic footing in Manchuria, Russia opposed Britain's request for Japan to send a massive army to Beijing. Having defeated China before and exacted substantial terms, other nations might not oppose Japan retaining favorable conditions as a reward for rapidly mobilizing troops when they could not relieve the legations. Hence, Russian rulers stated that though they were opposed to unilateral Japanese action, they "would not interfere with her freedom of action to send troops of her own volition provided she acted in conjunction with the other powers."⁷⁴

Honor was a significant factor in Japan and Russia joining the multinational coalition to relieve the legations in Beijing. During the Boxer Rebellion, the first official representative of a foreign state killed by the Chinese was a Japanese citizen. While the death of any civilian was a tragedy, the murder of a nation's representative provided a greater affront to Tokyo that had to be remediated. While Russia did not have any citizens murdered in the province of Zhili, there were multiple instances of Russian soldiers and civilians murdered in Manchuria in particularly egregious fashions.⁷⁵ They were concerned not only with preserving their honor, but also gaining more. When the question was raised to the Russians whether they would join the coalition they replied that their one condition was "[t]hat the British do not lead the column and carry off all honours."⁷⁶ Much like the Russians, Japan also saw this as a chance to capture prestige. As this was the first-time Japanese soldiers were "shoulder to shoulder with their brothers-in-arms from the West... this alone was sufficient to put them on their mettle, and to cause such patriots as they

⁷⁴ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 74-75.

⁷⁵ One such instance occurred on July 16, 1900, following a Chinese attack on Russian civilians living in Blgoveshchensk. Russian soldiers rounded up over 3,500 Chinese men, women and children living in the area and forced them to swim across the Amur river; thousands drowned. While the local military governor General K.N. Gribski was horrified by the actions of his soldiers, Tsar Nicholas stated that they "deserved the lesson they had been taught." For more information on Russian actions in Blgoveshchensk see Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 54-56.

⁷⁶ Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces*, 57-58.

are to strain every nerve to uphold the honor of their country.”⁷⁷ Japan and Russia sought participation in the coalition to not only uphold their honor but to also gain future glory amongst the other nations.

Structure of the Coalition

Each of the eight foreign nations in China participated in the coalition in some form or another. The size of the coalition grew over time as each of the nations mobilized and transported forces into China. More so than their European counterparts, Russia and Japan had a distinct geographic advantage in projecting power to China. Unlike the other countries in the coalition, Russia shared a land border with China. Because of this, the Russian military could quickly move troops via railroad through Manchuria and then onto Port Arthur where it could then further deploy troops. This would play as a critical factor in the defense of Tianjin, as Russia was able to mass forces quicker than the other powers into theater.

Table 1. Coalition Garrison of Tianjin, June 14, 1900

Nationality	Number of Troops	Percent of Total Troops
Russian	1,800	71.0%
British	393	15.5%
German	110	4.3%
Japanese	50	2.0%
French	50	2.0%
Austrian	50	2.0%
American	43	1.7%
Italian	40	1.6%
Total	2536	

Source: Major E. W. Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1903), 17.

Japan, though not sharing a land border with China, still controlled the sea lines of communication in the Yellow Sea, having destroyed China’s sea power five years earlier in the

⁷⁷ Charles Carby Dix, *The World’s Navies in the Boxer Rebellion (China 1900)* (London: Digby, Long & Co., 1905), 296.

Sino-Japanese War.⁷⁸ In 1900, the US Army assessed that due to the “overwhelming superiority of foreign fleets in the Chinese waters, the Chinese Navy will not be a factor in the operations now in progress.”⁷⁹

Thus, both Japan and Russia contributed greater forces more swiftly than the other countries. On June 15, Prime Minister Yamagata Aritomo and his cabinet agreed to send two infantry divisions to China under Major-General Fukushima.⁸⁰ Also, on June 26, Japan “agreed...to mobilize some 10,000 additional men who would not be transported to China until replies from other powers.”⁸¹ Similarly, when hostilities began in June, Russia was maneuvering reinforcements from Siberia. The Russian military “was in a position to supply 8,000 men from Port Arthur... while retaining 4,000 for the defense of that port.”⁸² Following the seizure of the Dagu Forts, Japan and Russia dominated the coalition, representing sixty-two percent of the combat power.

⁷⁸ At the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion, the Chinese Navy consisted of two squadrons, the Beiyang (Northern Ocean) and Nanyang (Southern Ocean). The Beiyang, which would have operated in the vicinity of the Gulf of Zhili, consisted of 3 cruisers of 3,400 tons, one torpedo cruiser, and one torpedo gunboat. Meanwhile the Nanyang, which would have operated further south towards Shanghai, consisted of 6 cruisers of 3,500 tons, one cruiser of 1,800 tons, 4 old gun boats and four modern torpedo boats. Other ships were built in Europe for China, but it is unclear whether they had joined the squadrons by this point. Lieutenant C. Mackenzie, Commander of the HMS *Whiting*, reported capturing “four Chinese destroyers moored off the dockyard at [Dagu]” on June 17. For more information on the Chinese Navy in 1900 see Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901*, 217; War Department—Adjutant General’s Office, *Notes on China* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 79-80.

⁷⁹ War Department—Adjutant General’s Office, *Notes on China*, 80.

⁸⁰ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 73.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁸² *Ibid.*

Table 2. Coalition Troop Numbers in the Dagu area, June 26, 1900

Nationality	Number of Troops	Percent of Total Troops
Japanese	3,752	31.1%
Russian	3,735	31.0%
British	2,300	19.1%
German	1,340	11.1%
French	421	3.5%
American	335	2.8%
Italian	138	1.1%
Austrian	26	0.2%
Total	12,047	

Source: David Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2013), 129.

These personnel numbers would continue to grow, and the dynamics of the coalition would continue to change as more troops flowed into the theater. By the time the coalition advanced on to Beijing, Japan dominated the alliance with nearly fifty percent of the troops and thirty-four percent of the artillery.

Table 3. Coalition forces marching towards Beijing, August 3, 1900.

