1984

Russian-American relations in northeast Asia during the nineteenth century

Donald Blinn Wenger

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RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN NORTHEAST ASIA DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN NORTHEAST ASIA
DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Donald B. Wenger
1984
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved, December 1984

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature and progress of Russo-American relations. The study addresses two principal questions. Why, at the end of the nineteenth century, did the long Russo-American friendship turn into a bitter rivalry? Why was Manchuria prized sufficiently by each to risk jeopardizing this friendship? In answering these questions an attempt is made to view the relationship from both the Russian and American standpoints, since the actions of one, whether economic, political or military, frequently prompted counter-moves from the other.

To obtain a broad perspective the whole century is included. It was over this entire time frame that the relationship first flourished and then quickly withered. Attention is centered on Northeast Asia, for it was in that region that Russian-American interactions were most numerous and where the expansionist drives of both nations finally intersected. The study traces how the geographic gap was gradually bridged across the North Pacific.

Throughout the century these interactions stemmed primarily from the initiatives of private individuals and businesses--fur hunters, whalers, merchants and entrepreneurs. Consideration of these private contacts and the process through which the two governments were slowly drawn into confrontation provides one of the underlying themes explaining the estrangement.

In order to understand the historic foundations of the amicable relations, attention is directed at the high degree of cooperation displayed during the 1850s and 1860s. Highlighted are the circumstances surrounding the benevolent neutrality exhibited toward Russia during the Crimean War and Russia's reciprocation during the American Civil War. Although both governments were drawn more deeply into the affairs of Northeast Asia, the results at mid-century seemed mutually beneficial. Russia acquired the Amur region, and the United States was permitted to purchase Alaska.

By contrast, examination of the escalating events of the 1890s--the political turmoil in Korea, the construction of Russia's Siberian railroad, the defeat of China by Japan, the subsequent diplomatic successes of Russia and the projection of American seapower into the Far East--reveals heightened competition between Russia and the United States and deteriorating relations. The Russian advance into Manchuria, which appeared about to frustrate America's own last opportunity to gain a foothold in Northeast Asia, was viewed with particular concern.

The study concludes with an outline of the pressures placed on the McKinley administration to safeguard American interests in Manchuria and an analysis of the procedures adopted. The policy promulgated by the first open door notes is shown to have been a tactic designed primarily to check Russian expansion into Manchuria. American insistence on an open door policy and Russian resistance to it brought to a close the long period of previously unquestioned friendship.

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RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN NORTHEAST ASIA

DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY
INTRODUCTION

At the outset, my intentions for this dissertation were to examine the general question of why, toward the end of the nineteenth century, had Russia and the United States, after a long tradition of friendship, become unfriendly rivals? What had caused this estrangement? The more recent and dramatic shift from Grand Alliance to Cold War undoubtedly stimulated my curiosity in this similar, if less spectacular transformation some fifty years earlier. I found that many accomplished historians, whose interest may also have been piqued by the contemporary Soviet-American power struggle, had already examined various aspects of previous Russian-American relations. Yet none of these historical studies addressed either this particular question or answered it completely to my satisfaction.

When the basic question was raised at all, a consensus seemed to agree with Edward Zabriskie. In his *American-Russian Rivalry 1895-1914*, Zabriskie includes a valuable and comprehensive review of the diplomatic exchanges which characterized the latter stages of the rivalry, but does not overly concern himself with searching for the basic causes. To him, and to many others, the rivalry occurred rather suddenly as the "result of the economic competition in Manchuria which began as early as 1895." This succinct answer, while having much to offer, spawned in my mind a whole host of nagging secondary questions. Why was relatively remote Manchuria suddenly considered of such vital economic concern to both Russia and the United States as to risk the disruption
of a previously cordial relationship? Why was the United States more upset by the Russian expansion into Manchuria than it had been with the Russian advances into Central Asia, the Amur basin, the Maritime provinces or Sakhalin Island? Why had not the United States concentrated on the far larger commercial markets in South and Central China, particularly along those coastal regions opposite its newly acquired entrepot in the Philippine Islands? Why had not the United States taken equal exception to the growing German, English, French and Japanese spheres of influence in China? In its search for markets why was the United States not equally concerned about the Russian market in general and the Asiatic Russian market in particular? For its part, why was Russia so reluctant to concede an open door policy in Manchuria? And so on.

My first inclination, much like Zabriskie, had been to examine, in detail, the Russian-American relationships during the period between the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. But to answer these questions at all adequately, I felt compelled to reappraise the earlier basis for friendship and search for the roots of the rivalry. This necessitated broadening the scope of the investigation in several directions. First, the period under investigation was extended backward to include the entire nineteenth century. This, in turn, resulted in expanding the geographical area of interest to all of Northeast Asia and to include extra-governmental relationships as well.

Charles Stewart Todd, a Kentucky politician and businessman, expressed a commonly held belief regarding the foundation of the Russian-American friendship. Having returned from serving four years as the United States minister to St. Petersburg, Todd declared in 1846 that Russia and the United States "are destined to be the best of neighbors, because they are so far off." At mid-century most Americans and
Russians probably agreed with Todd. If they thought of Russia at all, Americans generally viewed the northern empire from a single perspective. To them, Russia was remotely located eastward, beyond the North Atlantic. The established European states lay in between, acting as a barrier to direct contact and any possibility of a clash of interests between the two nations. Russia and the United States, each as expanding powers, could grow in strength on their own continent, isolated from one another and, therefore, remain in amicable harmony. Yet across the far distances of the North Pacific, and at first largely ignored in St. Petersburg and in Washington, Americans by mid-century had long been in vigorous and direct contact with Russian subjects and were, on occasion, actually encroaching on Russian-claimed territory. In most respects, as James Field has argued, the United States may have had an Atlantic orientation, but the main approach to Russia was across the North Pacific to Siberia. It was in the Pacific that the safe separation of the two powers was narrowed and put at risk.

As has been emphasized by such historians as Richard Van Alstyne and Walter LaFeber, the United States did not suddenly or unconsciously embark on an overseas expansionist path in the 1890's. The climax of imperialism at the end of the century was not an accident or an aberration, but can only be understood in the context of American activity during earlier decades. The same holds true in attempting to understand the shift in Russian-American relations. While Van Alstyne and LaFeber gave manifold examples of early American interest in the Caribbean, Hawaii and East Asia, they could as readily have included similar manifestations of Americans confronting Russians in Northeast Asia which preceded and set the stage for the enunciation of the "open door" policy.
Howard Kushner, in his *Conflict on the Northwest Coast*, and others have described the considerable interaction between the "Boston men" and the employees of the Russian-American Company. But the conflict was not confined to the Northwest coast of North America. It extended, early in the century, to the very shores of Asiatic Russia. Americans came there in increasing numbers. Merchants set up shop on Kamchatka and at the mouth of the Amur. Whalers swarmed into the Okhotsk Sea and made themselves at home on the beaches. Naval surveyors charted Siberia's coastal waters for safe passages and searched for coal deposits ashore on Russian territory. Unfortunately, only a relatively few scattered and sketchy accounts are available upon which to judge the extent of this interaction. For every John Ledyard, Peter Dobell, John D'Holf or William Collins, there were hundreds of other Americans who ventured into Northeast Asia, but left no record. Nevertheless, these trans-Pacific pioneers widened the knowledge of Northeast Asia in American circles and gradually set the stage for later events. Their impact on Russia was even greater, as can be seen from such Russian sources as Semon B. Okun's *The Russian-American Company* and P. A. Tikhmenev's *A History of the Russian-American Company*. They present additional details concerning the American presence on Russian soil and the Russian reactions to these incursions. Such conflicts that did arise from these early Russian-American confrontations rarely involved the two governments, both of which largely maintained a "hands-off" policy regarding the actions of their citizens in these remote regions. And, since Asiatic Russia frequently depended on American seaborne commerce, a degree of cooperation was usually maintained that enhanced the traditional friendship. Yearly, however, the gulf between the Russian empire and the North American republic
was being bridged by these extra-governmental contacts and the prime basis for the friendship was eroding. By 1895 the American minister to Russia recognized the transition which had long been taking place and was warning that while "under old conditions we never came into contact . . . under modern conditions we are" and that "the difficulties increase of honorably maintaining that friendly relationship which was formerly never put to the test."  

As the century progressed, two trends materialized. First, the focus of Russian-American interaction shifted across the Pacific from Alaska to Kamchatka and thence southward to the Okhotsk Sea to the Amur basin and finally to Manchuria. The rivalry in Manchuria was but the latest of a whole series of Russian-American confrontations in the region which had led to both cooperation and to competition. By the end of the century both nations still had interests which extended beyond the confines of Manchuria. And while the status of Manchuria had become the chief immediate issue, the stakes were greater than just the commerce of Manchuria. The perceptions of both protagonists were shaped by what had already transpired between them. Manchuria was seen as the key toward domination of not only Northeast Asia, but perhaps of the rest of Asia and the North Pacific as well.

Second, the official governments began to play an increasingly active and continuous role in the region. In previous decades, both conflicts and agreements were primarily among private individuals or businesses. The two governments intervened only sporadically and even then, because of slow communications, allowed the official on the scene a relatively free hand. At the end of the century, first the Russian government and then the United States, largely at the urging of the private groups concerned, decided to accept more direct
involvement. By the time the rivalry reached the Manchurian phase it had turned into a government-to-government affair and, therefore, of more significance than previous encounters.

In attempting to reconstruct some pattern in the earlier decades of Russian-American contact across the Pacific, I was struck by the degree of sensitivity which the countrymen of each nation exhibited toward the activities of the other. When Russians acted, Americans reacted and vice versa. When one group became successful at exploiting fur hunting or whaling, the other followed suit. When one opened up new territory, whether it was the Amur or Japan or Korea, the other was right behind. When American influence in Asiatic Russia appeared threatening, Russia tightened centralized control and encouraged more Russian settlers. When Russia constructed the Siberian railroad, Americans dreamed of an integrated transportation system connecting the West Coast with all of Asia. Neither could stand by and let the other have a free hand in Manchuria so their interests intersected.

To view these interactions as completely and as objectively as possible, it was necessary to look at the relations in Northeast Asia from the vantage point of both Russia and the United States. This was not always possible to accomplish evenhandedly, given the imbalance of reference material readily available, but an attempt was made. The work of B. A. Romanov and Andrew Malozemoff, although chiefly concerned with events leading up to the Russo-Japanese War, cited many Russian documents and provided very useful background and motivation for the Russian expansion into Manchuria. These, together with clippings from Russian newspapers forwarded by the American embassy, published selections from the Red Archives and a
scattering of other Russian documents, provided a rewarding, if
limited glimpse of the Russian-held image of America. Ironically,
the Russian authorities were, in many respects, earlier and more
closely attuned to the consequences of the trans-Pacific activities
of the American pioneers than Washington officialdom. At an early
stage they had extrapolated from the American advance to the West
Coast and Alaska, gauged the effect of an unchecked American destiny
in Asiatic Russia, and taken measures to prevent too much infiltration.

The changes in American attitudes toward Russia were more
easily traced in newspaper and magazine articles. These attitudes,
particularly toward the end of the century were affected by more than
the rivalry in Northeast Asia. They also reflected disapproval of
what would be termed today a lack of Russian concern for human rights.
It had long been recognized that the traditional friendship existed
between the two countries, despite diametrically opposed political
and social systems. At century's end, improved communications,
greater travel to Russia, and the influx of Russian immigrants to the
United States made it far more difficult to ignore these differences.
Thomas A. Bailey and William A. Williams, in their general explications
of Russian-American relations have included much of the material which
caused a worsening opinion of Russia by Americans.9 To be balanced,
the contemporary Russian criticism of American lynchings, materialism
and corruption would have to be included. I have avoided the issue
of this propaganda and counter-propaganda, except as it affected the
major power alignments in Asia. For example, at mid-century Americans
seemed to accept Russian expansion as a beneficial spreading of European
civilization. Later, they were more concerned that the sweep of
Anglo-American democratic civilization would be stemmed by Slavic
autocratic militarism. This change in attitude I considered a significant factor impinging on relations in Northeast Asia.

Which raises the point of the Anglo-American rapprochement toward the end of the century. Unlike William L. Langer, in his The Diplomacy of Imperialism 1890-1902, I have not attempted to untangle the whole skein of international relations surrounding Northeast Asia. Instead, a strenuous effort has been made to filter out only those threads connecting Russia and America. But Anglo-American relations cannot be entirely excluded, for another firm basis for the Russian-American friendship, aside from the great geographical separation, had always been a shared antipathy toward the international policies of Great Britain. The growing American rapprochement with England toward the end of the century could be considered as a cause for the weakening bond with Russia. Or, taking a slightly different view, the more intense rivalry with Russia may have led the United States to seek closer ties with Great Britain. In either case, Anglo-American relations could not be considered entirely extraneous.

Next, I was not convinced that the rivalry was determined solely, or even principally, by economic motives. That material interests strongly influenced Russian-American relations in Northeast Asia is well documented in such studies as those by Charles Campbell, Thomas McCormick and Marilyn Young, as well as all the various sources that dealt with the work of Sergei Witte as Russia's finance minister. But most of these studies are weighted heavily in favor of historical materialism. It is relatively simple to comprehend and explain the finite terms of economic measurement, to tabulate the number of cotton sheetings exported to Manchuria, or to compare the dollar values of kerosene exports. Far more formidable is the task of gauging such
psychological motives as the search for glory, the sense of mission, or the drive for power. Moreover, economic motives were often, at least by Americans, articulated as rationalizations to mask what were considered to be less respectable imperialistic motives. Such rationalizations cropped up throughout the century in the words of Aaron Palmer, Matthew Perry, William Seward, the Adams brothers, and the publicists of the American Asiatic Association, to cite a few examples. I have attempted, not necessarily successfully, to offer at least some hints of these other underlying motives which drove Americans to Russia's back door.

Finally, the enunciation of the "open door" policy by the United States in 1899 was taken as an appropriate event on which to conclude. The relations between the United States and Russia were to worsen in subsequent years, but that would have little bearing on the origins of the quarrel. The diplomatic efforts in formulating and seeking agreement with its open door policy was the first overt manifestation of the American government's intense distrust of Russian aims. The gauntlet had been thrown and the Russian government knew it was being forced to respond and openly declare its intentions. The sequence of events leading up to the reluctant and limited acceptance of the "open door" policy has been amply constructed by such historians as A. Whitney Griswold, Tyler Dennett, Alfred L. P. Dennis and Paul Varg.¹² My approach differs in only one respect. The prism I have held up to the "open door" sequence filtered out all but a concentrated Russian-American pattern. From this pattern I have concluded that the American policy was deliberately designed as a check on further expansion of Russia into Manchuria and that the
Russian government was fully cognizant of American intentions. The "open door" policy was the culmination of a century of confrontation in Northeast Asia and the final acknowledgment that the traditional friendship was at an end.
NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION


7 Breckenridge to Secretary of State, December 24, 1895, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, National Archives (elsewhere cited as RG 59 N. A.).


CHAPTER I
FUR TRADING

The Russian-American confrontation in the Pacific Northwest, which culminated in the sale of Alaska to the United States, has been well chronicled. Because it was on a much smaller scale at first, the history of the American interests across the Pacific, which converged with Russian positions in Siberia, is less well known. These early American enterprises in Northeast Asia cannot be studied in complete isolation from events along the Northwest coast. Until 1867, Russian-America provided a backdrop and rationale for the ambitions and expansionist drives of both the Russians and the Americans in the Pacific. Only occasionally during the first quarter century did their activity overlap in Asiatic Russia, and when it did, received little, if any, official notice in the United States. The imperial government and the officials of the Russian-American Company, however, scrutinized closely the few American incursions on their Asiatic shores. These early interactions can largely be summed up by examining the experiences of four Americans—John Ledyard, John D'Wolf, Peter Dobell and William Pigot. Among them, they had the distinction of travelling overland across Siberia and European Russia a total of six, and almost seven, times. Although three of them kept journals of their travels, only Ledyard, the man who did not complete his trans-Siberian travels, has achieved any lasting renown in the
United States. Nevertheless, these four, plus the other American ship captains, who left no record of similar voyages to Siberia, were every bit as much the pathfinding pioneers to Northeast Asia as the "mountain men" were in finding ways to cross the Rockies. And these early pioneers did leave lasting impressions in Russia which shaped Russian attitudes and policies in the region.

The first confrontation took place August 18, 1787 in Irkutsk, the provincial capital of Siberia, between John Ledyard, itinerant American traveller, and Grigorii Shelikhov, a leading Russian fur merchant. Shelikhov had only recently returned to Irkutsk from a three year voyage in the North Pacific, during which he had founded the first Russian settlement on Kodiak Island. This settlement formed the nucleus around which Russian-America later expanded. Shelikhov had conceived of broad plans to assimilate the Kuriles, the Aleutians and regions of North America into the Russian empire and to develop commerce with China, Japan, the Philippines, Spanish-America and the Amur region. As a first step in carrying out these projects, Shelikhov and his associates were busily engaged in persuading Siberian Governor-General Yakobi to endorse their petition to the imperial government for exclusive monopolistic rights to fur trading in the new territories and for measures "to discourage those who might have pretensions in those parts, and to stop the encroachment of other nations."2

While attending to these ambitious pursuits, Shelikhov must have been disconcerted to meet, deep in Central Siberia, Ledyard, a man who definitely harbored such pretensions. Though nominally interested in natural history and anthropological researches, Ledyard
seemed chiefly to seek information about Russian discoveries in eastern Siberia and Northwest America. Ledyard himself had some first-hand knowledge of the North Pacific and eagerly sought more. As a corporal of marines, Ledyard had been a member of Cook's third voyage of exploration. During the course of that expedition, Ledyard was set ashore to scout around Unalaska in order to determine whether any Europeans had preceded them to the Aleutian Islands. Guided by two Aleuts, he made the two-day journey inland, arriving at night at a camp. Ledyard recorded this first encounter with Russians.

To my joy and surprise I discovered that the two men who held me by each arm were two Europeans, fair and comely, and concluded from their appearance they were Russians, which I soon after found to be true.3

During his time in the Cook expedition, Ledyard also learned valuable geographic information. He spent several months in Kamchatka when his ship twice visited Avacha Bay near Petropavlovsk. It was during these stays that Ledyard gained a sense of how the Russians had established commercial and communication connections stretching from St. Petersburg via Okhotsk and Kamchatka at least as far as Unalaska. Without this insight, it is doubtful whether even the intrepid Ledyard would have imagined a west-to-east passage through Russia to America.

Most important, Ledyard learned, along with the others of Cook's crew, what it was that had brought the Russians across the Pacific to the Aleutians. In March 1778 the Resolution, the ship in which Ledyard sailed, had moored in Nootka Sound for the purpose of replenishing fresh water and obtaining timber for spars. In his journal, Ledyard noted that "this country will appear most to advantage respects the variety of animals, and the richness of their furs."
The crew bartered for a quantity of furs thinking to make warm clothing of them. Only later, during their stop at Kamchatka, did they realize the profit for which the furs could be sold at the Russian factory. The crew's regret in not loading aboard four times as many furs was heightened later when they discovered that the selling price for furs in Canton was more than double that at Kamchatka. Ledyard estimated "that skins which did not cost the purchaser six pence sterling sold in China for 100 dollars."4

The potential for profit from fur trade made a deep impression on Ledyard. Upon his return to America in 1783 he quickly wrote and published an account of the Cook expedition and then became preoccupied with plans for a mercantile venture to the Pacific Northwest. For several years he canvassed the Northeastern seaports for financial backing, but no merchant entrepreneur was yet willing to hazard his money on Ledyard's unsubstantiated story. They thought that his schemes were wild and visionary. Unable to interest supporters at home, Ledyard took his plans to Paris and London, but the magnitude of his designs were overmatched by misfortune. Repeatedly his attempts to reach the Pacific Northwest by sea were frustrated.

Ledyard began contemplating his overland journey through Russia to the Pacific in late 1785. Thomas Jefferson, then minister to France, may have suggested the enterprise. He certainly encouraged Ledyard and attempted to obtain for him a passport permitting the passage. Despite the refusal of Empress Catherine to grant the requested passport (she thought the project "chimerical"), Ledyard set out in December 1786 and reached St. Petersburg in March 1787.

Ledyard received help from a chance acquaintance, an officer in the entourage of Paul, the heir to the throne. Through him, he
procured an internal passport from a provincial administrative board and travel orders from the post office as an "American nobleman." Despite his newly elevated social status, he travelled as a "messenger" to avoid expense. As in so many other of his projects, the indefatigable Ledyard almost carried off his ambitious plan. By the middle of August 1787, he had reached Irkutsk, two-thirds of the way across Siberia. From then on, though, persons and events conspired to thwart his venture. To Ledyard the opportunity to question Shelikhov about Russian trade and settlements in the North Pacific must have seemed an unexpectedly fortunate circumstance. Judging solely from the entry in Ledyard's journal concerning the meeting, relations between Ledyard and Shelikhov were good.

Went this morning to see a Merchant owner of a Vessel that had passed from Kamschatka to different parts of the Coast of America. Shewed some charts rudely descriptive of his voyages. He says there are on different parts of the Coast of America 2000 Russians: and that as near as he can judge the number of skins produced by them in that Country amount of 12000: has a Vessel of his own at Okhotsk. Which leaves that Country for America next Summer, and offers me a passage in her.

Ledyard's persistent curiosity about Russian possessions and Russian trade and his dissimulation about his own participation in the Cook expedition, aroused deep suspicions in the minds of both Shelikhov and Yakobi as to Ledyard's intentions. And not all his questions concerned the Pacific Northwest. Many questions pertained to the Kurile Islands and the Russian enterprises there. When he was unable to obtain information on the Kuriles, Ledyard was reported to have stated "that those who are stronger will surely have the first right to occupy those islands." The eagerness with which Ledyard sought to join the "Northeastern secret expedition" of Captain Billings added to the doubts of the Russian authorities. Billings, an
Englishman in the employ of Russia, was a previous shipmate of Ledyard's from the days of the Cook expedition. Billings' mission was to explore Northeast Asia and the islands in the North Pacific. From these factors, and perhaps through deliberate misrepresentation by Ledyard, Yakobi deduced that the American traveller had been 'sent here by the English Crown for reconnaissance of the local situation.'