Nationality	Number of Troops	Percent of Total Troops	Number of Artillery	Percent of Total Artillery
Japanese	10,000	49.8%	24	34.3%
Russian	4,000	19.9%	16	22.9%
British	3,000	14.9%	12	17.1%
American	2,000	10.0%	6	8.6%
French	800	4.0%	12	17.1%
German	200	1.0%	-	-
Italian	50	0.2%	-	-
Austrian	50	0.2%	-	-
Total	20,100		70	

Source: Major E. W. Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1903), 55.

Command of the Coalition

Command of the coalition can be separated into three distinct periods each with unique characteristics and implications. The first period was during the initial emergency response to relieve the legations. To achieve unity of effort, the senior military commanders in China elected a leader amongst themselves to coordinate action both at meetings and the deployment of forces. British officer Vice Admiral Seymour was selected to lead the initial advance to save the

legations since he held the highest rank and was the most senior.⁸³ This decision was made by military, not political, leaders. However, because of the sizeable proportion of troops, Russian military officers were given positions of power and respect within the coalition. Seymour recommended that a Russian colonel be assigned as chief of staff for the coalition.⁸⁴ When making the decision to seize the Dagu Forts, Russian Vice Admiral K. Hildebrandt led the five gunboats and two destroyers.⁸⁵ Russians again assumed the role of leadership within the coalition when a 2,000 strong multinational force led by Russian Colonel Schirinski attempted to rescue the Seymour column.⁸⁶

The second period is characterized by the ad hoc formation of the multinational coalition into parallel command structures, with no single force commander designated by either military or international political leaders.⁸⁷ This period created unique challenges to ensure unity of action. Each nation's troops "were under the control of their own commanders, who gave the necessary orders for carrying out the general plans and movements agreed to."⁸⁸ The commanders of each nation synchronized operations with one another both on the sea and land. While commanders advancing towards Peking would meet daily to coordinate tactical movements, naval commanders met on a more sporadic basis deciding on the best course of action to support their ground commanders.⁸⁹ The most senior officer normally chaired these meetings, irrespective of

⁸³ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 243-244.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁸⁶ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 303.

⁸⁷ Umio Otsuka, "Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven 'Councils of Senior Naval Commanders' Contributed to the Conduct of Operations," *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 4 (Autumn 2018): 118, accessed January 6, 2019, <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7668&context=nwc-review>.

⁸⁸ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 569.

⁸⁹ Naval commanders met twenty seven times between June 5, 1900 and October 15, 1900. For more information on how often land and naval commanders met see Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 339,

nation. The chair would drive the discussion as well as the agenda. Of particular note, was the slight suffered to the Japanese naval leadership. After arriving in theater on July 19, Admiral Togo of Japan attended the multinational leader council on July 20. Though Admiral Togo was the most senior officer, Russian Vice Admiral Hildebrandt chaired this meeting with what appears to be no historical evidence of the tradition being contested by the other parties. To ensure the unity of the coalition, Admiral Togo directed Rear Admiral Dewa to attend all following councils on his behalf.⁹⁰ A combination of the senior Japanese officer not attending further meetings and other officers not enforcing their group norms and culture on behalf of Japan, led to Admiral Togo not having a direct voice or role in leading the multinational coalition.

As the months waged on, and as more combat power kept flowing into China, the countries involved in the coalition attempted to transition from an ad-hoc coalition to one designed and agreed upon by national leaders. Beginning on August 6, 1900, Kaiser Wilhelm II approached other national leaders to propose who should continue leading the coalition. Initially broaching the topic with Russia, he received no objection to the motion of German Field-Marshal Count Alfred von Waldersee as commander of troops so long as his authority was limited to the province of Zhili.⁹¹ This proposition was then voiced with other European monarchs, prefaced with Russia's support. With Britain not aiming to sponsor a commander for the multinational force, Waldersee would assume command when he arrived in Zhili.⁹² Japan saw this as a slight, as they had Lieutenant-General Baron Mootoomi Yamaguchi, a divisional commander, already deployed to China. Instead of protesting, they continued to support with a predominant share of

557, 567, 573, 574, 577; Otsuka, "Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven 'Councils of Senior Naval Commanders' Contributed to the Conduct of Operations," 124.

⁹⁰ Otsuka, "Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven 'Councils of Senior Naval Commanders' Contributed to the Conduct of Operations," 124.

⁹¹ Alena Eskridge-Kosmach, "Russia in the Boxer Rebellion" *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Volume 21, (2008): 46, accessed November 19, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040801894142>.

⁹² Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 75.

troops in the coalition and “swallowed the affront without protest.”⁹³ During this period, the individual nations retained their ability to uphold national caveats. Their militaries retained the authority to participate in as many or as little of the campaigns directed by Waldersee following the occupation of Beijing.

Decision Making in the Coalition

As established earlier, between the initial stages of conflict in June 1900 and the eventual occupation of Beijing in August 1900, Japan and Russia supplied the majority of the coalition’s troop numbers while British and German officers secured leading management positions. During this period, the dominant logic was driven primarily by military concerns with diplomatic issues in the back seat.⁹⁴ Therefore, to select what action the coalition should take, the military commanders, not the diplomats in Beijing, were the ones making decisions. So that each military could best represent their nation’s will, the military leaders made agreements as a group. They formed a conference and each military leader voiced their opinion on the matter. Between June 5 and October 25, a council of naval commanders met at least twenty-seven times.⁹⁵ When a consensus was reached, the nations then acted in concert together, attaining unity of effort. If a military leader disagreed, there was not any institutional requirement for them to go along with the plan since there was not a formal chain of command established.⁹⁶ On occasion, military leaders would abstain from discussions in order to obey their national caveats while at the same time not disrupting the unity of effort in the coalition.⁹⁷ These are the mechanism that guided the

⁹³ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 76.

⁹⁴ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 355.

⁹⁵ Umio Otsuka, “Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven “Councils of Senior Naval Commanders” Contributed to the Conduct of Operations,” 117.

⁹⁶ David R. Bustamante, “Coalition Operational Command and Control-Lessons Learned from the Relief of Peking During the Boxer Rebellion,” Monograph, US Naval War College (Newport, RI: USAWC Press, 2005), 10.

behavior and decision making of the Japanese and Russian military leaders as they developed their operational approach.

Operational Art of the Boxer Rebellion Coalition

Both the command structure and Russia and Japan's unique strategic objectives influenced the coalition's operational art. Operational art is how military commanders achieve strategic objectives with tactical actions by arranging battles and operations in time and space. FM 3-0 defines the elements of operational art as: end state and conditions, center of gravity, decisive points, lines of operation and lines of effort, operational reach, basing, tempo, phasing and transitions, and culmination.⁹⁸ In this campaign, the end state and conditions, operational reach and lines of operation were the factors most influenced by this unique coalition.

Operational Reach

Coalition military leaders made numerous decisions to extend the operational reach.⁹⁹ These arrangements were inextricably tied to Russia and Japan's participation in the coalition. The first decision the coalition made to extend their operational reach was resolving the issue of basing. To extend their operations, the coalition needed to establish a series of bases to project power from. Though the European powers had a military presence in China, it was not nearly enough to deal with the threat presented. The European powers would have to draw on forces from around the region and around the globe. From outside the immediate region, France deployed half her troops from Tonking, the Americans arrived from the Philippines, while a large

⁹⁷ Otsuka, "Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven 'Councils of Senior Naval Commanders' Contributed to the Conduct of Operations," 132.

⁹⁸ US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-20.

⁹⁹ ADRP 1-02 defines operational reach as, "the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities." US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-70.

contingent of British forces came from India.¹⁰⁰ Located much closer to the problem area, the Russians and Japanese rapidly deployed soldiers. Russian military embarked from Port Arthur and Vladivostok¹⁰¹ while the Japanese left from their islands. After traveling hundreds or thousands of miles to China, the coalition needed space to consolidate and organize their forces for follow on operations. They required intermediate staging bases.¹⁰² The town of Tianjin was logical because it was the closest city to Beijing that offered connections to it by rail, water, and road. It also had several concessions which needed to be secured. To get to Tianjin though the coalition would need a port to offload their ships. Tanggu and Qinhuangdao both offered ports to offload ships and railways that connected to Tianjin. Tanggu was a small town with a port on the Hai river located only fifty kilometers from Tianjin.¹⁰³ However, Tanggu was also guarded by five forts at Dagou¹⁰⁴ manned by Qing soldiers. Lacking fortifications like Dagou, Qinhuangdao offered a deep-water port with a 200-meter jetty.¹⁰⁵ Though coalition forces might have been able to take the port uncontested, this would have extended the line of operations by over 141 miles and thus increased security requirements to protect the lengthened line of communications. By seizing both naval bases near Dagou and Tianjin, the multinational coalition was able to extend their operational reach into northeastern China.

¹⁰⁰ Alfred Von Waldersee, *A Field- Marshal's Memoirs: From the Diary, Correspondence, and Reminiscences of Alfred, Count Von Waldersee*, translated and condensed by Frederic Whyte (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1924), 254.

¹⁰¹ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 594-595.

¹⁰² According to ADRP 1-02 an intermediate staging base is a "tailorable, temporary location used for staging forces, sustainment and/or extraction into and out of an operational area." US Army, *ADRP 1-02*, 1-52.

¹⁰³ Robert Nield, *China's Foreign Place: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), 240.

¹⁰⁴ Frederic A. Sharf and Peter Harrington, *China, 1900* (London: Greenhill Books, 2000), 89.

¹⁰⁵ Nield, *China's Foreign Place: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943*, 73-74.

To extend their operational reach, coalition commanders made numerous decisions about their consolidation area¹⁰⁶ to ensure that they could continue projecting combat power towards Beijing. Following the defeat of Qing and Boxer forces in the vicinity of Tianjin, coalition forces decided to establish a security force in Tianjin that could protect the diplomats there and shield their lodgment. They established a triumvirate military government in Tianjin that was led by "... the three nations most directly interested in China: Great Britain represented by Lieutenant Colonel Bower; Russia, by Colonel Wogack; and Japan by Colonel Aoki."¹⁰⁷ Though the Qing conventional forces were defeated in the vicinity of Tianjin, Boxers could easily blend in with the local population and feed their ire towards the occupying international government. To combat unrest in Tianjin, the occupying powers employed stability mechanisms.¹⁰⁸ One local journalist remarked, Tianjin "had witnessed more civic improvements in one year than in the previous five centuries" as the foreign powers focused on sanitation, security, potable water, and various other public works products.¹⁰⁹ The triumvirate government of Tianjin took it upon themselves to conduct stability operations¹⁰⁶ to reduce the chances that problems in the consolidation area would impact operations deeper in China at Beijing.

With stability operations mitigating the local threat, the coalition acted to ensure the logistical reach of the railroads. The coalition needed to maximize the use of railroads in the areas to resupply troops. To do this, the coalition decided to rely on the expertise of the Russians. On July 16, the military commanders assigned responsibility of the railroad from Tanggu to Tianjin

¹⁰⁶ FM 3-0 defines consolidation area as the "portion of the commander's area of operations that is designated to facilitate the security and stability tasks necessary for freedom of action in the close area and to support the continuous consolidation of gains." US Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-35.

¹⁰⁷ This government was called the Tianjin Provisional Government (TPG). For more information on the Tianjin government see Nield, *China's Foreign Place: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943*, 244; Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901*, 41.

¹⁰⁸ ADRP 1-02 defines stability mechanisms as the "primary method through which friendly forces affect civilians in order to attain conditions that support establishing a lasting, stable peace." US Army, *ADRP 1-02*, 1-87.

¹⁰⁹ Nield, *China's Foreign Place: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943*, 244-245.

to the Russians under the agreed terms that, “[this responsibility was] for the mutual benefit of the Allies, and with the stipulation that it should be given back to the former administration, as soon as military requirements would allow of this being done.”¹¹⁰ Russian management of the railways ensured that both troops and supplies would be rapidly transported to Tianjin and then made available to forces maneuvering towards the legations in Beijing.