Among Ledyard's claims were that "about ten thousand people of various European nationalities" were dwelling on the shores north of California. He also boasted that during the Cook expedition "some of the people living near Chukot were made English subjects." 7

After Ledyard had spent ten days in Irkutsk, Yakobi decided to send him on his way to Yakutsk "where there are fewer opportunities for the fulfillment of his intentions." Yakobi took the precaution, though, of warning the commandant at Yakutsk against Ledyard's "shifty enterprises" and instructed the commandant, while giving Ledyard an hospitable reception, to detain him inconspicuously by stressing the difficulties of a winter passage to Okhotsk. Although dejected by the thought of the winter delay, Ledyard continued his "shifty enterprises," questioning the great number of Russian merchants and traders in town about the places they had been. Tiring of his stay in Yakutsk, Ledyard gladly joined Billings when he proposed to return to Irkutsk to pick up supplies for his expedition. But when Ledyard returned to Irkutsk, he was arrested and deported from Russia at the express order of the Empress Catherine. 8

Many reasons for Ledyard's arrest and deportation have been suggested in the past. One held that the Russians believed that Ledyard was a French spy. Another attributed the deportation to Catherine's concern for Ledyard's safety. Yet another placed the
blame on Ledyard for alleged disorderly conduct. Ledyard himself was never offered any explanation. The most plausible account was first advanced by Ledyard's biographer, Jared Sparks. Based on circumstantial evidence, Sparks surmised, correctly as it turns out, that the plot to halt Ledyard was conceived in Irkutsk by the merchants engaged in the Pacific fur trade who feared foreign competition. Most recently Bolkhovitinov has confirmed Spark's theory from Russian documents. Using Shelikhov's notes on his conversation with Ledyard as a basis, the Irkutsk governor-general in November 1787 dispatched an extensive report on the activities of the "American nobleman John Ledyard" to A. A. Bezborodko, secretary to the Empress. Based on this report, Catherine, in December, issued the orders to expel Ledyard "with the admonition not to dare appear ever again anywhere within the limits of our empire." 9

Nor did Shelikhov live to see the fruition of his broad and daring projects. Four years after his death, his company and others were merged to form the Russian-American Company in 1799. The Tsar gave the new monopoly a twenty-year charter which allowed the government to exercise direct control when it wanted to counteract foreign expansion, but permitting also the guise of a private company. Both the new company and the imperial offices concerned with Siberia adopted the same attitude as Shelikhov toward foreign encroachment.

The Russians consistently attempted thereafter to follow a policy of keeping aggressive foreigners out of Russian frontier territories in Siberia and America--even lone, twenty-six year old, impecunious travellers such as Ledyard. But halting Ledyard did not keep out the American merchants. Although Ledyard failed to achieve any of his aspirations, other Americans would profit by following in
Robert Morris, the Philadelphia financier, had almost been persuaded by Ledyard to support his northwest coast venture. Instead, he outfitted the *Empress of China* and sailed it to Canton with a load of ginseng root and some furs from eastern American trading posts. The return of the *Empress of China* from the Orient in 1785 brought confirmation of the importance of the fur trade in China. Lacking specie or a readily saleable commodity, the Chinese trade would have languished after this first voyage except that a group of six Boston merchants decided, based on reading the Ledyard and Cook accounts, to adopt the scheme of acquiring furs along the Northwest coast and then exchanging them in Canton for teas and silks.

They dispatched Captain Robert Gray in *Lady Washington* and John Kendrick in *Columbia* in 1787 to Nootka Sound. Following the trade pattern envisioned by Ledyard, furs were loaded and taken to Canton and exchanged for Chinese goods which were brought home to Boston in 1790. From then on the "Boston men" made regular appearances in the North Pacific. More than 100 American vessels traded there during the next 25 years, most of them from Boston. As they edged out other rivals, the American ships reaped a bountiful harvest of furs, obtaining 10-15,000 sea otter pelts annually around the turn of the century.¹⁰

American ships, ranging further and further north from the Columbia River and Nootka Sound, began visiting Russian-American ports by about 1800. The first recorded commercial exchange took place early in 1801 when the American merchant ship *Enterprise* arrived at Kodiak. Alexander Baranov, the General-Manager of Russian-America, was faced by such an extreme shortage of goods that he ignored an
injunction against commercial contacts with foreigners. Thereafter, except for intermittent stoppages on direct orders from St. Petersburg, a lively trade transpired until the early 1840s, mostly with the Americans.11

The shortage of food and other supplies was a persistent concern for the Russian-American Company. Many alternative sources were sought and tried. The overland-overseas route through Okhotsk was the foremost, but it proved expensive and undependable. Periodically, direct sea shipments from the Baltic were arranged, but these, too, were costly and erratic in arrival. Local agricultural products from the Alaskan or upper California colonies proved inadequate, as did all efforts at direct trade with Spanish California, Hawaii, Japan or the Philippines. Only as a last resort did the company turn to regular trade with the Americans. The resulting agreements were profitable to the Boston merchants, and beneficial in many ways to the Russians as well. Having no means of preventing the Americans from trading guns and rum to the Indians in exchange for furs, Baranov preferred to deal directly with those American skippers whom he could trust. In addition to buying supplies, Baranov often agreed to joint hunting expeditions, splitting the furs 50-50. Baranov was also frequently dependent on the Americans for ships and shipping. To relieve his problems, he purchased eight American vessels, hired American craftsmen to build ships at Kodiak and Sitka, and chartered American ships to carry furs and goods to Canton, Okhotsk or Kamchatka. Through these voyages Americans became aware of the market for supplies in Eastern Siberia. Occasionally, the American merchants brought the furs that they had purchased in Russian-American to Siberian merchants outside of the company's monopoly.12
John D'Wolf was the first American merchant-captain to enter into an agreement with Baranov and visit Siberia. D'Wolf skippered the Juno out of Bristol, Rhode Island, on a memorable voyage in 1804. The twenty-five year old D'Wolf commanded a crew of 26 manning a 250-ton vessel. When ready for sea the ship and lading were valued at $35,000. Though D'Wolf was prepared to trade with the Indians, much of the outgoing cargo was intended for sale to the Russians. When D'Wolf in Juno arrived in New Archangel in the summer of 1805, he was welcomed by Baranov. The colonies were again in serious straits. The party of Baron Nikolai Rezanov was inspecting the colonies that year and planned to winter in New Archangel. With the added population to feed, Baranov eagerly bought the bulk of D'Wolf's cargo of rum, sugar, rice, beef, pork, flour, tobacco and molasses. Rezanov was a son-in-law of Grigorii Shelikhov, influential in court circles and a high official of the company. He was energetically trying to solve the company's supply problems and forge together the North Pacific commercial empire dreamed about first by Shelikhov.13

D'Wolf ingratiated himself further with his Russian hosts by offering to sell them the ship Juno. Since the company was chronically short of good craft, Rezanov quickly agreed to the purchase. In exchange, D'Wolf received furs, a small 40-ton craft, Yermak, and a bill of exchange on the Russian-American company in St. Petersburg. D'Wolf dispatched the Yermak with his crew and the furs to Canton and at the invitation of Rezanov prepared to proceed to Okhotsk and thence overland to St. Petersburg.14

Unlike Ledyard, D'Wolf engendered no suspicions. The Russians in their gratitude set up no obstacles to his completing Ledyard's journey in the opposite direction, from the Pacific Northwest to
St. Petersburg by way of the Siberia. The passage took a long while and was not always easy, but furnished with a passport and letters from Rezanov and able to draw on credit from the company's offices, D'Wolf was warmly received at each stage. The most difficult was the sea passage to Okhotsk in a small, 25-ton Russian craft which D'Wolf commanded. He learned first hand much about currents, winds, ice conditions, islands and harbors of the North Pacific. He made one significant observation for the future:

This tract of ocean, from longitude 130° West, along the entire coast of Alashka and through the seas of Kamchatka and Ochotsk, was at that time the great place of resort of the right whale. Persecuted in all its other haunts, it had sought refuge in this northern region, where as yet a whaleship had never made its appearance.\(^{15}\)

Finally, D'Wolf arrived at St. Petersburg in October 1807. There he met some of the directors of the company including Benedict Cramer, an American banker. He learned then that copies of his bill of exchange had arrived before him and had already been paid in a cargo of goods sent to the United States. The total profit for the venture was $100,000. After three years and eight months, he returned to Bristol having travelled around the world. His account of the journey states that he continued to engage in Russian commerce. Baranov was under the impression that D'Wolf, while in St. Petersburg, intended to contract with the company directors for the future provisioning of Russian-America.\(^ {16}\)

The situation in Siberia was somewhat different from that in Russian-America. The company maintained depots and trading posts at the major settlements in Siberia, but while it had considerable influence and was an important source of supply for the imperial administrative and military forces, the Russian-American company did
not exercise a complete monopoly of trade. Rival trading companies still existed in Siberia. But from whatever source--overland from Western Siberia, local agriculture or overseas from the Baltic--food supplies and other goods were rarely adequate for even the sparse population. Prices were exorbitant and the quality of products poor. The Okhotsk company office had the responsibility to oversee the supply of the Eastern Siberian posts and the Russian colonies in America. When the transport system failed, as it frequently did, the company of necessity turned to the "Boston men" for supplies which meant sharing the fur profits. This arrangement suited the American merchants, also. As the number of sea otters and fur seals declined, they frequently preferred to engage in trade or charter their ships to the Russians rather than incur the risks of trading with the Indians. After the peak of the fur trade passed, about 1810, the American vessels were alert to other trading opportunities in the Pacific, e.g., sandalwood from Hawaii and copper from Chile. Ship owners gave their captains great latitude in pursuing trade wherever success appeared promising. One of these corners of the North Pacific, the Russian outposts of Eastern Siberia, began to be visited more frequently by American vessels in search of commercial profit. In 1813, Captain Bennett, for example, added a new twist. He exchanged his cargo of supplies at Sitka for fur seals, but then instead of sailing for Canton, he took the skins to Okhotsk. When he placed them on sale there, the company was forced to buy them back at a much higher rate to prevent the furs from falling into the hands of rival merchants which would have created competition thought to be dangerous by the Russian-American company. 

Facts relative to the American actions on the Siberian coast
between 1812-1821 are meager and at times contradictory, but the Russian reactions to the Americans' enterprise was sufficiently sharp to indicate that the Russian officials perceived grave significance to the development. In particular, they were apprehensive about the plans and projects of two Americans, Peter Dobell and William Pigot. In their activities they foresaw the same type of encroachment in Russian Siberia that was occurring in Russian-America. Moreover, behind the presence of these two Americans, the Tsarist government divined the resources and support of John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company.

Few pertinent facts are available relative to Peter Dobell. He grew up in Philadelphia after his parents emigrated from Ireland. After serving in the army fighting Indians in Western Pennsylvania, he went to sea and travelled in many countries. In 1798 he first came to China and spent seven or eight years there, mostly in the Canton area, possibly as an agent for Astor. While in Canton he performed some sort of significant service for the Russian navigator Captain Kruzenstern which later gave Dobell a degree of entry to Russian officialdom. Kruzenstern in Nadezhda was in Canton in October 1805. During the previous year Nadezhda had visited Kamchatka three times. Nikolai Rezanov was a passenger in Nadezhda at that time and he arranged the off loading of critically needed supplies for the residents of Petropavlovsk. Either from his Russian contacts or from Astor's captains, Dobell learned of Kamchatka's needs, for an American brig, Sylph, owned by John Jacob Astor and commanded by Captain "Dubell" was bound in the spring of 1812 from Canton to Kamchatka. In August 1812 Peter Dobell arrived in Petropavlovsk with two ships with cargoes of supplies and provisions. One of the
vessels returned to Manila. Dobell stayed behind. He travelled in Kamchatka, met the Commandant and then sailed by way of the Aleutians and Penzhinskii Bay to Okhotsk. From there he travelled overland to St. Petersburg. On these journeys he kept a log which he later published, but the book proved short on personal details, recapping chiefly his observations of Siberia. According to Dobell, Siberia had "remote regions with inviting attractions to human industry and improvement" which would become one of "the most flourishing countries of his Imperial Majesty's dominions" and possessed "nature resources, soil, and climate, very superior to what is generally believed." He also concluded that Siberia had an insufficient number of inhabitants and that transportation was poor and expensive. He regretted that the Amur River, which would have provided for a more efficient transport system was still within Chinese territory. While in St. Petersburg Dobell became a Russian citizen, joined the merchants guild and obtained on good terms the right to trade with visiting foreign ships. The Tsarist government during these early years looked favorably on such trade. Besides this, Dobell presented to the government a broad plan with various provisions for commerce and industry in the Pacific. His economic development proposal for Siberia included:

1. Inauguration of a whaling and fishing industry in the North Pacific,
2. Improvement of the communications in Siberia,
3. Occupation of the Liu Ch'iu (Ryukyu) Islands,
4. Arrangement to tranship Chinese goods from Manila to Kronstadt
5. Establishment of regular trade relations between
Kamchatka and the Philippine Islands in order to assure necessary provisions for the inhabitants of Siberia.\textsuperscript{25}

To carry out this latter provision of the plan, Dobell entered Russian service and was named Consul-general to the Philippines in 1817 or 1818. In response to this plan, Baranov sent the American ship Isabella to Manila. The expedition which returned in 1816 was completely unsuccessful, bringing back mostly large quantities of rum. The Spanish authorities refused to recognize Dobell or any other foreign emissary to their colony. At the end of 1817 or 1818, Dobell returned to Kamchatka bringing trade goods with him. He also made an offer to the Commandant of Kamchatka, Rikord, to import various provisions from overseas. The local office of the Russian-American company informed the directors of this and they lodged a protest with the minister of internal affairs. Undeterred by this setback Dobell prepared to commence a whaling industry with an "agent of an American company." However, higher Russian authorities disapproved of the whaling agreement. Moreover, the government policy changed and trade with all foreign vessels was prohibited. Only because Dobell was a Russian citizen was he permitted to return to Manila and bring back one last cargo to Kamchatka in 1821, despite the protests of the Russian-American company. The Sylph, still reportedly owned by John Jacob Astor and commanded by "Dubell," arrived in the Hawaiian Islands from the Northwest Coast (possibly from the Asiatic shore) and was scheduled to sail for Manila that same year.\textsuperscript{26}

Pertinent facts concerning Pigot's Siberian experiences are also scant. In November 1813 Pigot took over command of Astor's vessel Forester while the ship was in the Hawaiian Islands. Having acquired
a load of seal skins along the Northwest coast, Pigot decided to
dispose of his cargo at Okhotsk, but was forced to put into Kamchatka
late in 1815. After offloading his furs, Pigot purchased a cargo
from an agent of Dobell and sent the Forester back to Hawaii while he
remained to conduct business. An agent of the Russian-American company
purchased the furs for six times as much as Pigot had paid for them.
The company headquarters, however, refused to honor the sale and,
citing an imperial ukaz forbidding the import of seal skins, ordered
him to take the skins out of the country. Pigot made the long over­
land journey to St. Petersburg in an attempt to rectify the situation.
Unable to obtain a satisfactory solution, he returned to Kamchatka.

Pigot made an offer which was "zealously supported by Rikord" to con­
duct fishing and whaling along the shores of Kamchatka for a period
of ten years. From Kamchatka he sailed for the Hawaiian Islands with
Astor's seal skins aboard the schooner General San Martin in October
1818. For a time, Pigot apparently was doing business for himself.
In December 1819 he bought the San Martin. This schooner was noted
arriving at Manila in March 1820 in company with the Sylph, but not
under the command of Pigot who had been engaged as an agent for the
Pedler, another of Astor's ships. The Pedler traded in Sitka before
proceeding to Kamchatka in September 1820. Forsaking further trading
ventures, Pigot went in San Martin with a company of Americans to
settle Fannings Island. 27

What role did Astor play in the Dobell-Pigot Siberian develop­
ment schemes? His interest in the Pacific fur trade was concentrated
primarily on the Northwest Coast, but his ambitions went far beyond.
Since 1809, Astor and his agents had been negotiating with Andrei
Dashkov, the Russian Consul-general and with Count Pahlen, the Russian
minister to the United States. The object of the talks was to set
conditions for cooperation between Astor's Pacific Fur Company and
the Russian-American company to exclude the other Americans from the
Northwest Coast. As a consequence of these conversations, Astor
sent Captain Ebbets in Enterprise in November 1809 with a cargo of
supplies for Baranov in Sitka. As part of Astor's instructions Ebbets
was authorized to deliver a portion of the cargo to Okhotsk should
Baranov find that expedient. So Astor knew as early as 1809 of the
shortness of supplies in Siberia. Ebbets was able to confirm that the
prospects for trade with Kamchatka were good and might include an
exchange for Siberian sables.28 In 1811 Astor sent his son-in-law
Bentzon to St. Petersburg to conclude a final agreement. One of the
terms which Astor proposed was to allow his company to import into
Russia, duty free, up to 2000 skins of animals trapped in the interior
of North America, such as black bear and raccoon. Astor proposed to
receive Russian goods in return. The Russians accepted all the con-
ditions of Astor's proposal of cooperation except the import of furs
by Astor into Russia. The directors of the Russian-American company
suspected the motives behind this proposition and voiced their objections
to Count Rumyantsev, Russia's foreign minister, arguing that the Tsar
should not permit "further hampering of Russian industry by private
American traders." This difference of opinion between Bentzon and
the directors of the Russian-American company received prolonged
examination in the upper levels of the imperial government, including
the Ministers of Finance and Internal Affairs. The import proposal was
finally firmly rejected by Rumyantsev on the grounds that such a
measure would constitute a violation of the Russian tariff.29

It seems likely, from a review of what is known about the
Dobell-Pigot movements in the years 1812-1821, that Astor did not give up his interest in opening up Siberia to American trade. The circumstances suggest that in 1812 he directed Dobell's two ships to Kamchatka with supplies, trusting that the Russian settlers there would become as dependent on him for provisioning as those in Russian-America. Pigot in Forester may not have arrived in Kamchatka in 1815 under any specific orders from Astor, but it must have seemed strange to the Russians that only three years after the rebuff to Bentzon an Astor ship was attempting to import a cargo of furs into Siberia. No wonder that Pigot spent three fruitless years, 1815-1818, trying to sell his cargo. During this period Pigot was able to keep Astor further informed regarding Siberian trade. 30

Whether Astor was specifically aware of the Dobell-Pigot plans to establish a Philippine-Siberia supply run or to start a whaling and fishing industry in Kamchatkan waters is more problematical. Pigot had purchased his own ship in 1819 and Dobell had become a Russian citizen a few years earlier. So these projects may not have been associated directly with Astor, though he may have assented to support them. From the Russian viewpoint though, they were still dealing with an "agent of an American company," as Pigot certainly was again during the port visit of Pedler to Kamchatka toward the end of 1820. By then the Russian reaction against the American endeavors was in full swing.

Because all of the Dobell-Pigot-Astor activity in Siberia since 1812 took place outside the framework of the Russian-American company, this caused the company to register strenuous complaints to government officials. Concerning foreign ships visiting Eastern Siberian ports, the company argued that foreigners usually brought in high profit luxury items such as alcoholic beverages rather than low-profit, bulky
food staples. They also argued that the furs obtained in the Kamchatka-Okhotsk region would inevitably pass into the hands of foreign competitors with a consequent loss of profits to the company and loss of customs duties for the government. As to the fishing and whaling enterprises, the company board of directors feared that the foreigners would use whaling as a pretext for a permanent settlement in one of the company's possessions and would be drawn into trading for furs with the natives or engaging in fur trapping themselves. This, the company concluded, would be a direct violation of the exclusive imperial privileges granted to the company and hurt the economy of Kamchatka.

In February 1820 Count Speranskii, the Governor General of Siberia, reported on the subject to Count Nesselrode, the foreign minister. While acknowledging the benefits which would accrue from a thriving whaling industry, he supported the arguments of the company and presented the disadvantages he saw in permitting the industry to fall into foreign hands:

1. Everyone knows of the Russian-American Company's complaints about the efforts of American citizens to trap and trade on their own account, and even to provide the natives with fire arms; these complaints are justified, but the matter cannot be helped. To try to get the American government to prohibit this would be in vain and against the spirit of that nation's trading rules. The company has only one recourse: to attempt to place its own establishments at key points. At the least, the government should not favor this foreign-owned trade. But it undoubtedly will be favored by the establishment of whaling on the eastern shores of Siberia. This would both foster and support it.

2. Although for various reasons animal trapping in Kamchatka and Okhotsk has diminished in significance, present and future hopes of the trade still depend on Russian hunters. But if foreign establishments are set up on the shores, it will undoubtedly pass into foreign hands. In these sparsely populated regions it would be impossible to maintain close surveillance or to prohibit the importation of alcoholic beverages, if this trade were permitted.
3. For the unity and completeness of its enterprise, the Russian-American Company should attempt to establish whale fishing, if not with its own employees, then at least with its own capital. At present its capital position is not only strong, but even excessive, and for this reason its enterprises require expansion. But a contract with foreigners would impose an insurmountable obstacle to this expansion.

4. Rikord asserts in his letter that if the foreigners wished to carry on whaling in those regions we would lack the forces to prevent them. First, the disproportionate weakness of our forces is questionable. The timely appearance of one well-armed ship would subdue and scatter all of these whalers. Second, if they are able to appropriate this industry by force, why should we support their force with contractual rights? Upon the advice of his ministers, the emperor decided not to ratify the whaling contract with Dobell and Pigot, but instead to direct the Russian-American Company to turn their attention to the whaling industry and equip one ship with the necessary gear and experienced men. As to commerce, the government of Irkutsk was directed to prohibit all foreign merchants from trading or putting into the ports of East Siberia. Foreigners were to be forbidden to enroll in the merchants' guilds or settle in Kamchatka or Okhotsk. Dobell himself, though a Russian subject, was ordered to leave East Siberia and prohibited from making either provisioning voyages to the Philippines or his projected venture transporting Chinese goods to the Baltic. Henceforth, the Russian-American Company must be responsible for furnishing supplies to Kamchatka and Okhotsk in their own vessels. In sum, the Russian-American Company had reacted strongly against the enterprises of Dobell and foreigners in East Siberia. At the instigation of the company, the government had abruptly changed its policy concerning foreign trade with Siberia. No longer welcome, such trade was prohibited.

At first glance, the Russian reaction to the incursion of a
handful of private Americans seems drastic. During the previous
decade only a comparatively few American vessels had put into Siberian
ports. But the activities of the Americans in Siberia were not
viewed by company or government officials in isolation. They were
well aware of the larger drama unfolding along the Pacific Northwest--
how the few foreign traders on the coast had multiplied to dozens
in later years. They observed how the Americans disregarded the
territorial claims of Russian-America and Spanish California--smugg-
gling, poaching, putting into shore and trading contraband items
with the Indians anywhere that no permanent settlement was in place.
How American statesmen proclaimed their own continental ambitions for
the United States and how the people were realizing these claims by
the relentless westward press to settlement. But most of all the
Russians observed how the commercial, seaborne thrust of the "Boston
men" could become the deciding influence in determining the fate of
the region. Russian naval officers such as Captain Vassilij Golovnin
were particularly irked at the American encroachments. After his
voyage to inspect the colonies, he recommended in 1819 that Russia
protect and defend its colonies against foreign penetration. The
Russian minister to the United States, Pierre de Poletika, also
reported the intense interest of American citizens and the Congress
in the settlements of the Pacific Northwest. 33

Compared to the main events in the Pacific Northwest, the
plans of Dobell and Pigot would have seemed like the actions of bit
players except for the fact that they were being acted out in the
Russian wings. Nor did the Russian authorities overlook the many
similarities between the Asian side of the North Pacific and the
American. Eastern Siberia was still very much a frontier colony,
sparsely populated with large stretches between the Russian settle-
ments. In extensive regions the natives were not yet under the
effective administrative control of Russia. Because of the transporta-
tion and communication difficulties, imperial authorities well realized
that they would have been hard put to prevent the same kind of
American commercial and territorial encroachment along the Siberian
coastline.

Therefore, when the events along the Pacific Northwest
triggered the imperial ukaz of September 1821, the terms were extended
to include the Asiatic Northeast coast as well. The Minister of
Finance, D. A. Gurev, a member of the committee that drew up the
ukaz, emphasized in a report to the emperor that "it was necessary
to protect the Eastern shores of Siberia, to shelter our colonies,
and maintain them in close connection."34 By the first two articles
of the ukaz, the imperial government decreed such protection.

1. The pursuits of commerce, whaling, and fishery, and of
all other industry on all islands, posts, and gulfs,
including the whole of the north-west coast of America,
beginning from Behring Straits to the 51° of northern
latitude, also from the Aleutian Islands to the eastern
coast of Siberia, as well as along the Kurile Islands from
Behring Straits to the south cape of the Island of Urup,
viz., to the 45° 50' north latitude, is exclusively granted
to Russian subjects.

2. It is therefore prohibited to all foreign vessels not
only to land on the coasts and islands belonging to Russia
as stated above, but also, to approach them within less
than 100 Italian miles. The transgressor's vessel is
subject to confiscation along with the whole cargo.35

If the plans of Dobell and Pigot had not already been enjoined
a short time previously, this edict would have effectively curtailed
their activities. The ukaz was not entirely defensive in nature. In
Asia, Russia was laying claim to vast territories nominally belonging
to China and Japan. The latitude 45° 50' north runs from the southern tip of Urup island in the Kuriles through the La Perouse Straits to a point on the Asiatic mainland far south of the mouth of the Amur River. The entire island of Sakhalin and a large portion of the Primorye (Maritime) Region, or Coast of Tartary, were claimed by the ukaz for the first time as Russian possessions.

Why did the Tsarist government raise the issue of the Siberian coast in the 1821 ukaz? From a review of the diplomatic correspondence, it is evident that Russia had seriously considered declaring the whole northern portion of the Pacific Ocean as a *mare clausum*. To make such a sweeping declaration of jurisdiction, it was necessary to include as great an extent of surrounding land possessions as possible, hence the Asiatic coastal claim. Moreover, as Robert Kerner has pointed out, there was a strong connection between Russian expansion in America and in the Amur region. When checked by the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 from pressing southward, the Russians advanced northeastward and eventually to Russian-America. Now, with the prospects of being checked on the North American continent, Russia was reversing directions and laying the groundwork for expansion southward to the Amur. Those officials drafting the ukaz also saw an opportunity for an advance into a region promising a more assured supply of food for its Pacific outposts.\(^36\)

The American Congress and the New England merchants paid scant attention to the provisions of the ukaz dealing with the Asiatic Pacific regions. Their ire was aroused solely by the threatened expansion of Russia along the Pacific Northwest. In all the diplomatic correspondence exchanged between Russia and the United States between the issuance of the ukaz in 1821 and the signing of the Russian-American
convention in 1824, the situation in eastern Siberia was rarely mentioned and then only in general terms. The United States raised no objections to the new boundary demarcation in Asia even though it became extended by dint of repetition by both sides to 45° North on the Asiatic side. No time limits were expressed in the convention concerning Northeast Asia. Nor was any list of contraband trade goods imposed.

But John Quincy Adams, the American Secretary of State, did insist that the vessels of the United States, as an independent nation, had the right to freely navigate those seas as a part of that independence. To the United States minister to Russia, Henry Middleton, he gave firm instructions.

The pretensions of the Imperial Government extend to an exclusive territorial jurisdiction from the forty-fifth degree of north latitude, on the Asiatic coast to the latitude of fifty-one north on the western coast of the American continent; and they assume the right of interdicting the navigation and the fishery of all other nations to the extent of one hundred miles from the whole coast.

The United States can admit no part of these claims.

Adams went on to compare the isolated Russian factories along the Northwest coast to those established by European nations along the coast of Africa for the past three centuries. The factories only communicated with one another by sea which did not suffice to consider the entire coast as being a Russian possession. Although Adams did not extend the analogy to Northeast Asia, the same argument largely pertained there also. Thus only in general terms did Adams keep the waters on both sides of the Pacific in mind. While he apparently had no territorial ambitions for the United States in Eastern Asia, Adams was strongly concerned about maintaining maritime rights of the United States unimpaired. During the subsequent negotiations with
Russia, Adams would only concede that in the Pacific Ocean "citizens of the United States shall not land in any part of the coast actually occupied by Russian settlements, unless by permission . . . ." Despite counter proposals by the Russians also to ban citizens of the United States from coasts "belonging to Russia," the first article of 1824 convention between the United States and Russia stipulated that:

It is agreed that in any part of the great ocean commonly called the Pacific Ocean, or South Sea, the respective citizens or subjects of the high contracting powers shall be neither disturbed nor restrained either in navigation, or in fishing, or in the power of resorting to the coasts upon points which may not already be occupied for the purpose of trading with the natives, saving always the restrictions and conditions determined by the following articles.

Since the restrictions and conditions determined in the succeeding four articles of the convention were specifically concerned with the Northwest Coast, the only article relevant to the Northeast Coast of Asia was the general first article. In this area of the Pacific the American proposal had been adopted in its entirety. Only belatedly did the Russians realize the possible consequences.

Admiral Mordvinov, director and spokesman for the Russian-American Company protested that the convention was vague and violated the company's monopoly rights. Before ratification the emperor ordered a special commission to review the company's complaints. Their report, approved by the emperor, tried to rectify the oversight by explaining that the condition permitting United States citizens to fish in colonial waters and trade with coastal natives should not be taken as implying the right to approach the shores of Eastern Siberia and the Aleutian and Kurile Islands. To avoid an "incorrect" interpretation of the convention the Russian envoy to the United States was instructed to make a formal explanatory declaration before the treaty
was sent to the Senate for ratification. Accordingly, Baron Tuyll approached Secretary Adams with the Russian clarification regarding the convention's application to Siberia and the Aleutians. Adams told Baron Tuyll that the convention could only be modified by a new convention and the departments concerned with its execution had no authority to consider stipulations. Adams advised the Baron to wait to present his note until after ratification in order to see how the convention worked in practice. Because he was probably uninformed about previous American commercial attempts, Adams assured Tuyll that "Our merchants would not go to trouble the Russians on the coast of Siberia... and it was wisest not to put such fancies into their heads." Tuyll reported to his government that he had only been able to express the Russian sense of the convention to the American cabinet verbally for to do otherwise would have been to arouse prejudicial conjectures. Both governments then proceeded to ratify the convention. 41

In reviewing this first chapter of Russian-American contacts in Northeast Asia, one must keep in perspective that the two nations were at the beginning of a flood tide of friendly relations. The conflict of interests on the Northwest Coast temporarily caused a slight back wash to the tide, but the events in Siberia hardly a ripple. Out of necessity the Russians found cooperative efforts acceptable. As long as they exercised a degree of control they agreed to trade, purchase ships, charter vessels and mount joint hunting expeditions with the Americans. Because Captain D'Wolf fell in with Russian plans, his experiences were entirely amicable. Independent commercial enterprises proposed by Americans were met, on the other hand, by suspicion and opposition.
The imperial government, roused by these first threats of American encroachment, strove to maintain the security and exclusive jurisdiction of its possessions, no matter how tenuous its claims, and attempted to forestall all challenges to the company trade monopoly, especially on the Siberian mainland. Despite these efforts, during the first quarter century the initial steps had already been taken to shift the scene of Russian-American interaction from America's continent to Russia's. American ships had navigated the North Pacific many times over and found their way safely into Asiatic Russian ports. The abundance of whales had been noted and reported. Americans had traversed Siberia several times and viewed the region for themselves. The initial plans had been hatched by Americans to exploit the resources and commercial prospects of the region. The United States government had refused to curtail the private enterprises of its citizens and had shrewdly avoided inhibiting Americans from following up in any unsettled areas of Northeast Asia.
Approximate Demarcation of Maritime Claims,
Imperial Ukas of 1921 ———

Sandwich Islands
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

1 Howard I. Kushner, Conflict on the Northwest Coast (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1975); Mary E. Wheeler, "Empires in Conflict and Cooperation: The 'Bostonians' and the Russian-American Company," Pacific Historical Review 40 (Nov. 1971), to cite two examples.


4 Ibid, p. 70.


6 Watrous, pp. 158-159.


8 Bolkhovitinov, p. 160; Watrous, p. 219.


11 Gibson, p. 157.


15 Ibid, p. 143.

16 Kenneth W. Porter, John Jacob Astor, 2 Vols, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1:444; Munro, p. 201. D'Wolf did visit St. Petersburg again in 1809, but no further details are known.

17 Tikhmenev, p. 113.


20 Russian Biographical Dictionary, p. 468; Peter Dobell to Captain Krusenstern, October 19, 1812, contained in Bashina, pp. 889-892.

21 Tikhmenev, p. 87.


26 Howay, 27-2 (1933), p. 147; Russian Biographical Dictionary, pp. 468-469; Tikhmenev, pp. 126-127; Kenneth W. Porter, "The Cruise of the Forester," Washington Historical Quarterly 23, p. 280, contains a slightly different version of this or a similar voyage. Captain Adams was contracted by Pigot to navigate the Sylph in 1818 from Kamchatka to Hawaii with the brig's owner "Col. Dobell" aboard as passenger.

28. Ebbets to Astor, January 11, 1811 contained in Bashina, pp. 720-723.

29. Porter, 1:192-197; Bolkhovitinov, pp. 260-268; Okun, p. 76.


32. Ibid, pp. 127-128.

33. Constantine Krypton, The Northern Sea Route (New York: Research Program on the USSR, 1953). The protectionist attitude of the Russian government was not limited to Siberia's Pacific frontier. In his preface, Krypton argues that northern sea route navigation was forbidden for a long period because the government feared smuggling, competition of foreign merchants, and the penetration of foreign capital which might have eased the way for foreign colonization; Okun, pp. 78-80; Kushner, pp. 30-32.


37. Polctika to Adams, February 28, 1822, for example, Alaska Boundary Tribunal Proceedings, p. 35.

38. Adams to Poletika, March 30, 1822; Adams to Middleton, July 22, 1823, both contained in Alaska Boundary Tribunal Proceedings, pp. 36 and 47.

39. Alaskan Boundary Tribunal Proceedings, pp. 82-83.


CHAPTER II
WHALING IN THE TSAR'S SEAS

Within two decades a second wave of Americans followed in the wake of the fur traders. By the late 1840s, hundreds of American whaleships sailed the Tsar's seas and resorted to the Tsar's shores. The whaling enterprise at its peak, which depended primarily on its catch in the North Pacific, was far more extensive than that of the fur trading pioneers. The numbers engaged in the industry, both at sea and at home, numbered in the tens of thousands, rather than hundreds. The value of one year's whale cargoes exceeded the annual imports from China. The segment of the country involved also reached beyond Boston and New England to the middle Atlantic coast and to San Francisco. As a consequence of this wider spread interest, the whalers gained a measure of support and protection from the United States government. Two naval expeditions were dispatched to the North Pacific ostensibly to make whaling safer and more productive, one to seek assurances from Japan that shipwrecked mariners would be treated decently and the other to chart the dangers to navigation in the seas off Northeast Asia. To the advocates of these two missions, such as Aaron Palmer and Senator William Seward, the purposes behind the expeditions were more far reaching—to open the area to American commerce, to acquire the necessary coaling stations along the sea lanes, and to establish a trans-Pacific foothold from which to spread American civilization in Asia.

44
Russian officials in Asiatic Russia and the managers of the Russian-American Company were annoyed by the presence of so many whalers in their waters. News of the American naval expeditions disturbed them more. From their viewpoint, the entire island chain from the Kuriles, to Sakhalin, to the Japanese Islands, and as far south as to Ryukus provided not only commercial opportunities upon which to base their own Pacific trade empire, but also an offshore barrier guarding against foreign encroachment on to the Siberian mainland. A permanent American presence and possible predominance anywhere along this chain was considered a threat to be counteracted, a factor which contributed to the Russian policy toward consolidating and expanding its own hold on Northeast Asia.

The Russians had long known about the presence of large numbers of whales in the North Pacific, but had failed to exploit their early advantage. Lacking experience in whaling, their single-minded dedication to fur gathering hampered their abortive attempts to become proficient. Included in Baranov's appointment as chief manager of the Russian colonies in America were instructions to report the number and size of whales washed ashore, the amount of oil and bone which might be extracted from them and the best means to catch whales in abundance. Whaling became a small, but essential industry in Russian-America. The Aleuts had always needed a whale catch for food and for greasing their small boats. But only about twenty whale hunters were engaged in this pursuit. Mostly the hunting consisted of searching for whales that had been washed ashore, though the Aleuts did attempt to expand this process by sticking darts in small whales close inshore. Despite company offers to pay for each whale caught, no one was interested beyond the subsistence hunting. Occasionally
the colonies, amidst the plentiful whales, were actually short of whale blubber and oil for their own needs.¹

In the Siberian waters the Russian-American Company made even less of an effort to develop whale fisheries. The government had recognized in 1820 the practical advantages of the Dobell-Pigot whaling proposal to secure a food supply for the local inhabitants. As a consequence, when the foreigners were prevented from proceeding with their plan, the company had been directed to initiate whaling and fishing around the shores of Kamchatka. The directors made some preliminary inquiries in England and Holland as to the cost of equipping a whaling ship, but never followed through. The Russians in effect left the entire North Pacific whaling areas, by default, to outsiders to exploit.²

And the American whalers eventually came in large numbers. By the beginning of the 19th century, American vessels had begun to frequent the South Pacific. In the 1820s, the American whaling activity had moved northward. Using Honolulu as a base, whalers cruised off Northern California and the "off Japan Grounds," the vast area between Hawaii and Japan. Before long, whaling activity had penetrated into the North Pacific areas. The "golden age" of whaling commenced about 1835 and lasted for several decades. American whaling assumed its greatest importance and its greatest commercial value during this period. The first right whale was taken off Kodiak in 1835 by a Nantucket whaler. This signalled a rush of Americans to follow suit. By 1841, fifty whalers were hunting the waters around the Alaskan peninsula and the eastern Aleutians. The following year the Russian-American Company received reports that 200 whalers were expected that season. In 1843 two ships from New
Bedford took, off the coast of Kamchatka, the first bow-head whales which proved to have great thickness of blubber and weight of bone. The quest for whales took a Sag Harbor whaler through the Bering Straits in 1848 where the whales were found to be comparatively tame.3

At its peak in 1846, the whaling fleet numbered over 700 vessels with a capacity of more than 233,000 tons and valued at $21 million. Of these whalers, nearly all of the large Nantucket and New Bedford fleets were engaged in whaling in the Pacific. Between 1843 and 1860, on an average, nearly 200 American whalers were in the North Pacific region annually. All of this activity did not pass unnoticed by the Russians. In fact, they probably exaggerated the already large scale of the operations. The governor-general of Eastern Siberia, Count Muravev, wrote to the Naval Chief of Staff in September 1849:

this year there were at least 250 whaling ships in our Sea of Okhotsk alone. They were all of large tonnage and had large crews. I met them constantly during my voyage; often there were several ships together. Nevel'skoi and Korsakov met them also. My own figure of their number is more conservative than any which I heard from the whalers themselves.4

During the decade of the 1850s, the waters of the Sea of Okhotsk were especially important to the whaling industry. According to Tikhmenev, the Russian-American Company historian, writing in 1861, the number of foreign whalers in the Sea of Okhotsk averaged at least one hundred vessels yearly during that period. The number of whalers increased until "not a single spot in the Okhotsk Sea was left unexplored." Most of the whalers concentrated in either the northern bays (Penzhinsk, Gizhiginsk and Tauisk) or the southern bays (Tugursk and Ul'bansk) near the Shantar Islands. These bays had rivers flowing into them which caused an earlier break-up of the
ice and the whales gathered there in large numbers to breed. Even so, the hunting season only lasted from mid-June to mid-September when the storms commenced. 5

The sight of the Americans profiting from whaling in the North Pacific did not upset the officials of the Russian-American Company so much as the temerity of the whalers. All the ills that the Russians had predicted might stem from approving the Dobell-Pigot plan in 1820 did in fact transpire 25 years later and to a far greater extent. The Americans penetrated the coastal waters at will, boldly stood into shore and landed wherever they chose. They cut wood to sell in Honolulu. They hunted game as they pleased and they rendered oil on the beaches which allegedly frightened the fur-bearing animals away from their habitat. Soon the whaling crews were engaging in trade with the natives, diverting furs from the company monopoly. Occasionally violence broke out between the American shore parties and company employees. The Americans ashore were accused of rowdiness, destruction of property and a complete disregard for Russian authority and regulations. The Americans felt so at home in Siberian waters that they gave their own nomenclature to geographical reference points and sometimes wintered over on the Siberian coast, though this proved both arduous and dangerous. 6

The Russian-American Company repeatedly complained to the imperial authorities about the incursions of the American whalers. In 1850 the company recommended that whaling in the entire Sea of Okhotsk be prohibited. Barring that, the company proposed that naval cruisers be based near the Shantar Islands in order to protect those places where the whales abound. To the company's energetic protests
of the American highhanded activities, the government returned cautious, restrained replies. Few protests were forwarded to the United States during this period because the names of the vessels and the captains usually remained unknown. Moreover, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs had become accustomed to the idea that the United States was powerless to restrict its citizens from arbitrary actions off distant coasts. The Russian government refused to declare again any part of the North Pacific a "closed sea." Article 1 of the Convention of 1824 being still in force, American citizens were recognized as having the right to fish everywhere in the Pacific Ocean including the Sea of Okhotsk. Only in territorial waters, customarily within a cannon shot or about three miles from shore, did the Tsarist government apply restrictions. Commencing in 1853, Russian patrol vessels were given the task to see that whaling was not conducted in such a manner as to hurt the natives and to maintain order within the coastal areas of Russian possessions.7

Why did the Russian government not pay more attention to the complaints of the Russian-American Company and defend the Siberian shores more vigorously against the American whalers? Part of the answer is apparent. The empire was preoccupied with European affairs. Liberalism and nationalism were sweeping Europe. The Far East possessions, despite a resurgence of interest in the Amur region, were a secondary theatre to Russia. The Russian colonies in North America were approaching economic collapse. The Russian withdrawal from its eastward thrust had already commenced with the sale of Fort Ross. Neither the company ships nor the Russian naval contingent in the Pacific were of sufficient strength to police the entire North Pacific littoral. The expense of gaining such naval power was too
formidable to contemplate seriously. In 1848, for example, the company balked at paying the expenses of outfitting and maintaining a single navy vessel to cruise the waters off Russian-America. 8

But that still does not completely answer the question of why Russia did not protest hotly to the United States through diplomatic channels or capture a few American ships to set an example. The Russian reluctance to take such steps can be attributed, by inference, to their unwillingness to bring attention again to the provisions of Article 1 of the 1824 Convention. Russia was willing to grant those aspects of Article 1 which dealt with free navigation and fishing, but wanted to avoid a renewed discussion of the freedom of "resorting to the coasts upon points which may not already be occupied for the purpose of trading with the natives." The issue had last been raised in 1834 during the negotiations following the expiration of the ten-year limitation on Articles 2-5 of the 1824 Convention. When Russia refused to consider an extension of these articles, the United States continued to argue forcefully, based on the permanent Article 1, the right of its ships to visit and trade at unoccupied points along the Northwest Coast. Henry Middleton, the United States Minister to Russia, in 1824 had presented the American stance that with regard to "trade in unoccupied places . . . all the shores of the great ocean upon which the parties of this contract have any claim will continue open to them." During the protracted diplomatic exchange between Russia and the United States which lasted from 1834 until 1838, the focus was entirely on the Northwest Coast. Nevertheless, the United States persistently held to its claims to resort to any coastal point of the Pacific not already occupied. This claim was justified not only on the mutual and permanent
clause of the 1824 Convention, but also on pre-existent rights which "existed in perpetuity by the laws of nations." The disagreement was never satisfactorily settled. Both nations turned to more urgent issues. A decade later it is not surprising that Russia avoided reopening this discussion, no matter how annoying the American whalers. Tikhmenev suggested that Russia feared also that England and France would join in such discussions.

Unlike the paltry enterprises of Dobell and Pigot, American whaling in the North Pacific had become an important factor of the United States' economy. Business interests connected with whaling were valued at seventy million dollars, giving employment to 70,000 persons. At its peak thirty-four ports in four Northeastern states were engaged in the trade. Ports in New Jersey, Delaware and California soon joined in. Whale fishing was a source of national wealth. The average annual cargo was estimated as worth nine million dollars which exceeded the highest annual import from China by two million dollars. Moreover, the skills in shipbuilding, navigation and seamanship which were developed in the whaling fleets enhanced the naval strength of the United States.