Finally, coalition forces resolved to increase their operational reach when they decided on the necessary force levels to mount an offensive from Tianjin to Beijing. With Seymour’s failure to reach the legations fresh in their mind, military leaders took an estimate of the situation. While some commanders, including the Japanese leaders, wanted to delay the attack until the multi-national force exceeded 50,000,¹¹¹ other commanders saw a more dire situation. Seymour’s expedition demonstrated that the railroads could not be relied on to advance hastily to Beijing. This meant forces would have to maneuver either cross-country following roads or along the river network to reach the legations. The cross-country movement consisting of maneuvering through tall crops, with little to no roads to guide them. The reduced depth of the Pei-ho River meant troops could not utilize it to rapidly move. Thus, the commanders estimated that to both advance to Beijing and then retake the legations, they would need a force of at least 70,000.¹¹² Though they never reached their desired troop levels, the military commanders waited until August 4 to depart Tianjin with 18,200 troops.¹¹³ They assumed risk by departing with less than the desired troop levels, but they were able to mitigate the risk to the operational success by massing the

¹¹⁰ Tanggu is a small village town located about five kilometers from the sea and protected by the forts at Dagu. For more information on Tanggu and Russian railroad authorities, see War Department—Adjutant General’s Office, *Notes on China*, map insert between 18-19. Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901*, 41.

¹¹¹ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 75.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 74.

¹¹³ In Norie’s account of the Boxer Rebellion he gives a slightly higher estimate, stating that on August 3, coalition members agreed to commence operations on August 4 with 20,100 soldiers. For more information on Qing military estimates, see Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901*, 311; Keown-Boyd, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony*, 158-159.

forces along one line of operation, securing their lodgment with 23,000 mostly Russian and Japanese soldiers in the Dagu-Tianjin area,¹¹⁴ and rapidly maneuvering to relieve the besieged civilians in Beijing.

Lines of Operations and Lines of Effort

Russia and Japan had different versions of how they saw the strategic environment of the Far East in 1900. They also had competing visions of what this environment should transform into. This crisis created the opportunity to align efforts and resources towards their desired endstates. While the coalition created the necessary reinforcing mechanisms to ensure Japan and Russia would support the common line of operation, it also created opportunities for them to pursue their individual lines of efforts.¹¹⁵ Pursuing their own lines of operations and efforts enabled Japan and Russia to allay fears, pursue interests, and uphold their respective nations' honor.

Japanese Lines of Effort and Operation

While Japan supported the coalition's line of operation, they also had their own individual line of effort in which they directed their endeavors. The Japanese wanted to achieve recognition from the western powers. Despite Japan's efforts to modernize and become a respected and powerful nation, it "was Asian and in contemporary western eyes associated with the other, the less developed and the racially inferior world."¹¹⁶ Despite their military success over China in the Sino-Japanese War, western powers dismissed them. In light of instances such as the massacre at Port Arthur, the Japanese military was still regarded as uncivilized and

¹¹⁴ Keown-Boyd, *The Fists of Righteous Harmony*, 158-159.

¹¹⁵ ADRP 1-02 defines lines of operation as, "A line that defines the interior or exterior orientation of the force in relation to the enemy or that connects actions on nodes, and/or decisive points related in time and space to an objective. ADRP 3-0 defines a line of effort as "a line that links multiple tasks using the logic of purpose rather than geographic reference to focus efforts towards a desired end state." US Army, *ADRP 1-02*, 1-59; US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-6.

¹¹⁶ Yulia Mikhailova and Steele, M. William, eds, *Japan and Russia: Three Centuries of Mutual Images* (Folkestone: Brill, 2008), accessed November 2, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central, 55.

therefore Japan was associated with the “Yellow Peril.”¹¹⁷ With the opportunity to showcase the expertise of their military and their value of their nation, Japan aimed to “reshape conventional views of Japan as weak, feminine and semi-civilized, and to rid itself of the unequal treaties, thereby facilitating acceptance into the circle of ‘civilized’ nations” while at the same time mitigating “criticism of military misconduct... as well as the broader concern in the West about its territorial aspirations in northeast Asia.”¹¹⁸

The Japanese military attempted to win over western nations with not just their brave conduct in battle but also with the objectives they chose. While the legations were under siege in Beijing, there were other pockets of foreigners besieged as well. One such location was the Beitang Cathedral. Because Boxers were hunting down Chinese Christians, 3,000 Chinese civilians took refuge at the Beitang Cathedral. At the Cathedral, forty-three French and Italian marines¹¹⁹ protected the thousands of civilians. Though the coalition had breached the walls of Beijing on the August 14, it was not until August 15 that French General Frey sought the assistance of the Russians and British to maneuver to the Cathedral and secure the people there.

¹¹⁷ Mikhailova and William, *Japan and Russia: Three Centuries of Mutual Images*, 56.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Dix, *The World's Navies in the Boxer Rebellion (China 1900)*, 236.

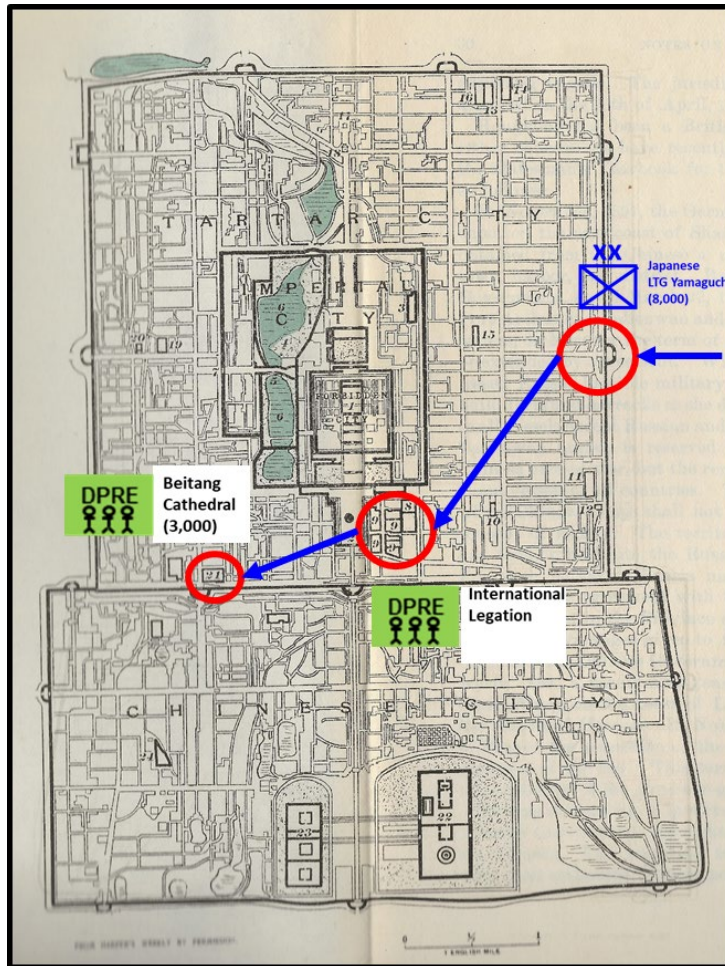


Figure 6. Japanese Route from Peking Gate to Relieving the Beitang Cathedral. War Department—Adjutant General’s Office, *Notes on China* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), Map insert between pages 30 and 31.