The hundreds of vessels plying the waters off Japan and along the Siberian coast were in constant danger from ice floes, unpredictable weather and uncharted shoals. Their situation was made more difficult by being so far from a port where they could refit, repair damages and take on supplies. Inevitably shipwrecks occurred. The sailors who managed to reach Japanese shores were thrown into jail. Eventually, some of those shipwrecked were repatriated through the mediation of the Dutch at Nagasaki and news of the severe treatment they endured was learned. American resentment of such treatment of American
whalers provided the proximate cause for dispatching a naval diplomatic
expedition to Japan under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry. 11

A second, underlying motive which influenced Perry's expedi-
tion had a more directly commercial basis. American manufacturers
and merchants perceived brighter prospects for increased trade with
Asian nations now that the United States was firmly established on
the Pacific Coast. Projects to connect the Atlantic and Pacific
coasts by intercontinental railroads and an Isthmian canal heightened
American interest in ending the isolation of Japan from international
trade. To this end, Perry was directed to seek permission for vessels
of the United States to enter Japanese ports for the sale and barter
of their cargoes. 12

As direct trade from the west coast of the United States to
Asia became a familiar thought, one prerequisite was recognized
as indispensable. Before trans-Pacific steamship routes could be
implemented efficiently, it would be absolutely necessary to acquire
strategically located coaling stations en route. Planning for coal
resources became an important factor in both naval expeditions and
was to remain a consideration of American policy throughout the century.
It is not surprising that among the guidelines furnished Perry was
the reminder as to the desirability of establishing "a depot for coal,
if not on one of the principal islands, at least on some small unin-
habited one." 13

In prosecuting the objectives of the mission to Japan,
Secretary of the Navy Kennedy, realizing that the American naval
squadron would be operating at a great distance from day-to-day
direction, invested Perry with "large discretionary powers." As a
final instruction, Perry was authorized to enlarge the scope of the
expedition, if the squadron was able without interfering with the main objectives. He was told to explore the coasts of Japan and of the adjacent continent and islands with a view toward extending commercial relations and of securing ports of refuge for American whaling vessels. To accomplish this latter purpose, Perry was authorized "to negotiate treaties of amity and navigation with any and all established and independent sovereignties in those regions." With these extraordinary powers Perry was ready to test out his broad conceptions of an American commercial empire in the Pacific. His orders, which he may have had a large hand in writing himself, suited his purpose exactly. Perry was being given the opportunity to bring the honor and glory to his nation that Captain David Porter had sought back in 1815 when he reminded President Madison that the United States "borders on Russia, Japan and China." Porter had urged that the United States then send out an exploring expedition to the remote regions of the Pacific, to introduce civilization and secure valuable trade. The history of the U.S. Naval Expedition to Japan has been recounted, in detail, in several forms. Two aspects only will be extracted from the various documents and narratives of the expedition and emphasized here. First, the imperialism of Commodore Perry, which was reflected both in his actions in the North Pacific and in his later commentary, is of interest as it foreshadowed the late nineteenth century imperialism of the United States. Second, the sense of Russian and American rivalry engendered during the course of the expedition was also a precursor of later events.

If, as Tyler Dennett has suggested, the instructions given to Commodore Perry mark the "first comprehensive statement of the basis of American policy for the Pacific," Perry's contribution came during
his months of study and preparation for the expedition. Perry had never before been assigned to a Pacific squadron, but he did gather together and read about the experiences of others and he did talk to New Bedford whalers who had been to the Far East. One of the experts that Perry consulted was Aaron Palmer, a New York commission merchant, who had been a leading promoter and lobbyist of those manufacturers favoring the American expedition. It may well have been Palmer who recommended enlarging the scope to include the "adjacent continent." Among Palmer's early promotional efforts was a geographical, political and commercial memoir addressed in January 1848 to President Polk on the "present state, productive resources, and capabilities for commerce of Siberia, Manchuria and the Asiatic Islands of the Northern Pacific Ocean." He not only urged that the United States' government foster the commercial navigation and whale fishery in the North Pacific, but also recommended that the United States should insist on the right of navigating the Amur River and its affluents "upon the same footing as the Russians." Speaking of the Gilyaks and other nomads along the Amur and Ussuri Rivers, Palmer made a point that their states were independent in that "they pay no tribute either to the Chinese or Russian governments."16

Through his studying Perry became convinced of the commercial importance of the Pacific region and the national necessity for the United States to ensure a prominent role there for itself. The concept of an extra-continental policy was not only new, but fraught with difficulties when taken beyond the talking stage. Projecting a secure and permanent American presence across the Pacific had practical consequences to be considered. How could Perry manifest the United States' destiny in the Far East without resorting to European style
55
imperialism?

Samuel E. Morison has termed Perry an

a difference."

"imperialist with

Perry may have been different, but not in the results

he hoped to achieve, only in the methods he proposed to use. 17
Commodore Perry put his ideas concerning trans-Pacific American
outposts into action at two places in the Western Pacific, in the
Ryukus and the

~onin

Islands.

Both locations seemed suitable for

being placed under American "surveillance."

They would provide

necessary ports of refuge for whalers and coaling bases for Pacific
navigation.

Both could be treated as oemi-independent, since prior

claims of sovereignty were mixed.

Both could become models of American

administrative probity and examples of Yankee industry.

Each could

serve as stations from which American missionaries could be sent to
the "benighted" countries of Asia.

To Perry, it seemed necessary

for the United States to "extend its territorial jurisdiction beyond
the limits of the western continent" in order to sustain "our maritime
rights in the East."

Although Perry tried to avoid the odious term

"colony" for such outposts, he rationalized their acquisition as
justified by the commercial benefits and the advance of civilization
and the industrial arts.

Perry acted promptly to establish a semblance

of American authority over these island groups because "some other
powers, less scrupulous, may step in and seize upon the advantages
which should justly belong to us."

The power he chiefly had in mind

• 18
was Russ~a.

Perry well knew that the United States would meet competition
in achieving its Pacific destiny.

Before embarking on the expedition,

Perry had examined carefully the repeated efforts of other nations
to break down the Japanese barriers.

He knew from his studies that

Russia had made a number of attempts to establish relations with Japan

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commencing 60 years before when Lt. Laxman sailed from Okhotsk to Hakodate to open talks. Laxman failed as did the subsequent peaceful missions of Rezanov (1804) and Golovnin (1811). Nor had the show of force employed by Khostov and Davidov (1807) changed the Japanese resolve for isolation. Perry may not have been aware of the most recent unsuccessful Russian try to open trade. A Russian-American Company ship Kniaz Menshikov in August 1852 entered the port of Shimoda to return seven Japanese castaways and open talks, but like all previous missions was ordered to depart before accomplishing its object. After his departure, Perry was informed by the Secretary of the Navy that the Russian government was sending a naval force to Japan. As early as 1843 the Tsarist government had considered sending such a naval expedition to China and Japan under the command of Admiral Putyatin, but had held back because of the cost involved. Once the American expedition was imminent, the long-proposed expedition was reactivated to prevent the United States from obtaining a pre-eminent relationship with Japan. In August 1853, the Russian squadron arrived off Nagasaki a step behind Perry's ships which had made their first visit to Tokyo Bay in July. For a year thereafter, Perry and Putyatin maneuvered in a Pacific "pas de deux," although Perry much preferred to act alone. Thus, when Putyatin proposed that the forces combine to cooperate in attaining their ends more easily, Perry positively, but courteously declined, believing that cooperation might benefit Russia, but would not advance the cause of the United States. To the Secretary of the Navy he declared himself considerably annoyed by the "mysterious movements" of the Russian ships of war. He was
even more annoyed when he learned that, contrary to Perry's orders, 
the Russian Admiral had been permitted to purchase 20 tons of American 
controlled coal in Shanghai in order to facilitate his fleet reaching 
Nagasaki. It was to circumvent just this sort of thing, that Perry 
had collected all the coal he could lay his hands on and placed it 
in the U. S. Naval stores in Shanghai. Putyatin requested a second 
order of coal in vain.²⁰

Leaving his proposals with the Japanese officials, Perry 
de parted Tokyo Bay after ten days, intending to return for his answer 
in the spring. Putyatin continued his discussions and received some 
encouraging words, but no treaty. The Japanese, not above playing one 
foreigner against another, told Putyatin that Russia was considered 
"as a defense against other countries" and that should Japan finally 
permit trade, "it will be first to your country."²¹ But circumstances 
and American diplomacy interfered with this promise. Due to the lack 
of suitable ships and the onset of the Crimean War, Putyatin was 
unable to reopen negotiations until November 1854. Meanwhile, Perry 
stole a march on the Russians by hastening his squadron back to Japan 
in February 1854 and signed the first treaty with Japan in March which 
earned him the distinction of "opening up Japan."

A few months after the announcement of the treaty, a Dr. Von 
Siebold published a pamphlet claiming that Russia should receive the 
credit for opening Japan to trade. Von Siebold, a knowledgeable Dutch 
authority on Japan, had been banished from Japan because he was 
thought to be a Russian spy. For this reason Perry had refused his 
offer to join the American expedition. His claims on behalf of 
Russia undoubtedly increased Perry's suspicions of that nation's 
motives.²² In every direction that Perry steamed in the North Pacific
he felt that Russian presence. He intended to turn Naha in the Ryukus into an American port of refuge, but found that the Russian squadron had also visited and exercised an armed force ashore. In examining the various claims to the Bonin Islands, he again discovered that Russia was a prior contender there, also. When the American squadron visited Hakodate, one of the newly opened treaty ports in Northern Japan, Perry became aware that Russia had recently "annexed" the Amur region.23

At the outset of his voyage, Perry, as might be expected, was strongly opposed to "annexationist England." However, in the course of the expedition, his attitude changed. The British had extended him several courtesies and freely acknowledged his lead in opening Japan. In Russia, on the other hand, Perry perceived a potential rival, one which "might aim to be a great maritime power, and to rule mistress of the Pacific." His narrative of the expedition is replete with similar warnings. Noting that Russia had already seized some of the Kurile Islands which belonged to Japan, he thought it not in "the interest of any part of the commercial world that Russia should ever own Japan," although "Russia has, doubtless, long seen the importance to her of its acquisition." Russia was suspected of secret purposes, of rendering aid to Japan as an ally, with the intention at the proper time of absorbing all of Japan. By fortifying the "annexed" territory at the mouth of the Amur, Russia had excited "suspicions of ulterior designs."24

Although the Perry expedition never proceeded on to the Asiatic mainland, the possibility that it might had hastened Russia's occupation along the Amur and on Sakhalin. The uncertainty as to where Perry intended to establish American outposts had heightened the sense of
Russian-American competition. To Perry, who already bemoaned the large areas of Asia already under European sway, the Russian acquisition of the Amur must have seemed like another opportunity lost for gaining a foothold in Northeast Asia. Based on these experiences, Perry made his own prophecy concerning the future rivalry with Russia:

It requires no sage to predict events so strongly fore-shadowed to us all; still "Westward" will "the course of empire take its way." But the last act of the drama is yet to be unfolded; and notwithstanding the reasoning of political empirics, Westward, Northward and Southward, to me it seems that the people of America will, in some form or other, extend their dominion and their power, until they shall have brought within their mighty embrace the Islands of the great Pacific, and placed the Saxon race upon the eastern shores of Asia. And I think, too, that eastward and southward will her great rival in future aggrandizement (Russia) stretch forth her power to the coasts of China and Siam: and thus the Saxon and the Cossack will meet once more, in strife or in friendship, on another field. Will it be in friendship? I fear not! The antagonistic exponents of freedom and absolutism must meet at last, and then will be fought that mighty battle on which the world will look with breathless interest; for on its issue will depend the freedom or the slavery of the world,—despotism or rational liberty must be the fate of civilized man. I think I see in the distance the giants that are growing up for that fierce and final encounter; in the progress of events that battle must sooner or later inevitably be fought.25

The United States Surveying Expedition to the North Pacific had different objectives from Perry's expedition to Japan. As its name implies, the aims of the North Pacific expedition were scientific exploration and reconnaissance, not diplomacy. The expedition was instructed to survey the areas navigated by whalers in the vicinity of the Japanese archipelago and the waters north to the Bering Straits in order to lessen the hazards of whale fishing by constructing more accurate charts of shoals, headlands, and protected anchorages. The expedition was also charged with charting trans-Pacific routes over which merchant ships could navigate safely and quickly between San
Francisco and Asia. Nor was the possibility of locating a strategic coaling station along the track overlooked.  

Senator William Seward was the chief proponent of the North Pacific Survey Expedition. In a major speech to the Senate in July 1852, it was he who cited the growth and importance of the American whaling industry, while deploring the large number of disasters at sea. He pointed out that eleven ships had been lost in the year 1851 alone. Elaborating on this original theme, Seward went on to give expression to his vision of the United States expanding into the Pacific. He foresaw "the reunion of the two civilizations, which, having parted on the plains of Asia four thousand years ago, and having travelled ever afterwards in opposite directions around the world, now meet again on the coasts and islands of the Pacific Ocean." The ordinary whalers and survey ships were seen by Seward, then, as an opening wedge into the region which he forecast would become the "chief theatre of events in the world's great hereafter."  

Five naval ships were commissioned for the expedition, but only the movements of the two which surveyed in Russian Far Eastern waters during the summer of 1855 are of concern here. The 700-ton sloop Vincennes served as flagship for Lt. John Rodgers. The John Hancock, a small steamer, was under the command of Lt. Henry Stevens. The last port-of-call before commencing the final stage of the survey in June 1855 was Hakodate, one of the two Japanese treaty ports opened by Perry. Word of this provision in the treaty had already circulated among American whalers by the time the expedition arrived. The whaling ships were making arrangements to resort to Hakodate in large numbers as a convenient place to re-fit and re-provision.
From Hakodate, Lt. Stevens in Hancock was ordered to proceed westward through the Tsugaru straits and thence northward along the west coast of Hokkaido. After passing through the La Perouse straits into the Sea of Okhotsk, he was directed to survey the northern coast of the sea first. Then, he was to penetrate southward to the vicinity of the Amur estuary and beyond to Castries in the Gulf of Tartary, if possible. Some doubt still lingered whether Sakhalin was an island or attached to the mainland, making the passage from the Sea of Okhotsk to the Gulf of Tartary impossible. The locations of several places ashore on Kamchatka and Sakhalin were provided to Stevens in his orders as potential sources of coal deposits, and he was advised that other localities could "doubtless be ascertained from the Russians." 29

Like the Perry expedition, the Russians were aware of the upcoming survey. Governor General Muravev had offered to detail two officers to assist the exploration of northern waters, but Rodgers was not able to avail himself of their services. In appreciation of the gesture, Rodgers forwarded a set of charts made by the coastal survey and requested in return a chart of the entrance to the Amur River. In politely refusing, Muravev claimed that the Amur chart was "yet so incorrect that I do not think it deserves to get a place in your valuable work." The policy of Russian Siberian officials was to welcome the American expedition cordially, but to withhold detailed information on the Amur estuary on the grounds that navigation in the vicinity was difficult and dangerous and that the whole coastline down to the Korean frontier belonged to Russia. Muravev was concerned that, if his plans to occupy the Amur region were not successful soon, then either the English or the Americans would
promptly seize the Amur. Although he believed, as early as the spring of 1852, that Russian possession of the "land of the Gilyaks" was being consolidated, he worried about armed foreign vessels in the Gulf of Tartary and the American expedition to Japan. Muravev still considered the Americans to be friends and not yet in the same category as the English "enemies." However, his evaluation of the "Palmer project" led him to take a cautious approach to the American expedition.30

Rodgers, who had Palmer's writings with him on the expedition, expressed similar admiration of the Amur in his instructions to Stevens:

The Amur is one of the great rivers of the world. It is the largest stream which empties into the vast Pacific. It is a great highway of natures making from the shores of the Pacific to the centre of Asia and at some future day a vast commerce will doubtless be borne upon its waters. A town at its mouth seems the Russian sister of San Francisco . . . .31

Having received his objectives—to survey the coast of the Sea of Okhotsk, search for coal fields, and explore the mouth of the Amur—Lt. Stevens departed Hakodate in late June 1855. Toward the end of July the Hancock was steaming along the western coast of Kamchatka, a mile or so off land whenever visibility permitted. The ship frequently anchored to allow shore parties to gather botanical specimens and to hunt or fish. According to Ensign Habersham, the first landing on the soil of "despotic Russia" took place on July 26. A few days later coal was found and a week was spent loading 45 tons of coal on board. Particular examinations were made in those bays frequented by whalers. While at anchor a number of native settlements were visited. Stevens allowed one-half the crew ashore at any one time to take on water and to engage in trade with the natives for food and furs. It was noted that the natives had already acquired a few American
slang expressions from the whalers. Arriving at Ayan, the *Hancock* sailed through a fleet of seven American whalers. The reception in Ayan was amicable, although the town was largely deserted because of a recent raid by the English and French. This was the only evidence of the Crimean war that the expedition encountered. Habersham did report that he met two "old acquaintances--members of that humorous tribe of restless Americans who live in all parts of the world, turning over their nimble six pences or attempting to establish new forms of government over dilapidated states." These acquaintances had already engaged in trade with the Russians and had set up a warehouse. During the stay in Ayan, the *Hancock* crew watched the whalers chasing their prey right into the harbor. More whaleships were observed near the next anchorage in the Shantar Islands. Habersham was told that once some two hundred whalers had gathered there.

One of the attractions, aside from the whales, was the rich vegetation ashore, particularly timber for masts and spars. Stevens took the opportunity of cutting 10 cords of wood to supplement his dwindling coal supply.32

As the end of the safe navigation season approached, Stevens tried to enter the Amur River. Near the entrance of the river the *Hancock* approached the American merchant ship *Palmetto* out of San Francisco with stores. The *Palmetto* had been attempting to enter the mouth of the Amur for ten days with the aid of a pilot and Russian naval boats. On board the *Palmetto* Stevens caught a glimpse of a chart of the straits, much to the annoyance of the Russians. When Stevens asked for a copy, a Russian officer told him that the chart was secret and could not be handed over to him. More delay was encountered in attempting to receive permission to enter the Amur
from Admiral Zavoika, the Chief of Russian Naval Forces in the Amur. When the weather began to worsen, Stevens decided to leave the gulf without accomplishing all of his mission. He did ascertain in conversation with Russian naval officers that there was a passage through the Gulf of Tartary and that Sakhalin was indeed an island. In his final report to Rodgers, Stevens recommended that the Amur River be revisited and given a good examination with "regard to the resources of the country and the wants of the people." He considered that the region would become a useful link in American trade with Japan and China. Through want of laborers, Stevens postulated that the Russians would depend on goods from America, no matter how fertile the soil in the Amur region. San Francisco, he thought, would be particularly interested in the commercial possibilities. Stevens also suggested stationing a United States' Consular Agent in the Russian port of Ayan to assist the large number of whalers that called there.33

Rodgers reserved for the Vincennes the most hazardous phase of the survey, the exploration through the Bering Straits into the Arctic Ocean. From Hakodate the Vincennes sailed along the Kurile Islands and after a port call at Petropavlovsk headed for the Bering Straits in early August. Before proceeding through the straits, Rodgers had the ship pull into shore on the Asiatic side. The ship was met by a large party of natives from a local Chukchi village. The natives proved to be friendly, so Rodgers "with a good deal of anxiety" decided to leave a twelve-man party ashore to make scientific measurements. In reporting to the Secretary of Navy, Rodgers carefully added that the Chukchi were "a race still unconquered and untributary."34 The shore party safely remained at their Siberian observation post.
nearly a month until the *Vincennes* returned for them.

Much survey work remained to be done after the ships of Rodgers' expedition returned to San Francisco. The whalers still were more familiar with the North Pacific than the data on the charts would show, and the trans-Pacific routes needed to be plotted in greater detail, but the appropriations were exhausted. The achievements of the Perry expedition, except for the commercial opportunities opened in Japan, were also left to wither. The Pierce administration never followed up with a permanent American "point of refuge" on Okinawa or a coaling station in the Bonins. Japan annexed both island chains formally in 1872 and 1875, respectively. Perry and Rodgers and those who advocated their expeditions were ahead of their times. The westward reach halted temporarily while the United States faced its internal crisis. Even the number of whalers along the Siberian coast dwindled. By 1868 there were only 68 whaling vessels in the North Pacific. After 20 years of high activity, the lure of the whale was fading. The second wave of Americans to Northeast Asia receded gradually and naturally, leaving behind both a reminder that any Russian-American contest had only been deferred and a promise of a new region, the Amur basin, to be developed.35
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1 Peter A. Tikhmenev, A History of the Russian-American
Company, trans. Richard A. Pierce and Alton S. Donnelly (Seattle: 
University of Washington Press, 1978); pp. 58, 85, 158, 208.

2 Ibid, p. 207.

3 Ibid, p. 317; Kenneth J. Bertrand, "Geographical Exploration
by the United States," in The Pacific Basin, edited by Herman R.
Alexander Starbuck, History of the American Whale Fishery (New York: 

4 Starbuck, pp. 98, 104; Tikhmenev, p. 490; James R. Gibson,
Feeding the Russian Fur Trade (Madison: University of Wisconsin
Press, 1969), p. 225 cites a Russian estimate of 500 American
vessels in the Okhotsk and Bering Seas in 1846.

5 Tikhmenev, pp. 320-321.

6 Albert Parry, "Yankee Whalers in Siberia," Russian Review
5 (Spring 1946), pp. 40-42; Howard I. Kushner, Conflict on the
Northwest Coast (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), pp. 89-90;
Tikhmenev, p. 317; Charles M. Scammon, Marine Mammals of the North­
western Coast of North America (San Francisco: John H. Carmody and
Co., 1874), pp. 60-63.

7 Tikhmenev, pp. 317-321.


9 Alaskan Boundary Tribunal Proceedings, S. Doc. 1, 25th
Cong., 3rd sess., pp. 64 and 79; Tikhmenev, p. 318; Benjamin P.
Thomas, "Russo-American Relations 1815-1867," Johns Hopkins University

10 J. T. Jenkins, A History of Whale Fisheries (Port Washing­
ton, NY: Kennikat Press, 1971), pp. 235-238; Congressional Globe,
32d Cong., 1st sess., p. 197, Senator William Seward stated that
the number of those actively afloat ranged from 15-20,000 while
twenty times that number were engaged in occupations connected with
the trade.

11 Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia (New York: Barnes
12 Correspondence Relative to the Naval Expedition to Japan, S. Ex. Doc. 34, 33rd Cong., 1st sess., pp. 2-9.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
16 Dennett, p. 262; S. Misc. Doc. 80, 30th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 32-33.
18 Correspondence Relative to the Naval Expedition to Japan, p. 81; Francis L. Hawks, Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan, 3 Vols. (Washington: Senate Printer, 1856), 1:212-13.
20 Correspondence, pp. 17-18 and 80-82; Lensen, pp. 263-264.
21 Lensen, p. 329.
22 Hawks, 1:70-3.
23 Ibid, 1:76.
24 Ibid, 1:45, 62, 76.
28 Cole, p. 130.
29 Ibid.
30 Cole, p. 133; Ivan Barsukov, Graf' Nikolai N. Muravev-Amurskij, 2 Vols. (Moscow: Sinodal'naya Tipografiya, 1891), 1:305-09. The Russian occupation of the Amur will be taken up in greater detail in the next chapter. Muravev apparently credited the two American expeditions to the efforts of Aaron Palmer, who had long advocated that the United States should vigorously pursue commercial opportunities in Northeast Asia.
31 Cole, pp. 55-56.


34 Ibid, p. 137. According to Gibson, p. 225, the Chukchi were not subdued by the Russians until 1867.

CHAPTER III
THE AMUR: MISSISSIPPI OF NORTHERN ASIA

Aaron Palmer, the first to call attention of Americans to the promise of the Amur region, termed the Amur the "most valuable river in Northern Asia; the highway of nature that directly connects the central steppes of Asia with the rest of the world." He was convinced that "a settlement at or near its embrochure would open a new and most profitable trade with Manchuria, Central Asia, Siberia, the Japanese Islands, Corea, etc." He envisioned "no insurmountable obstacles to direct communication being opened between the Pacific and the Baltic, and with the Caspian and Black Seas, by route of this river and the navigable waters of Siberia." Unlike the common conceptions of Siberia, Palmer described the river basin in terms of fertile land, supporting immense herds of animals, producing a wide variety of minerals and teeming with wild life.\(^1\) By 1855 a ship of Rogers expedition had confirmed the location of the mouth of the river and American merchantmen from San Francisco were already off-loading cargo for Nikolaevsk. Commodore Perry may well have had the Amur region in mind when he predicted in 1856 "that America will place the Saxon race on the eastern shores of Asia."\(^2\) The region seemed singularly suited to draw American interest--fertile, but as yet undeveloped; temperate climate; sparsely populated with people who should welcome the benefits of civilization; and most important,
not yet under any well-defined sovereignty. By the time that Americans seriously began to grasp the potential of the Amur region, however, Russia was already making strenuous efforts to place the territory under its firm control.

As befitted a frontier zone, the geographical limits of the Amur region were inexactly defined by the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689, and remained so until the mid-nineteenth century. By common usage, the region roughly embraced the territory north of the Amur up to and including the southern watershed of the Yablonnoj and Stannovoj mountain ranges and then eastward to the Sea of Okhotsk at about the Uda River. According to the treaty provisions, the region was an integral part of the Chinese Empire, forming the outer reaches of Manchuria (north of Heilungkiang Province). In reality, the Amur served as a largely unoccupied buffer separating the empires of Russia and China. The various groups of natives were mostly left undisturbed and ungoverned. Chinese frontier posts were widely spaced along the right bank of the Amur. Only a few Manchurian merchants penetrated into the region to trade for sable and ginseng. Overland trade between the empires was transacted at Kiakhta to the west in Mongolia. A second largely unoccupied and ungoverned region lay to the east of Manchuria proper, between Kirin Province and the Pacific. This territory, later named the Maritime Region, included the land from the right bank of the Ussuri River to the ocean.

The Russians were long aware of the potential importance of these regions, both as a base for growing the food supplies needed for Eastern Siberia and as an access route to the Pacific. They
were only deterred from advancing their boundaries southward to the Amur by two factors. First, throughout the eighteenth century the Chinese Empire was militarily stronger in Manchuria than the opposite Russian forces in Eastern Siberia. Second, the Russian government did not wish any border dispute with China to interrupt the valuable flow of trade overland through Kiakhta. The Tsarist government might well have been satisfied to continue the ill-defined status of the Amur border regions had not events, suddenly in 1842, upset the balance of influence and trade in the Chinese Empire. In that year the British defeated the Chinese in the Opium War, widening the rift in China's policy of exclusion from the maritime powers. Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain, five treaty ports were opened to trade and low, regular tariffs were established for imports. The Sino-American Treaty of Wanghia was concluded in 1844, followed by similar treaties with other maritime nations. To Russia, this appeared as an encroachment on their heretofore privileged trading position, as in fact it soon proved to be. The Russian merchants, still saddled with archaic trading restrictions, were consistently undersold by their maritime rivals. With only a dwindling supply of furs to exchange for an increasing Russian demand for Chinese tea, the Russian merchants were forced to offer manufactured goods in direct competition with European and American products. The Russian government realized that in order to compete they needed to increase their land ports-of-entry, come into more direct contact with the millions of potential customers in North China through the navigational possibilities of the Amur and its Manchurian tributaries, and obtain the same "treaty port" commercial concessions previously granted to
other nations.

The appointment of Count Nikolai Muravev as Governor-general of Eastern Siberia in 1847 signalled a shift to a more aggressive "eastern" policy. The advocates of a forward Asiatic policy were opposed by a faction led by Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, but the expansionists gradually gained the support of the emperor. In the subsequent 13 years, Russia acquired substantial additional territory for the empire without provoking war with China. Through the daring execution, deft timing and the skillful diplomacy of a handful of leaders, Russia gained the strategic Amur and Maritime regions which would become the bastion of Asiatic Russia and the jumping off place during the next attempt to further their Pacific empire forty years later.

Muravev, himself, provided the rationale for this change in policy. In 1853 he made a proposal to the tsar which slowly gained acceptance within the imperial government and became the basis for its Pacific policy for the remainder of the century. Muravev urged, now that the Americans had advanced across the continent to the Pacific, that Russia recognize the inevitability of the "North American States" spreading over all the North American continent. As a consequence of this advance, Russia should yield its own North American possessions gracefully and peacefully. In exchange for this free hand in North America, Muravev thought that the United States could be expected to help fend off Great Britain, while Russia redirected its efforts to extend its rule over the whole Asian littoral of the Pacific Ocean. The friendly partnership of the United States and Russia was expected to result in a sharing of predominance over the
North Pacific, each from its own continent. Muravev's plan proved sound and workable in all respects save one. Muravev did not foresee that the Americans would not be content to remain in North America. They wanted to extend the area of partnership to the development of all Northeast Asia. Soon it would be necessary to fend off the Americans as well.\(^3\)

Moving cautiously to expand southward, Russia first engaged in a series of explorations to gather information about the Amur buffer zone and the people who inhabited these regions. The Russian-American Company was directed to mount these expeditions, although the government paid most of the expenses and furnished personnel from the active services. In this manner, as Okun states, the government found it useful "to cloak that expansion behind private initiative."\(^4\) Lieutenant Orlov was sent overland from Ayan in 1849 to establish trade relations with the Gilyaks near the Amur. The Russian authorities conveniently considered that the "Gilyaks and their kinsmen apparently do not recognize the sovereignty of China." The following year Orlov returned to found a small settlement on the Sea of Okhotsk just to the north of the mouth of the Amur River. The Gilyaks were now becoming fast friends with the Russians. Some were recruited into the Russian service. And when they became upset about the appearance of foreign ships (probably American whalers) in the Gulf of Tartary, Orlov was able to assure them that Russia would defend them. Concurrently with Orlov's overland expeditions, Captain Nevelskoj had been energetically exploring from the sea approaches. In 1849 he was able to report categorically that the Amur estuary was navigable with some precautions and that Sakhalin was an island not a peninsula. Nevelskoj raised the Russian flag in
1850 for the first time on the lower reaches of the Amur at the site of Nikolaevsk. Nevelskoj announced to the native tribesmen and commanded that all foreigners be shown the following proclamation:

In the name of the Russian Government all foreign vessels sailing in the Gulf of Tartary are hereby notified that inasmuch as the shore of this gulf and the whole Amur region down to the Korean frontier as well as Sakhalin Island constitute Russian possessions, neither unauthorized dispositions nor injuries to the inhabitants can be tolerated here.

Nicholas I supported Nevelskoj's actions and over-rode Nesselrode's objections by declaring "where the Russian flag has flown it must not be lowered again." The permanent occupation of the Amur region had begun. Russian ships in those waters were instructed to inform any foreign ship encountered that any attempt to occupy any point in the region would not be tolerated. Despite the many American whalers which visited the nearby Shantar Island area, Muravev was mainly fearful that England would gain a foothold in Northeast Asia before the Russians could consolidate their position. When, in 1848 an Englishman named Austin, for example, attempted to raft down the Amur, Muravev had him arrested and returned to St. Petersburg. By contrast, later American expeditions to the area met a cautious, but cordial reception.5

The United States had a hint about the Russian move into the Amur region at least by the end of 1851. Neill Brown, the American minister to St. Petersburg, reported that a reliable source had informed him that Russia had acquired the Amur delta by treaty from China. In Brown's opinion this was just "another step towards the acquisition of territory which has been the ruling passion of Russia for more than a century." American whalers who sailed the Okhotsk Sea undoubtedly also brought back the news of the Russian occupation
of the Amur estuary. By 1853 Alexander Bodisko, the Russian Minister in Washington, was able to report to his government that at least some Americans seemed anxious for Russia to seize both banks of the Amur and to open commerce from there with the United States. The Russian occupation was extended to the Maritime region in 1853. Settlements were established at Castries Bay and Imperator-skij Bay hundreds of miles south of the Amur estuary on the Gulf of Tartary as well as at Mariinsk on the right bank of the lower Amur. Reconnaissance expeditions had also been exploring Sakhalin Island because of its strategic location guarding the Amur estuary and because of reported coal deposits there. News of the Perry expedition to Japan gave added impetus to the Russian scramble to establish a prior presence in the whole region and on Sakhalin in particular. In February 1853 the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its concern to Bodisko that Perry's expedition to Japan had designs on Sakhalin Island. Bodisko was advised that Russia could not permit that and the United States should be told that Russia would regard such a move "as contrary to the friendly relations which excel between the two countries." To forestall the Americans, Nevelskoj received the imperial instructions for the Russian-American Company to occupy points on Sakhalin in July 1853. By October the first Russian fort was being constructed at Aniwa Bay on the southern end of the island despite the presence of both Ainus and Japanese. Nevelskoj was directed not to harass the Japanese, but not to allow any foreign settlements on Sakhalin either. This four-year (1849-1853) flurry of occupation, which gave Russia nominal possession of huge tracts of the previous buffer zone
with China, was carried out by a relatively few hardy frontiersmen. Most of the posts were manned by less than 10 men, though 100 had been allotted to all of Sakhalin. While company officers such as Nevelskoj and Orlov led the expeditions, they were financed and directed by the government. Perhaps because of the small size of the detachments, for a few years the Chinese government was kept largely in the dark about these border developments. Perry had earlier intelligence on the annexation of the Amur than the Chinese. But the scale of activity required to tie the Transbajkal region in with the Amur estuary would alert the Chinese authorities at their strongholds along the river. Approval for this step was granted when it became apparent that Britain and France were preparing for war against Russia. The Russian government was seriously concerned about its exposed Pacific possessions. Early in 1854, therefore, the Tsarist government permitted Muravev to undertake this last step, a ship and raft expedition down the whole length of the river to reinforce and reprovision the ports on the Pacific coast.

The Crimean War, once declared, furthered Russia's ambitions in the Far East in many ways. Heretofore, the Russians had acted in utmost secrecy or, if confronted, had made a pretense that their posts at the mouth of the Amur were simply to defend the waterway from foreign encroachment. In actuality, the only pre-war encroachment came from American whalers, not from the feared British. Then with the onset of hostilities, Muravev had a ready-made excuse, not only for overtly reinforcing the garrisons on the coast, but for establishing cossack settlements along the whole left bank of the Amur to secure the line of transport and supply. Henceforth the
operations became more openly a government affair directed from Irkutsk. In April 1854, Muravev sent a note to the Chinese government boldly informing it of the intention to take Russian troops down the Amur to the Pacific. Although this first contingent was probably only a thousand men, the Chinese were helpless to oppose the move. Since the time that the Manchus had succeeded to the throne, Manchuria proper had been drained of military manpower and governmental structure to meet the demands of ruling China. During this period, because the Manchu dynasty was faced with the serious Taiping rebellion, it was unable to release reinforcements to protect the northern border regions. In the late spring of 1855, Muravev led an even larger expedition down the Amur consisting of some 7000 military men and settlers. Russia's hold on the lower Amur was now too strong for China alone to dislodge.

Moreover, the imperial policy was firming toward supporting Muravev's design for permanent possession. The Crimean War dramatically demonstrated the vulnerability of Russia's Pacific possessions. The strategic value of the Amur transportation route using the Amur was proved in actual operations. Though only a minor engagement, compared to the battles on the Crimea, Russia did enjoy a signal victory at Petropavlovsk. Thanks to reinforcements sent to them by Muravev down the Amur, the Russians were able to drive off an attacking allied fleet in 1854.

The onset of the Crimean War brought with it conflicting claims for American support and sympathy. Each side sought to enlist the benevolent neutrality, if not the outright participation of the United States, in its cause. During the war, the United States' government, while proclaiming its strict neutrality, actually
befriended Russia in many small ways. And American public opinion was, by and large, pro-Russian, or at least gave voice to Anglophobia. Nevertheless, a large segment of the American press and journals, often reflecting Western European publications, thought that the United States should side with England and France against "Asiatic despotism." Americans were being asked to examine the merits of the combatants and to make a choice. The ensuing journalistic debate first raised issues which were to grow in proportion during the rest of the century and form the initial arguments questioning the underlying value of the traditional friendship with Russia.11

Despite the press reaction, the Crimean War ushered in a period of unprecedented official cooperation between the United States and Russia, particularly in the Pacific region. While the war was only in the threatening stage, the Russian foreign office enquired of Bodisko, concerning the extent of American neutrality. In his reply he suggested a policy which Russia repeatedly applied--appeal to the self-interest of the United States by offering commercial favors. The prospect of supplanting British merchants in the lucrative Russian market was dangled before the American traders. Import duties were lowered on American goods entering Russia such as cotton and sugar, which had previously been carried in English ships. Yankees were to be encouraged by these inducements to risk trading with Russia and, if an incident occurred with the English blockading fleet, the United States might be drawn into the conflict on the side of Russia. This move was countered by England's agreement to recognize, for the first time, that the neutral flag protected all cargo except contraband, a position that the United States had long
maintained. However, only in the Pacific, where it was impossible for the English and French to blockade the whole Russian coastline effectively, were Americans able to take full advantage of the trading opportunities. 12

The American-Russian Commercial Company was one of the first to take advantage of the wartime opportunities. The company had been formed by a group of San Francisco businessmen and political figures in 1852 to buy Alaskan ice for resale in the United States. Encouraged by the initial success of the enterprise, the president of the company, Beverley C. Sanders, decided to journey to St. Petersburg to seek a long-term contract covering a wider range of products. Before sailing, he consulted with Bodisko in Washington and had an interview with President Pierce. He was also afforded an official courier's passport by Secretary of State William Marcy. Cloaked in a semi-official status, Sanders arrived at the Russian capitol in March 1854 in company with Thomas Seymour, the new American minister. Sanders was fully aware that this was an opportune time to conduct business. Since the Russians were anxious to express their friendship for the United States, Sanders easily gained access to government officials and the directors of the Russian-American Company. In these conversations Sanders insisted on a twenty-year exclusive contract to market all of Alaska's exports except furs, i.e., not only ice, but coal, lumber and fish. Granting such generous privileges to an American company was not only a reversal of previous policies, but the contract terms also extended far beyond the life of the Russian-American Company's charter itself. For this reason, the commercial agreement was granted only through the special
dispensation of the Tsar. As late as 1850, the Russian government, while again permitting some American trade in Siberia, had specifically refused to permit American vessels to trade in Alaska. The Russian acquiescence can only be explained by their desperate need to supply Russian-America and Asiatic Russia by neutral ships during the war. 13

Foreseeing that England and France might join in the hostilities against them, Russia had long worried about the vulnerability of its possessions in America. To forestall any future attack, the Russian vice consul and agent of the Russian-American Company in San Francisco, Peter Kostromitov, devised a ruse to sell the colony to the American-Russian Company. When terms of the fictitious sale were sent to the new Russian chargé d'affaires, Edward de Stoeckl, he asked for advice from Marcy and Senator Gwin of California. All agreed that the deception could not be maintained and might embroil the United States. As it turned out, the "sale" was unnecessary. The Russian-American Company was able to reach an agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company not to attack each others colonial possessions. The only logical reason for England granting such a one-sided concession was probably a concern that Russia might well cede the territory to the United States. Despite the agreement, the ships of the Russian-American Company were still in danger should they attempt to supply the colonies. 14

Upon his departure from St. Petersburg, Sanders wrote a letter to Grand Duke Constantine which reflected his view of Russian-American relations:

These two nations ought to be good friends and allies. There neither exists nor can arise any questions of policy ... to disturb the friendly relations which have hitherto marked their intercourse with each other. Russia wants nothing America owns or desires to possess; and America does not
covet anything which Russia has or desires to acquire; hence the two nations can go on to the fulfillment of their respective destinies without entertaining the slightest jealousy of each others prosperity and greatness.

After his return, Sanders turned energetically to helping the Russians. He ordered constructed a 450-ton steamer, the Astoria, and purchased a 287-ton bark, the Cyane. Both were turned over to the Russian-American Company, but retained their neutral status by having a United States' registration and by being manned by an American crew. These two ships kept the Alaskan outposts supplied during the war. Although the record is far from complete, the quantity and variety of trade with Asiatic Russian ports also increased under Sanders' direction. In December 1854 he shipped a cargo of provisions from New York to Petropavlovsk in the Levantor. The William Penn left San Francisco in March 1855 with flour and gunpowder for Siberia. In September 1855 the Palmetto of the American-Russian Company was sighted by Captain Rodgers trying to enter the Amur River with needed supplies for the Russians. 15

The American-Russian Commercial Company was not the only American company trading at Siberian ports. Since 1835, when William Boardman of Boston had petitioned the Russian government and been granted permission to trade in Kamchatka, American merchants had resumed visiting in Asiatic Russian ports. By 1843 they dominated the trade of Kamchatka and by the end of the Crimean War the Russian-American Company brought their commercial operations on the Amur to a close because they were unable to stand up to the competition of American goods at Nikolaevsk. 16

Nor did American whalers and merchantmen keep completely clear
of the war zones. In the spring of 1855, Muravev had ordered the evacuation of the entire Petropavlovsk garrison before another Anglo-French assault could be mounted. The evacuees crowded onto two Russian warships and two chartered American transports. They sailed from Avacha Bay to the Amur River and were nearly captured by an English squadron. Rear-Admiral Zavoiko who commanded the Russian convoy had warning from American whalers that the Allied forces were converging around Sakhalin.17

Both sides in the Crimean War realized that privateering would be an effective weapon for Russia to use, if they received help from the Americans. When sounded out, Marcy expressed the opinion that if he were in Russia's place, he would fit out every available ship against the enemy's commerce. And as far as his countrymen were concerned, Marcy believed that they had the right to do whatever they like—as long as it took place in foreign ports. Stoeckl took the hint and abandoned all thoughts of arming privateers in American ports as too risky. Whatever else, he wanted to cultivate American good will. He also discarded a plan for Americans to take their vessels to Russian-America to arm and take out Russian citizenships, even though he was convinced that "many a freebooter along the Pacific coast" would be willing. The privateering plans were revived in early 1855 by Senator Gwin and Sanders, both of whom urged that privateers based in San Francisco could sweep the allied ships from the Pacific. All that was needed, according to them, was money and a few Russian officers to command the ships. Again the Russian foreign ministry turned down the proposals. Not wishing to compromise their good relations, the only place Nesselrode would consider that
armed corsairs would be legal was Eastern Siberia and anyone who wanted to could go there.\textsuperscript{18}

Among the breaches of strict neutrality was the United States' attitude toward the Russian government building the warship \textit{Amerika} in New York. Secretary Marcy was aware of the true owners, but did not interfere as long as the letter of the law was followed. The steamer-corvette sailed under American flag to the Pacific by way of Cape Horn. At Rio de Janeiro it was intercepted by an English warship and only the action of an American naval officer prevented capture. The \textit{Amerika} arrived safely at the Amur in 1856 and was to see extended diplomatic service as the flagship of Admiral Putyatin and General Muravev. The \textit{Amerika} was to be the first of a small fleet of steamships built in the United States for use by Russia on the Amur after the war.\textsuperscript{19}

In dealing with Japan, the representatives of the United States also entered into a period of cooperation with the Russians, rather than the competitiveness displayed by Commodore Perry. Disaster had struck Admiral Putyatin's expedition in December 1854 as he was negotiating the Russian treaty with Japan. An earthquake at Shimoda caused a tidal wave which severely damaged his flagship \textit{Diana}, the only ship remaining of his squadron. When the \textit{Diana} eventually sank, Putyatin was stranded in the midst of the Crimean War. The Americans rendered assistance. Captain McCluney and Commander Adams arrived in Japan in January 1855 with the ratified Japanese-American treaty. Their offer to transport the Russian party to Shanghai was not accepted, but they were able to provide a service. Through Adams, Putyatin was able to send a copy of the treaty he had negotiated with Japan to St. Petersburg via Washington.
Again, when the United States surveying expedition arrived in May 1855, Captain Rodgers offered friendly assistance to the shipwrecked Russians. Finally the American schooner *Caroline E. Foote* carried a large contingent of the Russian crew safely to Kamchatka in April. The contingent eventually found passage in *William Penn* from Kamchatka to Castries Bay.²⁰

The Russians reciprocated these kind acts in the following year. Captain Poset returned with the ratified Japanese-Russian treaty in November 1856. At Shimoda he found Townsend Harris, the first American consul general and minister to Japan who was attempting to negotiate a commercial treaty with Japan and was badly in need of western company. In addition to the exchanges of gifts and friendly assistance, the representatives commenced fruitful diplomatic cooperation in dealing with Japan. They kept each other informed of negotiations in progress and collaborated on policy. When the Russian consul settled in Hakodate rather than Shimoda, Harris struggled to success on his own, concluding a commercial treaty in July 1858. Putyatin signed a similar treaty with Japan a month later.²¹