Upon reaching the Beitang Cathedral, the multi-national force discovered that the Japanese army had already lifted the siege there.¹²⁰ This is interesting because the Beitang Cathedral was not an objective that the Japanese happened to come across along their way from the point of breach at the Chihuanmen Gate en route to the legations. The Beitang Cathedral was over one and a quarter miles past the legations.¹²¹ Thus, it was a conscious decision for the Japanese military commander to maneuver through hostile territory to rescue non-combatants

¹²⁰ Dix, *The World’s Navies in the Boxer Rebellion (China 1900)*, 239.

¹²¹ War Department—Adjutant General’s Office, *Notes on China*, Map insert between pages 30 and 31.

who were not from Japan. The Japanese military secured these people to curry favor from the other Western nations.

Because of the Japanese efforts within the coalition, they won the respect of multiple foreigners. Major Charles H. Muir of the US 38th Infantry remarked, “[if] Japan can keep the armament and equipment on par with her soldiers she is a most valuable ally and a most formidable enemy.”¹²² While several of the nations treated each other with hostility and suspicion, one officer noted the friendly relations between Americans and Japanese soldiers, “the relations between the Americans and the Japanese are very cordial... [despite not] being able to speak a word of each other’s language.”¹²³ Though the Japanese defeated the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War, Japanese military prowess still did not impress the world as China had for years been seen as the “decrepit Sick Man of Asia.”¹²⁴ The Boxer War gave the dominant powers of the world the opportunity to better compare the professional bearing and strength of the Japanese versus the Russian military. A reverend attached to the British Force remarked that the Japanese, “...are brave men and will in the future have to be reckoned with, when international affairs are being discussed.”¹²⁵ Because of this comparison, and thus favorable impression, the Japanese would gain a strategic advantage of favor in international relations in subsequent conflicts between Russian and Japan.

Russian Lines of Effort and Operation

Besides the coalition’s line of operation, the Russians concentrated on an additional line of effort and operation. The Russians pursued a stability line of effort that was vastly different from the other coalition members. Russia wanted to preserve its special relationship with the

¹²² Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 362.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 505.

¹²⁴ Scott, *China and the International System 1840-1949: Power, Presence, and Perceptions in a Century of Humiliation*, 3.

¹²⁵ Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces*, 94.

Qing Dynasty rulers. The lease of the Chinese Eastern Railway, which cut across Manchuria, offered the Russians an incredible opportunity to consolidate its lines of communication. This lease allowed Russia to maintain a connection from Port Arthur, their leased warm water port, to Vladivostok,¹²⁶ and the Trans-Siberian Railway.

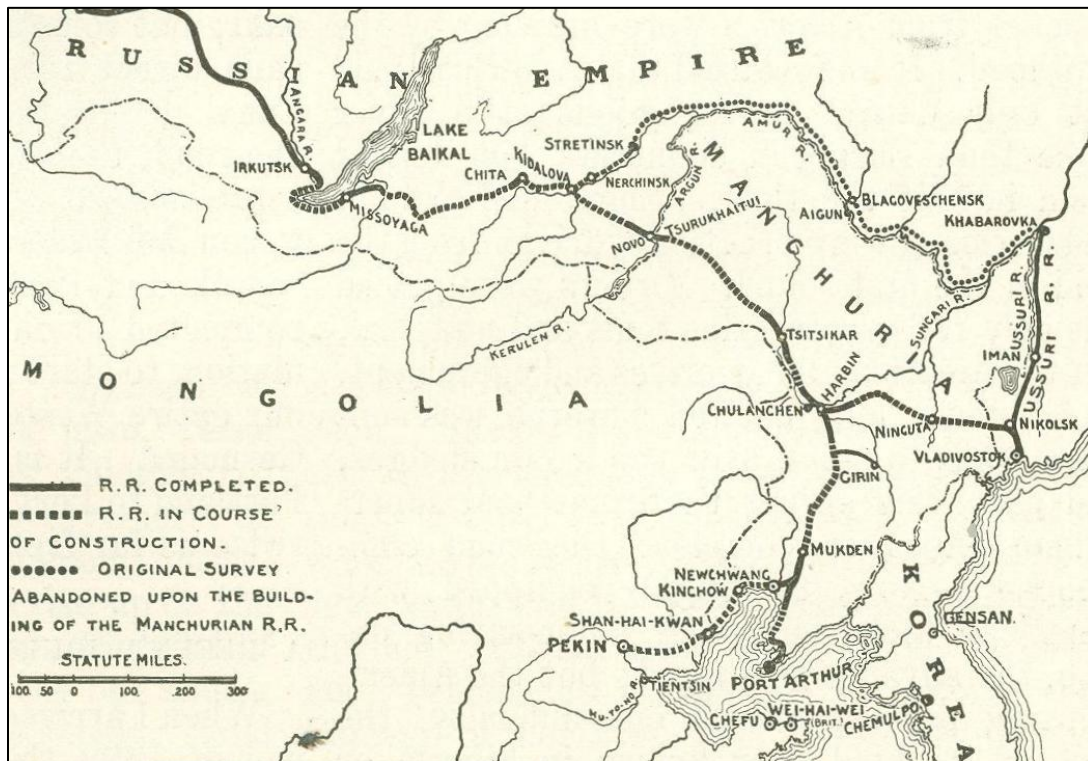


Figure 7. Chinese Eastern Railway and Transiberian Railway connecting key Russian locations as of November 1899. Alexander Hume Ford, “The Chinese Eastern Railway Sergey Friede” *McClure’s Magazine*, November 1899, accessed February 7, 2019, <http://www.digitalhistoryproject.com/2012/05/chinese-eastern-railway-sergey-friede.html>.