During the Crimean War, the United States was the only major nation in the world which freely acknowledged a friendship for Russia. After the conclusion of peace, the Russian government made a series of related diplomatic moves, ostensibly to return the friendship demonstrated by the Americans in the Pacific area, but which actually served to ensure American unwitting collaboration with Russian designs in the Amur and Maritime regions. The Russian partial occupation of these regions had been explained to the Chinese authorities
as a wartime, defensive measure. After the war, it was necessary
to negotiate the permanent cession of these lands, but Russia wanted
the Amur issue to be kept separate from negotiations the Western
powers were then carrying on with China to liberalize trade. To
avoid embroiling the Russo-Chinese bilateral negotiations in the
larger diplomatic maneuvers, Russia sought to treat the Amur occupa-
tion as a fait accompli. The Russian government also held out to
the United States the enticement of jointly developing the commercial
prospects of the Amur basin. At the end of the war, American mer-
chants made enquiries as to the chances of trade on the Amur and
Sakhalin Island. One of these merchants, Perry McDonough Collins,
in conversation with Stoeckl was led to believe that "the friendly
power of Russia now holds ready and willing to further American
enterprise and energy." The Russian foreign minister Gorchakov
confirmed, that although no American consul could for the time being
be admitted, the Americans would find a warm welcome. 22

Collins, a San Francisco businessman, had been thinking along
lines similar to Palmer. By 1855 he had determined in his own mind
that the Amur River was "the destined channel by which American
commercial enterprise was to penetrate the obscure depths of Northern
Asia, and open a new world to trade and civilization." When Collins
learned that the Russians had taken possession of the Amur country
and formed a settlement at the mouth of the river, he decided to
investigate the river personally. Like Ledyard, he chose to cross
Siberia from West to East. Unlike Ledyard, he decided not to go
without credentials, so he proceeded first to Washington and conferred
with President Pierce, Secretary of State Marcy and Russian Minister
Stoeckl. The latter offered him encouragement concerning his reception in Russia. In March 1856 he was appointed Commercial Agent of the United States for the Amur River and arrived at Kronstadt in May. Collins' presence in Russia placed the authorities in a somewhat awkward position. The Amur territory was not yet officially ceded to Russia, so the matter of accepting a foreign consul in the region created an anomalous situation. And if a United States' consul were recognized, representatives of other powers, such as Great Britain, would have to be allowed in. At the time, the third Russian expedition was still proceeding down the river. By the end of the year, though, the Russian occupation was an accomplished fact. The Manchu authorities no longer posed any threat to the left bank of the river. The Amur was no longer an internal river of China. Muravev solved the dilemma posed by Collins' presence by treating him with every courtesy and show of cooperation, but he did delay his departure from Moscow until December 1856. Thereafter, Collins travelled with Muravev himself or one of his officers. He was held up in Irkutsk and Chita until May 1857, when he was at last permitted to travel down the Amur to its mouth, arriving in July 1857. He then proceeded back to San Francisco by way of Hakodate, Petropavlovsk, and the Sandwich Islands.²³

Collins' reports to Washington both during and after his journey could not have been better designed to reveal that the interest of the United States lay with supporting Russia in its occupation of the Amur region. Whether deliberately misled by the Russian authorities or betrayed by too active an imagination, Collins painted a picture of a future American commercial empire spreading deep into the interior of Northern Asia. A few excerpts from his reports illustrate
this point. On the eve of his departure from Moscow, Collins was confident:

that the entering wedge, which is now for the first time about to be driven into the heart of Manchooria, will in good time produce all the good results to our country which I have anticipated, and may eventually prove of vast importance to our commerce. At all events our country will be first in the knowledge of this hitherto "terra incognita."

That the waters of Lake Baikal can be connected with the Amoor I think there is no doubt, and thus open the very heart of Siberia to our Pacific commerce.

From Irkutsk Collins reported that he told Muravev:

that the opening of a direct commerce between Siberia and the United States, by way of the Amoor, would develop an immense amount of commerce now latent, would stimulate all branches of industry, and finally make that vast country known to the world.

Collins also supported further Russian expansion at Chinese expense:

The probability is that Russia will find it necessary in order to give peace and security to the trade on this important river, from her Siberian possessions into the ocean, to follow our example in the acquisition of Louisiana; for the whole of Manchooria is as necessary to the undisturbed commerce of the Amoor as Louisiana was to our use of the Mississippi; consequently, in my opinion, nothing short of the Chinese wall will be a sufficient boundary on the south . . . it would be very advantageous to us, if this should take place; these immense countries would then be open to our commerce and enterprise, and a great city would spring up at the south of the Amoor, unlocking to us a country of vast extent and untold wealth.

Concerning Muravev, Collins reported:

He is very anxious to open up the commerce of the country through this river, and, as stated in another part of this report, has prevailed upon his government to grant free trade for a term of years on the Pacific coasts.

Finally, Collins recommended that the United States create a "commercial system for Asiatic Russia" so that the "navigable waters of the Amur can be penetrated from our own Pacific seaports."24

In the course of his travels, Collins was encouraged by
evidence that the commercial development that he dreamed of was already taking place. At Nikolaevsk, where Collins estimated the whole trade of the Siberian sea coast would concentrate, he found five American commercial houses already in operation. During 1856 and 1857, a number of cargoes had already been unloaded. On his return voyage Collins noted the establishment of two American commercial houses each at Hakodate and Petropavlovsk.

With glowing reports from Collins, their commercial agent, and enthusiastic support from congressional members, the United States' administration was more than willing to continue to accept the Russian offer to march together in the negotiations with China. Senator Gwin and Representative Scott of California were among those who were beguiled by the new field of commercial enterprise. Based on Collins' reports, they believed that the Amur gave Californians "a ready and facile access to the very center of northern Asia." They foresaw the Amur becoming "the Mississippi of northern Asia." No matter how remote the Amur basin, a comparison to the prosperous development of the Mississippi could evoke support. The New York Herald reported that the Amur was second only in importance to the Mississippi and that "the whole Amoor basin is as necessary to Russia ... as was the Mississippi Valley to us." Leaders on the West Coast pictured the Amur as directly across the Pacific, opposite their ports. These commercial prospects gave added incentive to connecting the Pacific coast by railroad with the rest of the United States. 25

The United States, in general, sympathized with Russian expansion and looked with disfavor on English attempts to stem these
advances. This had been one of the deciding reasons which had kept the United States friendly to Russia during the Crimean War. The United States saw a parallel with its own efforts to expand in the western hemisphere being checked by Britain. In the Pacific, for example, the Pierce administration had been optimistic, in 1854, that the Hawaiian Islands would request to be annexed by the United States. Both England and France were bitterly opposed. When Secretary Marcy sounded out the Russians, however, he received a positive response. Russia was only too happy to encourage any move that might create active antagonism between the United States and Great Britain. 26 Thus when English statesmen and English publications inveighed against the dominion Russia was attempting in Northern Asia, the United States foresaw no adverse impact on its national interest in Russia occupying the Amur. English carping was passed off as the usual jealousy which they expressed at any nation expanding other than the British empire. Besides, Russian expansion promised America an inside track to commercial development in the region. The United States much preferred to compete in the North Pacific with what was considered to be a relatively weak sea power, than with the English merchant fleet. A better balance of power in Asia was thought to help the United States. Most Americans found nothing reprehensible about the continental expansion of Russia. Opening the Amur to inland navigation, gaining access to the sea, settling and cultivating the land—these were aims that the United States found compatible with its own continental experience. Americans at the time felt few forebodings about Russia dominating the China market. Rather, they felt confident that Russia would provide them with the edge to do just that.
Several years afterwards, a *New York Times* editorial summed up the prevailing American opinion:

She (Russia) availed herself of a war with France and England to quietly and unobservably acquire on the Amoor a territory worth as much as six times as much as was lost by the expenses of the war. . . . The great dream of modern Russia . . . has been a St. Petersburg on the Pacific . . . which would not be ice-bound six months in the year . . . . It would of course be indelicate and discourteous to interfere with Russia's own little Chinese maneuvers . . . . It is by no means to the disadvantage of American commerce or manufacturers that the advance has been made long even before the Pacific shall have become the Mediterranean of the future.27

William Reed was appointed to be the American minister plenipotentiary to China in April 1857. Before departing on his mission, he studied all the material he could find on China and submitted his views to the Secretary of State. Among the many diplomatic issues which he expected to confront in China, the subject of the "Russo-Chinese connexion in the North" was more important than generally imagined. Reed wanted "candid revelations of the real state of things between them (Russia) and China." An earlier warning had been voiced by Humphrey Marshall, a previous United States Commissioner to China. During the Taiping rebellion, Marshall was alarmed at reports that Russia was preparing to render military assistance to China. Marshall was concerned that such assistance might lead to a Russian protectorate over China which would nullify United States interests in the future, including American fishing in the North Pacific. His recommendation was unequivocal:

I think, then, that almost any sacrifice should be made by the United States to keep Russia from spreading her Pacific boundary, and to avoid her coming directly to an interference in Chinese domestic affairs.

Like Marshall before him, Reed did not want Russia to gain undue advantage:
if a distinction be taken in favour of Russia in consequence of her conterminous relations to China, it occurs to me that the relation of our Pacific coast and commerce is quite as close as that of the deserts and caravan intercourse of Asiatic Russia. No one can look at the map of the world without being impressed by the peculiar geographical relations of the United States and Russia to the Chinese Empire.

Moreover, Reed had gleaned the intelligence that the picture of Russia as the friend and protector of China might not be entirely accurate, instead, "that difficulties, if not actual hostilities, have occurred between the Russians and Chinese so that in the existing war a new and unexpected belligerent party may be added." Reed considered the "whole subject of the Russian navigation of the Amour by steam and her naval stations very interesting" and that in the threatened acquisition of Chinese territory "Russia may have her designs as well." 

Fortuitously for Russia, the Foreign Ministry had advised Stoeckl in February 1857 how to counter just such issues if they were raised in Washington. The Russian position was:

The consolidation of our position at the estuary of the Amur River is in no way a conquest. According to our previous treaties with the Chinese government we have long established rights to the estuary of the river and, if until now, we have not found it necessary to proclaim this publicly, it has not made our rights less obvious. Count Putyatin, whose mission is of an entirely peaceful character, is commissioned only to come to an agreement with the Chinese government on several secondary points connected with this question, which demands the best possible solution. Opening free navigation over the Amur River is for us an utter necessity which cannot be contested.

When Secretary of State Lewis Cass issued detailed guidance to Reed for the conduct of his mission, the subject of the Amur occupation or possible Russo-Chinese hostilities was not specifically mentioned. Rather, Reed's instructions contained a clear call to cooperate with the Russian envoy:
You are authorized, therefore, to communicate with him as far as practicable upon all subjects of mutual concern, and should his disposition prove favorable, as it is believed it will, his cooperation may be highly advantageous in promoting the objects of your mission. This cooperation is to be expected, moreover, with the greater confidence, because there is nothing in the policy of the United States with respect to China which is not quite consistent with the pacific relations which are understood to exist between that empire and Russia.  

The Russian-American cooperation in dealing with the Chinese Empire was sealed when Thomas Seymour, the American minister in St. Petersburg was instructed to show a copy of Reed's instructions to Foreign Minister Gorchakov. Seymour was able to report back that Gorchakov was very pleased and that the Tsar had told the Russian envoy, Admiral Putyatin, "to give his warmest support to the United States' envoy and to cooperate with him in the fullest manner." Cass also asked about the state of Russo-Chinese relations. Again, Seymour was able to reply reassuringly, advising that in his view the relations were amicable. About the alleged Russian occupation, Seymour was unable to give additional details, but gave as his opinion:

That Russia is strengthening her power in that direction is no doubt true—I am quite certain, however, from what has often been said to me on the subject of the Russian possessions on the Amur, that Russia desires the Amur may be open to trade with the United States, and that every reasonable encouragement will be given to our citizens to come there, and unite with the Russians in laying the foundation of a future profitable commerce between the two countries by exchange of commodities across the Pacific.

This opinion was bolstered by a subsequent conversation held with Count Muravev, who told Seymour that Russia had opened up the Amur region to foreign trade and that three duty-free ports had been designated—Castries Bay, Mariinsk, and Nikolaevsk. Muravev also
lightly inserted the Russian claim to the Maritime Region, which had only been partially occupied, and was then being reinforced. When this news reached Washington in the spring of 1858, together with reports from Perry Collins about the American prospects for commercial gain along the Amur, the United States' policy of leaving the Amur to the Russians was firmly set.\(^{31}\)

But while the Russian occupation was an accomplished fact, China had not yet officially relinquished its claims. This was the primary goal which Admiral Putyatin was directed to accomplish. The Admiral had a very delicate assignment when he joined the representatives of the other powers making demands on China. He hoped to cooperate and benefit by their joint negotiations for commercial advantage, but secretly he needed to treat with China on the Amur question bilaterally. Putyatin particularly fostered friendly relations with Reed, with whom the stage for mutual cooperation had already been arranged. The two got along famously, exchanging views, conferring about notes to be sent to the Chinese, and using each other's ships and courier services when convenient. Putyatin spoke excellent English, but flattered the Americans by letting them phrase his notes into proper English. Reed considered Putyatin "at least half an American." The Amur question was never raised between them. To all outside observers, the two seemed to represent a common front of neutrality and peaceful intentions toward China. Putyatin's flagship was even constructed in the United States and named Amerika.\(^{32}\)

Undercover, Putyatin played another game. In February, the four powers agreed to send similar notes to China as a last conciliatory gesture. The contents of these notes were freely exchanged
among the representatives before transmission to Peking. However, unknown to the other envoys, Putyatin added a supplementary document, revealing for the first time the extent of Russia's territorial claims against China—the left bank of the Amur and the right bank of the Ussuri where Russian towns and military posts were already established. Unbeknown, Putyatin also invoked the backing of the other powers for these claims. This was given added weight, in the case of the Americans, because Reed agreed to send the Russian note to Shanghai in the U. S. frigate Mississippi. Being a gentleman and unsuspicious, Reed did not tamper with Putyatin's mail.33

The Chinese authorities correctly assessed that the American barbarians and the Russian had a common purpose. The Chinese perceived that the two would take advantage of the strife, hoping to reap benefits and that their objective would be to mediate and placate. Putyatin's tactics of identifying with the Americans worked. In March, an imperial edict directed the Manchurian authorities to commence boundary negotiations in the North:

As to the Russian barbarians, they have had friendly relations with China for years, but never traded on the sea-coast. Suddenly now there are these (Russian) documents in Manchu, Chinese, and barbarian characters presented appended to the American barbarian papers . . . . We have notified Urga and Heilungkiang to send word to that country's Senate Yamen to come to an agreement with them on the matter of their request for a boundary survey . . . . The American barbarians, even though in self-vindication they make it clear that they were not involved in the fall of Canton, support the demands in their papers.34

The Russian foreign ministry meanwhile, in early 1858, had decided that Putyatin's mission was too complex. Gorchakov decided that, henceforth, Muravev would be entrusted with negotiations on the Amur frontier, while Putyatin would concentrate solely on obtaining
the same privileges from China as the other nations obtained. From then on, Putyatin could concentrate on obtaining the goodwill of China so that they would cede the Amur as a reward. He not only joined Reed in mediating for the Chinese in trying to meet the British and French demands, but also offered Russian military equipment and instructions to bolster the Chinese defenses. In all this complicated diplomatic maneuvering Putyatin was successful in keeping the Amur issue out of the general Chinese negotiations. Only once did the Chinese ask American representatives to intercede with Russia about the Amur frontier. According to S. Wells Williams, one of the interpreters with Reed, the Chinese in May 1858 alluded to the difficulties of the inhabitants of the ceded district, but:

> everything said by a Chinese must be taken with allowance. The weak always resort to cunning and deceit, and I don't believe this assertion. If Russia wishes to take all the territory in Manchuria lying North of the Saghalien (Amur) the matter of dispute concerning an old territory can be as easily brought up as it was in the American war with Mexico in 1846 or the Russian with Turkey. However, this river is by far the most proper outlet for the trade as it is for the drainage of Eastern Siberia, and it is of no use to the Chinese in comparison to the facilities it affords the Russians.

Williams may not have even informed Reed about the conversation, for Reed made no report of any Chinese appeal. The personal views of Williams probably closely reflected the official opinion of the United States.35

Meanwhile, Muravev with his new diplomatic authority was negotiating at Aigun with the Chinese military commander at Heilungkiang. Muravev was successful in overawing the Chinese negotiator and forcing a treaty to be signed in late May 1858 which ceded to Russia most of its demands. Aside from the territorial question, one provision had
an important bearing on American dreams of commercially developing the Amur River basin. The treaties provided for free navigation of all frontier rivers, but for Russian and Chinese vessels only. For all the bright prospects reported by Collins, Muravev had no intention of America monopolizing the trade along the Amur. Not until August 1858 did Reed learn of the Aigun treaty and then only from an unofficial source. An American schooner which had arrived at Shanghai from the Russian settlements on the Amur brought him the news. There is no evidence that Reed ever received a candid accounting of the Aigun negotiations from any Russian envoy, or that he demanded one, before he himself departed China in December. Perhaps he was too preoccupied with negotiating the Treaty of Tientsin and the subsequent tariff issues with the Chinese to question the Russians bluntly. Nor does it seem that he passed his information on to his fellow British or French diplomats. Nevertheless, the Boston Daily Advertiser credited Reed for giving the United States a favorable position on the Amur since "the accession of Russia in that quarter must eventually open to our commerce the whole of northeastern Asia." 36

When the Chinese imperial court rejected the terms of the Aigun treaty, the Russian government persisted, directing in June 1859 that Count Ignatev, their new envoy, reopen boundary negotiations in Peking. The new American minister, John Ward, also arrived in Peking that same summer to exchange ratifications of the Treaty of Tientsin. The Chinese immediately suspected the two countries to be in collusion and that the "Russian barbarians are taking advantage of the American barbarians coming to Peking to follow their lead."

The Chinese thwarted every effort of the Russian and American delegations
from meeting and freely communicating with each other in Peking. Later, when the Anglo-French forces were preparing to attack China, Ward was instructed to cooperate with the Russian minister in any proper efforts to bring the approaching conflict to an amicable conclusion. In Shanghai, in June 1860, Ignatev and Ward were finally able to communicate openly and assure one another that the intentions of the Russian government were identical with the policies of the United States. They addressed joint notes to the Chinese Supreme Council expressing friendship and their willingness to render the Chinese any service consistent with a position of entire neutrality. After the Anglo-French forces occupied Peking, Ignatev did serve the Chinese as a successful mediator. In return, Ignatev was able to negotiate the Russian Treaty of Peking in November, by which the Chinese again granted all the territorial demands of Russia. Although the Anglo-French military operations provided the chief incentive in forcing the Chinese to make such concessions, Russia's diplomatic triumph was, in some measure, the result of American tacit cooperation and lack of interference in Russian expansion. At no time did the United States seek or receive, in return for its cooperation and goodwill, any binding agreement from Russia guaranteeing commercial access to the Amur region.37

In the short run, neither the dreams of Collins or Muravev were completely fulfilled. Russia did not immediately become a major Pacific power. In 1872 Vladivostok, near Korea in the Southern Maritime region, became the principal port and fortress of Asiatic Russia, but the Russian Pacific fleet declined in strength. Russian ships still depended on Japanese ports when Vladivostok became frozen for
four months of the year. Economically, the development of the Amur-Maritime provinces proved to be a slow process. Trade with China did not compete with seaborne commerce. Nor did the Amur really serve as an adequate food base for many decades. Climate and disease prevented sufficient crops to be harvested to feed even the few settlers in the region and grain was imported in large quantities from America. The possession of the newly acquired territories long proved a financial burden to the state. 38

When Collins returned to St. Petersburg at the end of 1858, he was still enthusiastic enough to persuade the American minister, Francis Pickens, that an Amur "Open Door" was at hand, which would unlock the commerce of Asia. But a more realistic picture was being reported by Harrison Chase, who had been appointed as Vice-Consul at Nikolaevsk when Collins left. Chase was an agent of the William Boardman Company, the first American trading company to set up business on the Amur. They were established before Collins' descent of the river. Chase himself was a competent observer who knew the Russian language and was well acquainted. He served previously at Petropavlovsk and Casties Bay during the Crimean War. From his vantage point, Chase concluded that the trade "has not been so particularly satisfactory and encouraging to Americans as from some cause generally expected in the United States." He cited numerous reasons. Trade was limited to six or seven months of the year by weather. Growth of trade was slow. The sparse population could only afford the necessities. The lack of laborers slowed agriculture and held up the development of natural resources, hence no export trade. Stringent port regulations, local ordinances and the monopoly exercised by the Amur Company up river hindered commerce. The
expected commerce with Northern China did not open up and the lack of steam transport prevented goods from being transshipped along the Amur. To emphasize the bleakness of the prospects, Chase quoted a statement made by Muravev in May 1859:

No foreigners have a right to trade on the river above Sophisk and can only pass through the country as travellers. Foreigners are not allowed to have Russian agents up the river or in the interior.

Having achieved its diplomatic ends, Russia closed the door to American interests except at coastal seaports. The Amur, as a result, was not destined to become the "Mississippi of Northern Asia."39

The disillusionment over the earlier grandiose schemes did not completely dampen American interest in Northeast Asia. Collins continued on with other plans. By 1859, the number of American commercial houses at Nikolaevsk had increased to seven. Collins' book about his travels down the Amur, which was published in 1860, added to the interest in the region among his fellow countrymen. Writing about opening trade with the region drained by the Amur, Hunt's Magazine predicted that "development of this great commerce must produce as great a revolution in the commercial world as did the discovery of the passage to India." Several years later, Hunt's Magazine was more cautious and wrote about more practical aspects of the trade, concluding that advantages would depend upon the "sagacity and nerve" of the American merchants. Harper's noted that the Amur region would become the home of a "settled and industrious population whose geographical position will necessarily bring them into intimate relations with our own Pacific shores." A New York Times editorial described the Amur prospects as one of "the grandest schemes of American enterprise in the paths of commerce and civilization" which
"must rapidly assume proportions of immense importance, not only to
Russia, but to the United States."\(^40\)

The decade of the 1850s had been a period of almost uniformly
good relations between Russia and the United States, but it had also
been marked by rapid changes which required adjustments on America's
part to a larger role in the Pacific. During the Crimean War, the
United States had actively assisted Russia in the Pacific. A few
years later, American emissaries were deeply involved with European,
particularly Russian, diplomats trying to persuade China to open her
commerce. As the United States turned more and more to a Pacific
front, the distance across the North Pacific loomed less great.
The geography of Northeast Asia, too, had become more familiar and
less forbidding. The virtues of the Amur had been extolled suffi-
ciently so that prospects of sharing the riches of the region seemed
both natural and attractive. Californians, especially, saw the West
Coast linked closely to the regions directly across the Pacific from
them. As early as 1856, Americans could read predictions of a
"continuous line of railway and ocean-steam navigation, reaching
round the globe and turning the commerce of the East through the
heart of America and Russia."\(^41\)

Confronted with the new situation of the 1850s and the
possibilities offered, Americans were of several minds as to what
the future portended for them in Northeast Asia. The New York Times
was already focusing attention southward on Manchuria as "peculiarly
a market for the heavy manufacturers of the American mills" and
predicting that "Americans will doubtless possess themselves of the
better share of the internal commerce" secured there. In speaking of
"Our Empire on the Pacific," *Hunt's Magazine* predicted that the political influence of California would not be confined to "this side of the Pacific," but is "destined to reanimate the slumbering nations of Eastern Asia." According to the *New York Herald*, the "young eagle" was not satisfied just to "gird the Western World," but is "already taking wing still westward over the Pacific Ocean." When "West meets East" the treasures of Asia will be poured into the lap of the American Republic in return for the "principles of liberty and civilization." Across the Pacific "the United States will one day take the (Russian) bear behind, the thus dispatch him." The *Southern Literary Messenger* thought otherwise. It agreed that the United States was changing front from the Atlantic to the Pacific and would "soon be closely connected with China," but did not believe that the United States could check the progress of Russia for control of China any more than the Anglo-Saxon race could be curbed in the Western Hemisphere. "At no distant period ... the world will divide into two immense empires. What then?"42

As the success of the Russian advance into the Amur and Maritime regions became more apparent later in the decade, some American observers became less sanguine that the "star of empire" always moved westward. They became more willing, as Muravev had hoped, to concede almost unlimited sway to Russia on its own continent. From St. Petersburg, Minister Pickens warned that Russia was sending large contingents of settlers to the Amur from whence Russia could exert "great power over all the North China." The *New York Times*, in a series of editorials, went further. Asia was "as certainly the theatre of Russian manifest destiny, as is America for the people of
the United States." It was only a matter of time before the Anglo-Saxon race established sovereignty of the Western Hemisphere and the Slavonic races "material supremacy in the Eastern." What would happen when the two great expansive powers advanced "at the same pace toward the same field, the Pacific world?" The New York Times speculated that an encounter and a conflict would occur with "sovereignty of the globe as the ultimate prize of the competition."
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III


2 See Chapter II.


7 Lensen, pp. 280-281; Golder, Guide, 1:75.


10 John J. Stephan, "The Crimean War in the Far East," Modern Asia Studies 3 (July 1969) includes a full account of the military action.


17. Stephan, pp. 266 and 269.


24. Collins to Marcy, Nov. 30, 1856 and Jan. 31, 1857; Collins to Cass, Mar. 6, 1858. This and similar correspondence contained in *Explorations of Amur River*, pp. 6-22.


29. A. Popov, "Tsarist Diplomacy during the Taiping Uprising," Krasnij Arkhiv, 106 vols. (Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1966), 21:190; New York Herald April 8, 1858 supported this view when it congratulated Russia for "waking up to the reannexation of the Amur."

30. Cass to Reed, May 30, 1857. Most of the diplomatic correspondence concerning China for this period can be found in a more legible form than the National Archive microfilms in Jules Davids, ed., American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China 1842-1860, Series I, 21 vols. (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1973). The cited correspondence, for example, is contained ADPP-1, 14:180-84.

31. Seymour to Cass, October 10 and 30, 1857, and Jan., 26, 1858, RG 59 N. A.

32. Reed to Cass, April 3, 1858, ADPP-1, 14:181; Quested, p. 91.

33. Reed to Cass, Feb. 13, 1858, ADPP-1, 14:391-97; Quested, pp. 97-100.


35.Quested, p. 160.

36. Reed to Cass, Aug. 24, 1858, ADPP-1, 15:174; Quested, p. 147; Boston Daily Advertiser, Jan. 27, 1859.


39. Chase to Collins/State Department, Aug. 16 and Sept. 19, 1859, March 3 and June 30, 1860, RG 59 N. A.; a letter from Pickens reprinted in the New York Times, Oct. 29, 1858 painted a much more optimistic picture. According to Pickens, trade between California and the Amoor and Asiatic Russia was increasing. The trade of the Amoor was estimated at $20 million a year.


CHAPTER IV
CONNECTING THE CONTINENTS

The events of the American Civil War had little direct bearing on the relations of the United States and Russia in Northeast Asia. Indirectly though, the cordial relations that were engendered in the course of the war made a significant impact on each nation's posture and strategy in the North Pacific. The immediate post-war years marked the height of Russian-American friendship. The wartime spirit of cooperation led to a joint attempt to link Asia and North America by telegraph line. And that same sense of friendship and obligation to one another greatly facilitated the sale of Russian-America to the United States. From this period emerged also a whole litany concerning the "lasting and traditional" friendship between the two peoples which was frequently invoked in later years, but which reflected only an ephemeral community of interests, not a permanent foundation capable of offsetting any real challenges to national self-interest.

The attitude of Russia toward the United States during the war has been described by revisionists as a "mythical" friendship. That is not an entirely correct characterization. Russia did perform friendly acts toward America and the United States was properly grateful. Not surprisingly, these acts also accorded with Russia's self-interest. The only myth created was by those who exaggeratedly attributed Russia's actions to altruistic motives. Nor was it
surprising that Russian officials never disclaimed any credit for these actions, unselfish or otherwise.

One of Russia's policies, which was taken as a friendly act, was its adamant refusal to join with other European powers in any plan of enforced mediation in the Civil War. This was a distinct service to the federal government. Simply by wishing the federal government well during the conflict and studiously avoiding any intervention, Russia proved a "steadfast friend." The fact that the interests of Russia and the North coincided does not diminish the importance of the Russian position. Nor were the sentiments and motives of Russia altogether hidden. Russia was seriously concerned about continuing the strength and unity of the United States as an offset against other European powers and did not hesitate to say so. The Union was considered by Russia to be an "element essential to the universal political equilibrium." The emperor himself declared that he was very anxious that the "United States, as a nation, should suffer no diminution of power or influence." Prince Gorchakov, the foreign minister, likewise acknowledged that "we desire, above all things, the maintenance of the American Union as an indivisible nation." The Russian refusal to intervene in the internal affairs of the United States was in its own best interests, but proved a boon to the Lincoln administration. Left unspoken was Russia's equal reluctance to set any precedent for intervention while other European powers were threatening to interfere in the Polish insurrection.\(^1\)

The second, more dramatic and more public act, was Russia's decision to dispatch two squadrons of ships to United States' ports in 1863. This was perceived by the American public as an open
manifestation of friendship and a virtual alliance against any outside powers intervening in the course of the Civil War. Based on his research of the Russian archives, Frank Golder has effectively explained the real purpose behind the unexpected visits of the Russian ships. The Russian authorities were apprehensive about their fleet being bottled up in Baltic and Black Sea ports in the event of European involvement arising out of the Polish insurrection. Not wanting to repeat the experiences of the Crimean War, Russia forestalled the possibility by ordering their fleet to America. From there the Russian ships could pose a threat to French and English shipping, should war ensue.2

As early as January 1862, Admiral Popov, commanding Russia's Pacific squadron, had been directed by Grand Duke Constantine to be prepared to destroy enemy commerce in the Pacific in case of war between Russia and a stronger sea power. The disposition of Popov's ships was left up to him. He faced much less chance of being bottled up in the North Pacific, but he chose San Francisco as more desirable than any of Russia's own stations. Popov was familiar with San Francisco from previous visits and he was assured of a warm welcome from his friends there. Many leading San Francisco civic and business leaders already had commercial interests in Russia through the American-Russian Trading Company and a nascent Pacific-based whaling industry. Popov rightly anticipated better provisioning, repair and communications facilities in San Francisco than elsewhere in the North Pacific and, most importantly, permission to enter and leave port as he chose.3

Rear Admiral Popov arrived in San Francisco with his squadron
of six ships October 12, 1863 where he was warmly and enthusiastically received. In the absence of detailed contrary instructions, Popov came near to breaking strict neutrality and becoming the active ally of the federal government. During the winter of 1863-1864, San Francisco was left without the protection of any U. S. man-of-war. When rumors were reported that Confederate cruisers were planning to attack, Popov readied his ships for action to assist the unguarded city "in all measures which may be deemed necessary by the local authorities to repel any attempt against the security of the place."

When Popov's plans were reviewed by Gorchakov and Stoeckl they were disapproved and he was urged to maintain the strictest neutrality. Russian spokesmen at the time never claimed that the Russian ships had been sent as an overt gesture in support of the federal government, only that the fleet was there "for no unfriendly purpose."

Nor did they disclaim such motives when public opinion in the North assumed that Russia had acted solely out of friendship. Russia did not reject American gratitude and was prepared to accept credit for performing a distinct service to the North. But not all observers accepted this "myth," even at the outset. The Harpers New Monthly Magazine noted quite accurately that:

In the present position of European politics the presence of these vessels in our ports has a special significance. During the late Crimean war the Russian fleet was closely shut up at Cronstadt and in the Black Sea, and was unable to render any effective service. The Russians have now quite an effective naval force in the open seas.

And when Senator Charles Summer asked "Why is that fleet gathered there?" he answered himself:

My theory is that when it left the Baltic, war with France was regarded as quite possible, and it was determined not to be sealed up at Kronstadt.
In general, though, the American public and the government, according to the reminiscences of Frederick W. Seward, Assistant Secretary of State to his father, felt intuitively that help would come from Russia, if needed. Nevertheless, it is extremely doubtful that the members of Lincoln's administration were completely deceived as to Russia's actual motives and policies during the war. However, fostering an illusion of disinterested amity on Russia's part proved beneficial to the United States in the short term. In the long run, one young observer of the Washington scene may have been influenced by the differences between the perceptions and realities of this Civil War tradition of Russian friendship. John Hay was a personal secretary to Lincoln. Thirty years later as Secretary of State, he was habitually distrustful of Russian motives, frequently harping on Russian "mendacity."

The temporary concert of national interests between Russia and the United States overrode, for the time being, any antipathy either may have held toward a nation with diametrically opposite political institutions. Both sides, in their diplomatic exchanges, sought diligently to rationalize the differences in their forms of government. Usually this took the form of emphasizing the many parallels in their current state of development and recognizing that diversity in approaches were only human. Both were described as young, vigorous and improving empires which were expanding continentally. Each was carrying the light of civilization to heathen lands. Each found itself occasionally resisted by other jealous states. Each had recently emancipated those in bondage. Each had successfully put down an internal insurrection. And more importantly, Russia and the United States were still considered geographically remote
from each other, "placed at the extremities of the two worlds," and therefore would "never come into rivalry or conflict." Despite such assurances, Secretary of State Seward, reflecting some of the thoughts of the previous decade, recognized full well that the tracks of empire would eventually meet. As he instructed Cassius Clay, the U. S. Minister to Russia, early in Lincoln's administration, the two nations "may remain good friends until, each having made a circuit of half the globe in opposite directions, they shall meet and greet each other in the region where civilization first began." As a consummate expansionist, Seward envisioned that the meeting would take place when the American empire touched Asia. To this end, even in the midst of the Civil War, he actively encouraged a project linking the continents by telegraph.

During his second trip to Russia in 1859, the fertile mind of Perry Collins, the San Francisco businessman who had previously rafted down the Amur River, conceived a project for connecting North America with Asia and Europe by telegraphic line. His plan visualized a telegraphic link between San Francisco and Nikolaevsk by way of the Bering Strait. The recent failure of the trans-Atlantic telegraphic cable gave impetus to his plan. Samuel F. B. Morse, when consulted, foresaw no insurmountable difficulties in the proposed project. Hiram Sibley, President of the Western Union Company, which had just extended its telegraphic system to the West Coast in October 1861, reported that his "men are pressing me hard to let them go on to Behring's strait next summer." To support Collins' proposal, Senator Latham of California submitted a bill calling for the United States to aid and assist in a survey, under the authority of the Russian government of the waters, coasts and islands of the North
Pacific in order to determine the best route for the telegraph. 9

The first American approach to the Imperial Government was rebuffed. In 1861 when Cassius Clay asked Prince Gorchakov for the cooperation of the Russian government in constructing such a telegraph line, he was advised that Russia intended to build such a line itself. The following year Seward again instructed the United States minister to Russia, Simon Cameron, to exert his efforts in favor of the telegraphic enterprise which would "doubtless be effective in enlarging the commerce between the two countries and the two continents." In this instance Gorchakov went so far as to reply that the Collins' project was under consideration, and that a "telegraphic connection between the two nations was decidedly favored."10

By mid-1863 the climate had improved further and rapid progress was made toward an agreement. Clay, again back at his post in St. Petersburg, on May 13 submitted, upon request, his views on the telegraphic project to the Russian Asiatic Committee. A week later he was able to report to Washington that General Ignatiev, the Chief of the Asiatic Department, was favorably inclined to grant most of what Collins had requested. On May 27, 1863 the Tsar confirmed the decision of the Asiatic Committee to approve a charter conditional only upon proof that the Russian-American Telegraph Company actually had been formed, that shares for at least one-half the cost of construction had been sold and the final plans for the lines direction produced.11

The original Collins' proposal requested that the telegraph company be awarded full possession of all territories along the telegraph's right-of-way and exclusive control of the native tribes not
under the direct authority of the Russian government. If granted, this would have meant virtual sovereignty by an American company over long stretches of Asiatic Russia. The grant, when finally approved, greatly modified these stipulations. The company was not allowed to exercise any right or powers in the Russian dominions or to subordinate the natives to their control. The negotiations, however, left little doubt that the American entrepreneurs had preferred to carve out their own independent domain in Siberia. The Russian grant did warn that the stations near Bering Strait ought to be constructed in such a manner as to be able to defend themselves against natives in case of attack and recommended that the company hire armed Russian guards for protection. Apparently, the Chukchi natives were still relatively untamed. The grant further stipulated that all workmen on duty along the projected line be Russian subjects, but rejected the idea of establishing villages along the line peopled with "exiled culprits." 12

Even so modified, it is somewhat difficult to understand why the Russian government, after mulling over the Collins' proposal for two years, suddenly consented. Why, when Russia was still so sensitive to the incursion of American merchants and whalers along the coasts of Asiatic Russia and Russian America, should the government permit American influence inland? Russia acknowledged that the principal benefits would accrue to the commercial cities of Europe and the United States and not to Russia itself.

Perhaps it was not coincidental that renewed interest in the American telegraphic proposal began during the period when Russia was contemplating the dire prospects of European intervention into
the Polish insurrection. Acquiescing to a commercial project in which the federal government believed strongly enough to push forward, despite the ongoing Civil War, must have seemed another means of cementing cordial relations with the United States at a crucial moment. Perhaps the Russian officials were convinced that such a gigantic undertaking would never be executed. Once the Polish question subsided, their enthusiasm for the telegraph project did wane. When Collins and Sibley returned to St. Petersburg in October 1864 with the required proofs as to the establishment and financial status of the Russian-American Telegraph Company, they again ran into delays and a new set of conditions. Some of these new propositions limited the franchises of the earlier grant, but most importantly reduced the profit margin allowed to the company. Since the enterprise was already well underway and much capital had been invested, Sibley and Collins reluctantly agreed to the revised agreement and did not cancel the project, as perhaps the Russian government was hoping.13

If the Russian aim was to secure better relations with the United States, they succeeded. This act served as yet another reminder of Russian friendship. President Lincoln was able to report in his third annual message to congress that "satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Emperor of Russia, which, it is believed, will result in a continuous line of telegraph through that empire from our Pacific Coast." Seward, noting the "liberality and friendship" which Russia and Great Britain had manifested toward the United States, thought that no other enterprise "within the scope of our foreign relations more directly important than the preservation of
peace and friendship with those two great and enlightened powers."
The New York Chamber of Commerce commended the Russian "spirit of
wise liberality."14

To Perry McDonough Collins belongs all the credit for first
envisioning the union of the continents by telegraph and for tenaciously
negotiating with Russian officialdom. In the words of Seward, the
"country could not have a more enlightened, assiduous and faithful
representative" than Collins. But equal credit redounds to Seward
who immediately recognized that the telegraphic project would
further his dreams of an American Pacific empire. As a consequence,
Seward provided diplomatic support to the project at every stage,
and was instrumental in securing congressional support for the con-
tracts and surveys necessary to begin construction. In May 1864
Seward propounded to the Senate Committee on Commerce in detail the
feasibility of the proposed telegraphic line, its usefulness and
its claim to government patronage. He pointed out that, domestically,
telegraphic communications had stimulated an active and profitable
system of commerce. From this he conjured up a vision of an
America-centered, worldwide commercial empire in which:

the merchant or the manufacturer, the miller, the farmer,
the miner, or the fisherman, of Halifax, Quebec, Portland,
Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis,
St. Paul, Little Rock, Denver, Salt Lake City, Carson City,
Los Angelos, San Francisco, Sacramento, Portland, with the
aid of a transoceanic telegraph, would be in daily, and, in
case of need, in hourly correspondence with producers and
consumers on the Amoor, where the fur trade of Asia is
gathered up; with Sofinsk, the depot for the overland
traffic between Russia and Japan, and the mineral treas-
ures of Narchinsk; with Kiakhta, the centre of the
international commerce of Russia and China; with Irkoutsk,
Moscow, St. Petersburg; with all the cities of western
Europe, including Constantinople; with the cities of
Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez.15
Seward also had expectations beyond the immediate telegraphic project which he believed would follow as a matter of course. He foresaw the telegraphic enterprise as another wedge for the entry of the United States into the development of Northeast Asia, particularly the Amur basin, and from there, to all of Asia. As he predicted to the Senate, by their cooperation in Collins' design,

Russia actually invites us to put forth our national energy from every point within our borders where industry of any kind dwells, and especially from our northwestern and western States, and to apply that energy in the great work of renewing and restoring the long languishing civilization of the regions where our race first impressed its dominion upon the globe appointed for its residence.16

With the enthusiastic support of Seward the Congress passed a bill in July 1864 granting the proposed telegraphic line a right of way within territory of the United States, the assistance of the Navy and the protection of troops. Colonel Charles S. Bulkley was appointed engineer-in-chief. By the summer of 1865 he had organized three exploring parties to survey the routes of the line. The Asiatic Russian segment stretched approximately 1800 miles through bleakest Siberia from Nikolaevsk on the Amur River to the Bering Strait. The responsibility for finding a suitable route through this trackless wilderness was assigned to ten men, a Russian and nine Americans, one of whom was George Kennan. By spring, when travel bogged down in many regions of Siberia, the entire route had been traversed. The party commenced the work of constructing station houses along the way and warehouses to store the large quantities of material due to arrive during the summer. Additional foremen also arrived to superintend the actual construction. The next year was spent distributing the company supplies of insulators, wire and brackets, as well as cutting
thousands of trees for telegraph posts. For this work, 600 Yakutsk laborers were hired. By the spring of 1867 the work had progressed so well that those in charge confidently expected to have the line completed before 1870. Then in May, from an American whaler, they heard the news that Cyrus Field had not only successfully laid a trans-Atlantic telegraph cable, but had actually lifted and repaired his earlier attempt. Soon word was received to cease work, sell what material they could and return home. 17

George Kennan's chronicle of his two and one-half years in Siberia was first published in 1870 and was never out of print for the next forty years. Numbers of Americans seemed interested in reading about the wilds of Northeast Asia and, through the eyes of George Kennan, getting a glimpse of a new frontier. For the first time Americans had a first-hand view of the interior of Asiatic Russia, the spectacular geography, the forbidding weather, and the colorful natives. Heretofore, the knowledge of Siberia had been limited to the coastlines visited by whalers and Navy surveyors or to the more established roads and waterways. In Kennan's portrayal one reads about a hardy band of American pioneers overcoming all the hardships and dangers of a vast wilderness area. They trekked beyond the few settlements and ventured into the lands inhabited only by the wandering Chukchi and Koryaks, whom Kennan compared to the North American Indians. Already in the isolated settlements Kennan noted signs that American "culture" had penetrated--natives who swore in American and sang "Oh, Susannah," and had pictures from Harper's Weekly adorning the walls of native yurts. From Kennan Americans gained impressions of American ships frequenting the coastal
waters of Siberia and American merchants monopolizing the trade. 18

The Yankees, one was led to believe, cannot only deal with the natives in their own element, but also can develop this remote territory through American ingenuity and organization. The telegraphic project was prosecuted with all the vigor which capital and intelligent labor could secure. It was cancelled only after an expenditure of three million dollars, not through any failure in the enterprise, but because another telegraph route proved to be more economical.

The continents of Asia and North America were, nevertheless, drawn closer together in men's minds. Asiatic Russia was not nearly so remote. Western Union offered to continue the project solely on the North American side if Russia would undertake the entire Asian segment up to Bering Strait, but the Russian government did not avail itself of this offer. Russia was even then, at the moment of cancelling the project, disengaging completely from the North American continent. 19

Underlying the sale of Russian-America to the United States was the widely held belief among Russian leaders that the United States would eventually seize the territory anyway, so why not sell it peacefully and gain something from the transaction. The friendly relations between the two nations during and immediately after the Civil War certainly facilitated the negotiations and overcame the reluctance toward the transaction in each nation, but it was the growing realization by Russia that Russian-America could no longer be held intact as a colony against American pressure without the unacceptable expenditures of funds and military effort which decided the issue. At the time of the 1824 Convention, a few Russian naval
officers and officials of the Russian-American Company had advocated just such an expansionist course. They had urged that Russia extend its holdings in California to block the predicted onrush of the Americans before their move was well underway. Their proposals were overruled and by the terms of the convention Russia began its retreat from North America. Now, some forty years later, a growing number of Russian officials assessed that the American continental expansion to the Pacific coast and the rapid settlement thereon would lead to acquisition of the entire North American continent by the United States, including Russian-America. They were convinced of America's "manifest destiny." Perhaps they were more convinced than the average American. To those Russians who followed Muravev's blueprint, the solution seemed obvious—eliminate this source of future friction with the United States, while ridding Russia of an indefensible liability. They did not urge a retreat from the Pacific. On the contrary, they recommended that Russia concentrate its efforts on the newly acquired Amur and Maritime Regions. To them, this was the best strategy for strengthening Russia's power in Asia.