Fearing a deposed Qing Dynasty would threaten their opportunity to maintain this lease, Russia looked to prevent any disruption to these favorable terms. In pursuit of this line of effort, Russian military leaders continually advised their peers to limit military action and not overthrow the Qing leadership. Even before peace terms could be settled with the absent Qing government,

¹²⁶ Demonstrating the geopolitical significance of this port, the translation of Vladivostok means “ruler of the East.” For more information on Vladivostok, see Jim Slater, Roger Strange, and Limin Wang, eds., *Trade and Investment in China: The European Experience* (London: Routledge, 2003), 96.

Russian military leaders stated that their intent was to leave Beijing so as to coax the Chinese government to return and that it advised the other nations to follow their example.¹²⁷

While the majority of the coalition members focused on just one line of operation in the Beijing area, Russia was forced to focus on two lines of operation during this time period. While Russia was concerned about securing her international community in Beijing, she also wanted to protect the railway networks throughout Manchuria. Beginning in March 1900, the Boxer Rebellion had spread northeast into Manchuria however the region was not threatened beyond quickly suppressed “small disturbances at Haicheng, Liaoyang, and Mukden”¹²⁸ until the end of June. Following the seizure of the Dagu Forts on June 17, the Chinese government and military aligned with the Boxers and threatened Russia’s presence in the region.¹²⁹ Qing General Chin Chang with 50,000 forces positioned in the vicinity of Anshan, roughly eighty-five kilometers south of Mukden, initially assisted the Russian railroad garrison to protect the rails from the thousands of guerillas operating in the area.¹³⁰ These forces quickly turned against the Russians following a pronouncement from the three Chinese governors in the Manchurian area stating “all Russian railroad officials and guards... [must] leave Manchuria under Chinese escort...[and] transfer the line and property to the care of the Chinese.”¹³¹ With the Qing forces diverting the focus of Russian attention, Boxers destroyed about 200 miles of railroad track in Manchuria.¹³²

¹²⁷ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 513.

¹²⁸ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 53; Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 581.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 581-582.

¹³⁰ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 54.

¹³¹ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 581.

¹³² Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 53.

Boxers soon occupied most of the stations on the South Manchuria Railway, disrupting any traffic moving north and south.¹³³

Seeing their strategic investment in the Far East threatened,¹³⁴ Russia took steps to secure their interests. On June 25 the Russian government ordered “the mobilization of the troops in the Amur military district, for increasing the strength of the troops of Eastern Siberia, and the garrisons of Vladivostok and Port Arthur.”¹³⁵ Fearing that this initial mobilization orders would not be able to contain the growing threat, St. Petersburg, “a couple of weeks later [ordered] for the transfer of troops from European Russia... [and extended] the area of mobilization to the district of Siberia and territory of Semirechesk of the district of Turkestan.”¹³⁶ On July 11, 1900 Count Witte informed the Chinese that Russia intended to deploy troops to the area, but would withdraw them once the violence in the area subsided. Within three months, Russia “deployed six army corps, or about 100,000 troops, and occupied all of Manchuria.”¹³⁷

Beginning with an attack from July 15 to 19 of 18,000 Chinese on Blagoveshchensk, nearly 900 miles away from Beijing, hostilities in Manchuria would grow in both scope and scale.¹³⁸ While coalition forces were entering Beijing, Russian General Paul von Rennenkampf

¹³³ Bruce Elleman and Stephen Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: an International History* (Armonk: Routledge, 2009), accessed November 2, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central, 22.

¹³⁴ From initial construction in 1897 to the outbreak of hostilities in June 1900, “Russia had spent about one billion rubles— half on investments and half on operating costs, laid 850 miles of track, and had 208 locomotives and 5,400 cars in operation [on the Eastern and South Manchurian Railways]. These three years of expenditures represented nearly three-quarters of the total government budget for one year, and one-third of total foreign investment in China. The uprising destroyed or damaged two-thirds of this new railway system, meaning a staggering financial loss for the Russian government. [Finance Minister Sergei] Witte estimated damages of at least 50 million rubles.” *Ibid.*, 23.

¹³⁵ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 580.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Elleman and Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: an International History*, 22.

¹³⁸ Blagoveshchensk was “the chief place of the [Russian] Amur region, the residence of the military governor of the district, and the center of military, civil and judicial administration.” For more information on Blagoveshchensk and the span of Boxer hostilities, see Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of*

was maneuvering on and attacking Chinese forces along the Russian border in the vicinity of the Amur River.¹³⁹ As the coalition was occupying Beijing and attempting to make terms for peace in late September, Russians were still fighting groupings of 30,000 Chinese farther south in Manchuria along the Liaotung Peninsula.¹⁴⁰ Large scale Russian offensive operations concluded with the seizure of Mukden on October 2 and the link up of northern originating and southern originating Russian forces along the railway line at Tienlin on October 6, 1900.¹⁴¹ By the beginning of October “some fifty cities and towns- the most important in the three Manchurian provinces- were under the Russian heel.”¹⁴² Having secured Russian lines of communications in Manchuria, they should have redeployed their forces and transitioned requirements back over to the original rail security forces. However, due to a confluence of various factors - the remaining requirement for “suppression of roving bands of disorganized Chinese soldiers,” the arrival of cold winter weather which both slowed the tempo of troops moving over land and neutralized the ability for ships to sail on the frozen Shilka and Amur rivers, the lack of a functioning governance in the region, and the inherent self-interested desire to safeguard their strategic investment, “it was determined to retain temporarily a portion of the invading troops in Manchuria.”¹⁴³ This decision led Russia to establish a civil administration with over 177,000 officers and soldiers to govern the region.¹⁴⁴

Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China, 585; Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 54.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 593.

¹⁴² B.L. Putnam Weale, *Manchu and Muscovite* (London: Macmilland and CO., LTD: 1904), 471.

¹⁴³ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 58; Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 594, 599.

¹⁴⁴ Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun*, 58.

Because Russia entered into a coalition with the other seven nations, they were able to pursue their interests along two lines of operations. The Manchuria line of operation demanded a significant amount of Russia's military attention due to its sizeable investment, the massive expanse of land it traversed, and the large size of the enemy. Participating in a coalition in the Beijing line of operation lowered Russia's overall costs as it did not have to employ as many soldiers there and yet still had means to further its interests. Because Russia entered into a coalition, the Russian military could afford "limited commitment to operations in the... [Beijing] area,"¹⁴⁵ could concentrate their manpower in Manchuria, and achieve objectives in both areas of operations.

End state and conditions

When nations go to war, there is a time when military action ceases and diplomacy returns to the forefront of international relations. The military coalition agreed upon and pursued a commonly accepted set of end states and conditions¹⁴⁶ so that the diplomats could eventually return to the lead. However, these agreed upon conditions were not the only ends that nations were pursuing as they each had their own national aims. That being said, the Japanese and Russian military commanders pursued unique end state and conditions, driven by national aims, at the end of the Boxer Rebellion.

Coalition end state

When the coalition initially formed with the Seymour expedition, the agreed upon end state was rescuing the besieged legations in Beijing.¹⁴⁷ As time passed and the situation changed,

¹⁴⁵ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 76.

¹⁴⁶ ADRP 1-02 defines end state as, "The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives." US Army, *ADRP 1-02*, 1-34.

¹⁴⁷ Specifically, the first military council on June 5 agreed that, "The purpose of the coalition was to protect the lives and properties of their countrymen via a peaceful and defensive mission, which in no way was directed against the Chinese government. Actions of the coalition should be taken according to the desires and with the consent of the ministers, and it behooved the commanders to act in concert. If the ministers in [Beijing] were isolated and communicating with them was impossible, and if time permitted, the commanders should consult their superior naval authorities. If affairs were so serious and urgent that

the end states also adjusted. With the Qing government abandoning Beijing and other cities in northeastern Asia, the imperial powers took it upon themselves to garrison the towns and establish military governments.¹⁴⁸ Since the Qing military was no longer suppressing the Boxers, some of the coalition members decided to advance deeper into China to defeat the Boxers harassing their missionaries.¹⁴⁹ Overall though, the eight nations could not cease their military operations until the ruling government signed terms of peace. Contrary to the suspicions that the Manchu Court held, the foreign powers had no unified aims of replacing the rulers.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, the military secured their lines of communication and population areas until the government could be convinced to return to the Forbidden Palace and sign peace terms.

Japanese end state

During the initial negotiations Japan wanted to maintain the status quo in China and prevent the ambitious aims of other countries from carving the nation up. Thus, prior to embarking on the campaign, Japanese foreign minister Aoki Shuzo stated that “after suppressing the Boxers and restoring order in China, all countries should simultaneously withdraw their forces...Japan’s decision on whether to send an increased force depends on your reply.”¹⁵¹ Though the eight country alliance agreed on the conditions of restoring order to China, once the coalition reached Beijing matters became complicated. Because the Manchu Court left Beijing

time did not permit such consultation, the commanders should consult with each other and act without further consultation with authorities”; Otsuka, “Coalition Coordination During the Boxer Rebellion: How Twenty-Seven ‘Councils of Senior Naval Commanders’ Contributed to the Conduct of Operations,” 120-121.

¹⁴⁸ Norie, *Official Account of the Military Operations in China 1900-1901*, 91-92; Nield, *China’s Foreign Place: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1943*, 244.

¹⁴⁹ “During the fall and winter expeditions were sent out over the country surrounding [Beijing], some of them going a hundred miles or more from the city. These were called ‘punitive expeditions,’ and were given prominence by the German contingent on its arrival... there were about fifty of these expeditions during the fall and winter and spring, and most of them by the Germans.” Brigadier General. Aaron Simon Daggett, *America in the China Relief Expedition* (Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1903), 141-142.

¹⁵⁰ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 313, 247.

¹⁵¹ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 46.

before the coalition arrived, Japan and the other countries debated when they could safely redeploy their armies. The concern was less over ensuring proper governance established by the Chinese but rather “...whether the various governments involved [in the coalition] would live up to their promises to withdraw speedily.”¹⁵² Chief among Japan’s concern was whether or not Russia would depart, or use this as an opportunity to extend its sphere of influence from Manchuria further south.¹⁵³ War Minister Prince Taro Katsura argued that though Russia’s intentions were a concern, the value of the other coalition partners’ opinions far outweighed it. Pleading his case to his fellow countrymen, Katsura stated, “Japan, having joined the civilized countries of the world...must not put a foot wrong at this stage...If we are to complete our meritorious task satisfactorily, it is necessary for us speedily to remove the majority of our troops and not lose the goodwill of the so-called powers.”¹⁵⁴ The Europeans were not the only ones the Japanese sought goodwill from. On August 22, Prince Ito Hirobumi proposed to Prime Minister Yamagata Aitomo that this quick withdrawal would “demonstrate that she did not have any territorial ambitions and would thus [also] gain the goodwill of China.”¹⁵⁵ This aim to eventually achieve goodwill, coupled with the fact that “such a sizeable expedition had been a substantial drain on the Japanese exchequer,”¹⁵⁶ caused Japanese military commanders to begin withdrawing troops at their earliest convenience. The 9th Brigade was the first withdrawn directly to Hiroshima in October and the remaining units redeployed in the following months.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 47.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁵⁵ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 48.

¹⁵⁶ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 78.

¹⁵⁷ Steinberg, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, 49; Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 78.

Russian Endstate

The Russian endstate in the legation relief coalition was driven by two primary factors - ensuring that Russia's position of advantage was maintained with the Chinese government and protecting Russian investments in Manchuria. Prior to the coalition's advance on Beijing, Russia and the Manchu Court had been on good terms with one another. Russia enjoyed many favorable agreements granted by the Qing Dynasty. However, the future of these terms was put into question when the coalition occupied Beijing. Because the Empress Cixi and her court fled, there was no one to negotiate with. If the court failed to return to Beijing and reclaim power, authority would then pass on to the numerous viceroys throughout China.¹⁵⁸ If the dynasty lost control, Russia would be forced to reform new agreements and negotiate with several parties instead of just one to secure its interests. In view of this, the tsar recommended a "softly softly approach ...intended to hasten the return to the capital of the Chinese court."¹⁵⁹

Shortly after the seizure of Beijing, on August 25, Russians announced that they would withdraw their legation and troops from Beijing to Tianjin.¹⁶⁰ Russia was not alone trying to withdraw from the capital but rather, Count Vladimir Lamsdorf, the interim head of the Russian foreign ministry, invited the other imperial powers as early as August 21 to follow its lead.¹⁶¹ General Nikolai Petrovitch Linievitch planned to redeploy the majority of his forces from Beijing, leaving only one battalion of rifles and one company of sappers to guard Russian representatives

¹⁵⁸ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 78.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Robert Bickers and R. G Tiedemann, eds., *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), accessed November 2, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central, 180.

negotiating with Li Hung Chang and Prince Ching.¹⁶² On September 13, the Russians began their retrograde over sixteen days, motivated by “idealism and self interest.”¹⁶³

The Russians were motivated by self interest because, “Manchuria was Russia’s top priority... [Beijing] only secondary.”¹⁶⁴ While all the other countries were collectively negotiating terms for peace with the Manchu Court, Russia secretly tried to make their own deal. Russia demanded seven conditions:

- 1) a large indemnity to cover railway damages; 2) Russian control over Manchurian administration; 3) exclusion of foreign concessions from Manchuria, Mongolia, and North China, as well as exclusion of Chinese railway development in Manchuria and Mongolia; 4) replacement of England with Russia for the collection of Manchurian customs; 5) Russian control of the Yingkou-Shanhaiguan section of the Yingkou-Tianjin Railway (a railway financed by British loans); 6) additional tax preferences for the overland railway trade; and 7) expansion of the Liaodong concession to include Jinzhou.¹⁶⁵

While the other countries were content on just receiving indemnity payments, guarantees for protections of its citizens, and assurances of common access to Chinese markets, Russia wanted to take advantage of the situation and solidify its strategic advantage in the Far East.

Negotiating these separate terms allowed Russia to position itself in a more favorable position after the conflict. Russian leaders needed to secure Port Arthur “not only because it was ice-free but because she also needed this foothold on the southern mainland of China in order to take advantage of what she foresaw as the impending collapse of China.”¹⁶⁶ Russia still faced the prospect that they had not defeated the Boxers, “[they] and their supporters had not been defeated

¹⁶² Chaffee, *Extracts from the Report of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, Commanding United States Troops on Military Operations in China*, 513.

¹⁶³ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 77.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶⁵ Elleman and Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: An International History*, 23.

¹⁶⁶ R.M. Connaughton, *The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear* (London: Routledge, 1988), 4-5.

but had merely gone to ground – a position similar to obtaining in [Zhihli] province in China.”¹⁶⁷ While none of the other countries attempted to expand their territorial holdings in China, Russia ended the conflict occupying three provinces in Manchuria.¹⁶⁸ The Russian government needed to end this conflict in a favorable position because it intended to “tip the balance of power in Northeast Asia in Russia’s favor by permitting rapid troop deployments as well as the militarization of the Russian side of the border... [so as to] prevent a repetition of the unfavorable balance of power of the 1880s, when China had compelled Russia to return territory.”¹⁶⁹

Conclusion

In the late 1890s, Japan and Russia viewed each other as adversaries vying for future control and influence of northeastern Asia to support their own domestic agendas. Despite their national differences in strategic aims and objectives, both nations’ militaries entered into a coalition with each other as well as six other nations. Motivated by fear, honor, and interests, Japanese and Russian militaries aimed to achieve immediate military goals but also influence long term advantages for their own nations. Only by operating with their adversary could they accomplish this.

It has been 120 years since the multinational force relieved the legations during the Boxer Rebellion. Many of the military and diplomatic environments have changed since then, however the lessons of this campaign are still valuable today. Much like how in 1900 the imperial nations were all competing with one another, the United States 2017 National Security Strategy states

¹⁶⁷ Nish, *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*, 85.

¹⁶⁸ Elleman and Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: an International History*, 22.

¹⁶⁹ In 1871 Russian troops occupied the Ili Valley in China’s Western Province of Xinjiang. They forced the Qing government to cede the territory in 1879 in the Treaty of Livadia. However, the territory was quickly returned back to the Chinese two years later in the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881) when China mobilized forces along the borders in Manchuria and Xinjiang threatening indefensible Russian territory. For more information on the transfer of Ili Valley between China and Russia, see Scott, *China and the International System, 1840-1949*, 65,70,103-105; Elleman and Kotkin, *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: An International History*, 28.

that Russia, Iran, VEOs, North Korea and China are “actively competing against” us as adversaries.¹⁷⁰ We see ourselves in a time of great power competition where both Russia and China are attempting to establish themselves as regional hegemons and challenge our influence in their regions of the world.

If the US wants to maintain its position as leader in the world, it must demonstrate its leadership. Opportunities to demonstrate this leadership will arise with global challenges whether they be disaster relief, ensuring freedom of navigation in contested waters, or responding to security challenges in failed states. Rising hegemons of China and Russia will also intervene in these situations in order to secure interests and curry favor from the rest of the world. Challenges like these are opportunities for collaboration. In order to safeguard our own national interests the United States must fulfill its commitments to, “[stand] ready to cooperate across areas of mutual interest with both countries.”¹⁷¹ Through collaboration we can compete with both Russia and China, thus influencing their short term and long term goals while projecting our own. By competing with these nations successfully, we set the conditions to maintain a stable order that is favorable to our view of the world, or if necessary, improve our footing to win in conflict.

This case study about Japan and Russia, though removed in time and space from America’s current conflicts, offers operational artists and policy makers many valuable lessons learned. John Lewis Gaddis once remarked “that if we can widen the range of experience beyond what we as individuals have encountered, if we can draw upon the experiences of others who’ve had to confront comparable situations in the past, then – although there are no guarantees- our *chances* of acting wisely should increase proportionally.”¹⁷² By studying conflicts like the Boxer

¹⁷⁰ “National Security Strategy of the United States of America” accessed January 19, 2019, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>, 25.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁷² John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.

Rebellion, readers can build on the right lessons to better exploit future opportunities that present themselves.

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