The most influential of those convinced of the Muravev concept was Grand Duke Constantine, younger brother of the Tsar and General-Admiral of the Russian Navy. He became the real promoter of the sale of the Russian-American colonies as early as 1857. He argued that "we must not deceive ourselves and must foresee that the United States, aiming constantly to round out their possessions and desiring to dominate undividedly the whole of North America will take the aforementioned colonies from us and we shall not be able to regain them." Therefore, Constantine proposed that the colonies
be sold to the United States, "solving in a friendly fashion and in a way that would be profitable to us a problem which will otherwise be solved in a way disadvantageous to us and in addition by conquest." Otherwise, not only will the Russian-American Company trade be harmed, but "all Russian trade in America." Russia he urged "must endeavor . . . to hold those extremities which bring her real benefit." 20

Baron Wrangell, who had served as governor of Russian-America and was a stockholder in the company, well knew the value of the territory, if its natural resources could be developed without "fears of the future." Nevertheless, he too urged that Russia turn over the colony to the Americans since such a cession was "anticipatory prudence." 21

Admiral Popov, who commanded the Russian fleet in the Pacific, was not only a confidant of the Grand Duke, but was well acquainted with the situation in the North Pacific. From his visits he had a personal glimpse of the American appetite for expansion. He was convinced that Americans truly believed in the Monroe Doctrine and that their "manifest destiny" would lead to eventual seizure of Russian-America. As a consequence, he also recommended that Russia focus its energies in developing the nearer and more promising Korea and Amur regions of Asia, while ceding the colonies on the North American mainland and the Aleutians, because "geographically all these are American." Popov did not include the colonies on the Kurile islands, which had earlier been tentatively considered for sale, and he specifically urged retention by Russia of the Commander Islands "so as not to have the Yankees too near us." 22

From his vantage point in Washington, Stoeckl was urging a similar course of action. During the Crimean War he had been involved
in the abortive attempt to make a fictitious sale of Russian-America to the United States. Since that time, Senator William McKendree Gwin of California had made several unofficial overtures to him concerning a bona fide sale, which Stoeckl relayed on. Senator Gwin's interest in acquiring Alaska was but one facet of his plans for an American commercial empire stretching out from his California and embracing the millions of people who inhabited China and Japan, and the "hosts Russia will soon have planted in her possessions on the Amoor River." The encouragement of friendly relations with Russia became the basis for Gwin's Pacific policy. Stoeckl was equally anxious to promote friendly relations, because the monopoly exercised by the Russian-American Company was an embarrassment.

While he was busy trying to promote good relations, the company was creating needless friction with the United States. American commercial and fishing interests were excluded from Russian-America, while Russian ships and commercial agents were welcomed to San Francisco. Stoeckl was particularly alarmed when he heard rumors that a large body of Mormons intended to settle in Russian-America. He recognized that the colonizing power of America would be difficult to forestall. The Mormons did not test the situation, but reports of gold being found in Russian-America threatened an actual stampede of American prospectors to the region. In his reports Stoeckl spoke of the "aggressions" of the Americans. Only the current small value of Russian-America, according to him, made it "safe from American filibusters." After the sale, in an effort to answer critics in Russia, Stoeckl was even more explicit. He described how Americans considered the continent "their patrimony" and how the "rapacious"
American filibusters "swarm in the Pacific" causing "depredations on our coasts." Stoeckl likewise thought the best solution for Russia was to solidify its hold on Asia:

It is upon our Asiatic coast that our interests lie and it is upon this point that we should concentrate our energy. There we are upon our own soil and we have the products of a vast and rich province to exploit. We shall take our part in the extraordinary activity which is developing in the Pacific; our establishments will rival in prosperity those of other nations and, with the solicitude which our August Master has devoted to the countries bordering on the Amour, we are destined to gain, in this great Ocean, the high consideration which belongs to Russia. 23

Prince Gorchakov, who received all of these recommendations for Russia to divest itself of its North American colonies, gradually became convinced. He was cautious not to antagonize England carelessly and he wanted the initiative to come from the United States, so at first he avoided a decision by setting a commission to study the problem. Then the Civil War permitted him to sidestep the issue for awhile. Meanwhile, the government withheld approval for a new charter for the Russian-American Company when it expired at the end of 1861. Finally, in December 1866, when Stoeckl was back in St. Petersburg, Constantine brought the issue to a head at a council meeting attended by the Tsar. Stoeckl was ordered to return to Washington to open negotiations and to accept no less than 5 million dollars for Russian-America.

The reluctance of Gorchakov may have been partially overcome by the euphoria created by the Fox mission only a few months before. During the summer of 1866, Gustavus Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was sent with a squadron of three naval warships to Russia to deliver a resolution passed by Congress congratulating Tsar Alexander II upon his providential escape from assassination. For
six weeks the mission travelled to various cities in Russia receiving deputations, memorials, banquets, toasts, orations, medals, gifts and honorary citizenships. Fox met with the imperial family, court officials, naval officers, civic leaders and merchant groups. Expressions of unstinting friendship were mutually exchanged. The friendship of Russia and America was variously described as:
fraternal, disinterested, not founded on selfishness, permanent,
sincere, unchanged for ages, not artificial or chimerical, lofty
and pure, indissoluble, a union of two worlds. In one of the last speeches, Gorchakov spoke about the "manifestations of sympathy between the two countries." At the time Gorchakov considered:

It is a fact the most interesting of our epoch, a fact which creates between two nations--I will say rather between two continents--germs of reciprocal good-will and friendship which will bear fruit, which create traditions, and which tend to consolidate between them relations founded upon the true spirit of Christian civilizations. This understanding does not rest on geographical proximity--the gulf of oceans separates us.24

Three months later he was setting in motion the continental aspirations of both nations, but drastically narrowing the gulf between.

Not all Russian officials favored the sale. Baron Osten-Saken, of the Asiatic Department, when he learned of the proposed sale of Russian-America, raised some pertinent objections. He pointed out that the sale would destroy the three-power equilibrium on the north-west coast of North America and that Russia would be subject to renewed fears, misunderstandings, disadvantages and further seizures from a "new next-door neighbor in the person of the United States of North America." In Osten-Saken's view, it was preferable to have the Americans blocked off by the intervening English colonies rather
than separated from Asiatic Russia by narrow bodies of water. Antici-
pating that the Americans would not stop at the water's edge, he
questioned whether Russia was "in a position to oppose them (the
Americans) with any counter-action in the Eastern Siberian Territories."
The immediate temptation for an American advance into Eastern Siberia
was at hand, the Russian-American Telegraph project. Osten-Saken
believed that the United States, once Russian-America was theirs,
would have a strong motive for gaining exclusive possession of the
important line which would interconnect America with Japan and
China "along the chain of volcanic islands connecting America with
Kamchatka, Kamchatka with Sakhalin, etc."25

In later years Osten-Saken gained high position in Russia's
foreign office, but in 1866 his influence did not match his vision.
If the high council which decided to sell held any such qualms,
they were calmed by the simultaneous determination to strengthen
Russia's hold on Asiatic Russia. Minister Clay, in judging Russian
opinion concerning the sale of Russian-America, acknowledged that
some were jealous of foreigners and traditionally opposed to ceding
any territory, but that the prevailing group "look upon it with favor
because we are to be near their eastern possessions, and they regard
us perpetual friends, in hopes that it may ultimately lead to the
expulsion from the great Pacific of nations whose power in the east
is justly feared."26

Once Stoeckl returned to Washington, he and Seward quickly
agreed on March 30, 1867 to terms of the sale of the Russian colonies
to the United States. The Senate ratified the treaty ten days later
by an overwhelming vote of 37-2, following the lead of Senator
Charles Summer, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee. The United States was notified of the Russian ratification of the treaty in mid-May and in October the territory of Alaska was officially transferred. The only hitch in the smooth proceedings occurred during the summer of 1868 when the House of Representatives debated for a long time whether to appropriate the money for the purchase.

Public opinion, as reflected in newspaper editorials and congressional debates, was generally favorable to the purchase in all sections of the United States, once the public became more knowledgeable of Alaska and its potential economic worth. Backers of the treaty were also aided by a strong pro-Russian sentiment. Many, who were at best lukewarm advocates of the purchase, nevertheless supported it, in order not to offend Russia. Most of the arguments favoring the sale stressed the economic and commercial advantages—mineral resources, furs, fish, timber and ice. Considered equally important was the opportunity to cement good relations with Russia and show American gratitude. 27

Two other American motives behind the sale were more muted, perhaps to avoid arousing the vocal group which objected that the acquisition was just another misguided attempt to follow the doctrine of "manifest destiny." Seward, the architect of the treaty, ardently believed in the eventual expansion of the United States across all of North America. As early as 1860 in St. Paul, he had prophesied:

Standing here and looking far off into the northwest, I see the Russian as he busily occupies himself in establishing seaports and towns and fortifications, on the verge of this continent, as the outposts of St. Petersburg, and I can say, "Go on, and build up your outposts all along the coast up even to the Arctic ocean—they will yet become the outposts of my own country—monuments of the civilization of the United States in the northwest." 28
An indication of the importance he attached to the purchase occurred in 1864 in the midst of the Civil War. Seward arranged to invite Grand Duke Constantine to visit the United States on a mission "beneficial to us, and by no means unprofitable to Russia." Although the chief Russian proponent of selling Russian-America could not come at that time, Seward's eagerness was apparent. Yet, when the treaty was forwarded to the Senate, he avoided any hint of jingoism, citing mainly examples of the bonds of friendship between Russia and America and how the treaty would prevent the growth of difficulties arising out of the fisheries in the Russian possessions.29

In one of his arguments in his lengthy and decisive address to the Senate advocating that the treaty be ratified, Sumner returned to the theme of extending the dominion of the United States. Sumner urged that accession of territory obtained peacefully and honestly would stimulate pride in the country and an increased consciousness of strength. He particularly favored the extension of republican institutions and the dismissal of "one other monarch from the continent." A number of newspapers expressed pleasure that the United States expansion had thwarted the plans of Great Britain and thrown British Columbia in jeopardy. But in an uncharacteristically sharp comment, the Philadelphia North American and Gazette rejoiced that the universal "lust of dominion displayed by Russia" was stayed by the treaty which "freed this continent from her designs" and that "Russian ambition has disappeared from the American continent."30

Speaking thirty years after the purchase of Alaska, Theodore Roosevelt enlarged on this sentiment without too careful a regard for the facts surrounding the transfer of territory:
The English-speaking people have never gone back before the Slav, and the Slav has never gone back before them save once. Three-quarters of a century ago the Russians meant that Northwestern American should be Russian, and our Monroe Doctrine was formulated as much against them as against the other reactionaries of continental Europe. Now the American has dispossessed the Russian . . . the American--the man of the effete English-speaking races--has driven the Slav from the eastern coast of the North Pacific.31

Having "driven" the Russians from Alaska, did the United States have as an additional motive for the purchase, the possibility of using Alaska, and particularly the Aleutians, as a strategic stepping stone for further expansion into Northern Asia? The answer is a qualified yes. Seward himself had long predicted that the Pacific would become the chief theater of events in the world and that there lay America's destiny. "Certainly no one expects," he said as early as 1853, "the nations of Asia to be awakened by any other influences than our own." Openly and officially at least, Seward was discreetly silent on this point, seeking to allay any Russian fears on this score during the period of treaty negotiations and ratification. He may well have expressed himself privately concerning the strategic value of Alaska for future American enterprise in the North Pacific during his vigorous efforts to garner support for the purchase. A number of newspapers and politicians either echoed similar views or became convinced that Alaska, in addition to its other values, was likely to become the northern gateway to Asia.32

Sumner pointed out the advantages of uniting the "East of Asia with the West of America" noting that the great circle navigation route from San Francisco to Hong Kong by way of the Aleutians was far shorter than by way of Honolulu. Advocates of a Northern Pacific Railroad were quick to observe that the route to Asia through Puget
Sound was shorter still. Once the concept of the west coast railroad terminals had been equated with trans-Pacific commerce, all sections of the United States could visualize a commercial interest of their own. Newspapers advocating one or the other of the routes across North America argued which would be the better "Asiatic route across the continent." 33

Editorial comment from every section remarked on the importance of Alaska to expanding the trade with East Asia. The ports and harbors of Alaska, it was explained, would make excellent coaling stations and provide a "commanding naval base." The Philadelphia Inquirer thought that "possession of this territory will give us the command of the Pacific." The New York Times opined that the main importance of the acquisition of Alaska was "upon our future trade with Japan, China and the other countries of Eastern Asia . . . . It seems inevitable that all such commerce should be American." 34

The heated debates in the House of Representatives in mid-1868, presented another forum in which those favoring the payment of the 7.2 million dollars looked to American "commercial and naval supremacy in the Pacific." Congressman Maynard of Tennessee did not think that any obstacle should be placed in the "westward course of empire." To Congressman Johnson of California the "Aleutian range . . . stretches far away to Japan, as if America were extending a friendly hand in trade to Asia." But the most vociferous exponent of the trans-Pacific advantages to accrue to the United States by possession of Alaska was Congressman Banks of Massachusetts. He, too, thought that the Pacific would be the "theater of the triumph of civilization in the future" and that Alaska was the key. Noting
that the new territory brought America to within seventy or eighty miles of the Asiatic coast, he claimed that this new possession "gives us control of the Arctic" and makes the "Behring Sea substantially an American Sea." Furthermore, he foresaw a time "when Americans are in absolute possession of the commerce, trade and fisheries . . . of the north Pacific . . . and the Russians excluded therefrom altogether."\(^3^5\)

A close reading of these American newspaper editorials and congressional debates might have led Russian authorities to question the wisdom of selling Russian-America. Some Americans, at least, did not view the acquisition of Alaska as being only a step in completing the North American dominion. Rather, they perceived the new possession as a strategic entry point to Asia. The commercial rivalry which had led to conflict on the northwestern coast of North America was resolved, but the threat of renewing the rivalry in Northeast Asia became more of a reality. The Republic of the West and the Empire of the East, expanding in opposite directions were indeed destined to meet, but henceforth it would be on Asian soil.

Observing the situation from St. Petersburg, Minister Clay was aware of Russia's resolve to strengthen its position in Asia and was having some second thoughts about the Russian activities there. Previously he had been completely convinced that it was Russia's proper destiny to "civilize" Asia:

> The world should not regard her progress into Asia with distrust, but gratification. The new life must come from the West and Russia is the only nation which can give it.

Now, he saw that such moves might have an adverse effect on American interests. He reported that "our friends the Russians are gradually
taking possession of all the islands inclosing the Sea of Okhotsk, which is now the best whaling ground in the Pacific." He called attention to Russia colonizing in "Northern China and the isles of Japan" in preparation for future political and commercial moves against "those great centers of population and wealth."36

Clay still visualized Northeast Asia as the gateway to the riches of Japan and China, but he was becoming convinced that Russia was not going to invite the United States to participate jointly in the venture. Despite the dreams of Americans like Perry Collins, Russia intended to develop the Amur Basin without a partner. His suspicions were confirmed in May 1868 when Chase, the commercial agent at Nikolaevsk, advised him that four years earlier he had seen secret instructions from Grand Duke Constantine to naval and civil officials in Eastern Siberia to "drive the Americans from their coasts."37

To offset the strategic advantage that Clay thought Russia was gaining, he recommended that the United States act vigilantly to acquire bases for "future power and security." He thought it important for future "commercial and political" relations with East Asia that the United States have "some formidable stand-point in the seas bordering on Japan and China, where our armies and navies may rest secure." Specifically, Clay suggested that the United States investigate the island of Nanki (Port Hamilton) belonging to Korea or Kunashiri belonging to Japan. It is doubtful whether anyone in the State Department gave any serious heed to Clay's recommendations, but his reports should have dampened any speculation that American commerce of influence was likely to gain access to China through Asiatic Russia.38
One island over which Russia sought to gain sole control was Sakhalin, because of its strategic position off the Amur estuary. Aside from its location, Sakhalin had little to attract attention except coal deposits. In 1860 the American consul at Yokohama, E. E. Rice, obtained permission from the Russian government to mine coal on Sakhalin and under the direction of an American merchant at Castrie Bay, Otto Esche, small-scale mining of coal was attempted. By 1867 the demand for coal was growing. The Pacific Mail-Steamer Company proposed to finance a larger development on Sakhalin. The Americans formed a joint stock company including Clay, who petitioned the Russian government for a 20-year exclusive right to mine coal on the whole island or, barring that, on that portion of the island lying between 49° and 50° North latitude. After some preliminary indications from lesser officials that the American request would be granted, Gorchakov rejected the petition in 1869 on the basis that he was opposed to monopolies on Sakhalin. In reality, another possibility which was being discussed within the Russian government worked against the American request. Officials in St. Petersburg planned on turning Sakhalin into a huge penal colony where convict labor would mine the coal. Such a scheme would rid the rest of Siberia of convicts and the guards would simultaneously afford military protection to the island.39

Besides, Russia was having difficulty enough settling the Sakhalin boundary question with Japan without the presence of an extensive American enterprise on the island. Shortly after the Crimean War, Russia had commenced a reoccupation of the center of the island, gradually moving military detachments and settlements southward
toward the Japanese fishing villages. For years the Russians pressured Japan to cede them the entire island. The Japanese government turned for support to the United States. When Seward was on a private visit to Japan in 1869, his views were sought. He advised Japan to offer to buy Sakhalin, but unlike the case of Alaska, Russia considered Sakhalin a defensive necessity, not a liability. Again in 1870, Japan asked the United States to mediate the boundary dispute, but Russia refused the American offer. Finally, in 1875, Russia and Japan signed a treaty resolving the territorial issue for thirty years. Japan relinquished all claims to Sakhalin to Russia. In return, Russia ceded all of the Kurile Islands to Japan. Strategically, Russia had chosen to strengthen its defense of the Asiatic mainland rather than retain its possessions seaward. No longer could Russia maintain even a vestige of a claim to the Sea of Okhotsk being a mare clausum. This turning away from the inhospitable North presaged the eventual southward swing for Russian expansion. The shift of its Far Eastern naval base from Nikolaevsk to Vladivostok in 1872 was yet another step, but Russia still did not enjoy a year long ice-free port on the Pacific and did not immediately gain uncontested control of its North Siberian coastline.40

As Baron Osten-Sacken had predicted, the acquisition of Alaska had not prevented the Americans from continuing to enter Siberian waters. Although decreased from its peak years, substantial numbers of American whalers still hunted in the Tsar's seas. Attempts by Russia to equip its own whaleships were not successful economically and the single Russian cruiser could do little to interdict the American whaling fleet, now operating principally out of San Francisco.
Nor could the Russian government establish colonies of Russian settlers in all the remote bays frequented by the Americans. It was alleged that the Americans also poached fur-bearing animals, consorted with natives, sold them contraband vodka in exchange for furs and spread epidemics of smallpox and syphilis. Worst, from the Russian viewpoint, the Americans felt themselves so much the masters along the coast that their charts and atlases showed the Chukotsk land as independent of Russia.41

The most profitable American venture turned out to be a renewal of seal hunting. After a prolonged prohibition on hunting, seals were again plentiful on the Commander Islands, just off the Kamchatkan mainland. In 1871 an American company, Hutchison, Cole and Philips, gained a 20-year hunting lease on the islands in return for generous payments to the Russian treasury. The company started out taking 10-15,000 pelts annually, but by 1880 nearly 50,000 were acquired yearly. Although the venture proved profitable for both the Russian treasury and the natives, as well as the company, the government began to have second thoughts as the scope of the American exploitation grew and the islands came more under American subordination. As Admiral Popov had feared, the Americans in the Commander Islands were far too near. Captain Hooper, commanding a large American ship patrolling the islands in 1879, reportedly claimed that "It is not necessary for the Russian government to take active measures, but it is sufficient only to permit the customs cruiser of the United States to oversee the industry and the commerce along the Northeast coast of Siberia." Notwithstanding this generous offer, the imperial government in 1882 promulgated stricter rules regulating
access to Russian shores. Henceforth, permission would have to be
received at Vladivostok from the governor-general of Eastern Siberia
before any hunting or commercial enterprise could be conducted along
the Siberian coasts. Otherwise, ships and cargoes would be con-
fiscated. This ruling led to an upswing in Russian-American incidents
which reached diplomatic levels for resolution.42

As Russia exerted its claim to sole possession of the Siberian
mainland and extended its sway to nearby Sakhalin, it must have become
apparent to American entrepreneurs that the left bank of Amur River
was temporarily closed to the United States. Despite the earlier
optimism of Collins, Clay and Seward, Russia was not going to allow
American participation in the development of the Amur basin. Russia
held exclusive control of this northern gateway to China and Japan
and showed no disposition to share its strategic position, despite
vague promises in the past. The very proximity of Russian-held
and fortified territory to the commercially important nations to the
South began to cause disquiet. The United States minister to China
thought that Russia's policy in her intercourse and dealings with
China was "mysterious and past finding out." He reported that Russia
"is suspected by most people of a desire for further territorial
encroachments." The United States found itself with no forward area
strongholds in the region, a weak and aging navy, and no means to
counter any further thrust of Russia. The German minister to Wash-
ington sensed this mood of unease as he observed in 1874 that:

the Secretary of State never speaks of Russia, when one
talks concerning Japan. Because the United States regards
Japan as an appendage of America. And although the Yankee
feels strongly enough to be able to hope that sooner or later
he will be in a position to paralyze the influence of all
European powers in Japan, the Asiatic proximity of Russia
yet fills him with a secret fear, and the colonization of the Amur region as well as the Russian settlements on Sakhalin island are well suited to darken for every American politician of the future the heaven of his Japanese hopes.43

Henceforth, the buffer territories of Korea and Manchuria would take on added significance. In early 1876 reports appeared in English-language newspapers in China concerning encroachments by Russia south of the Amur boundary. George Seward, the United States minister to China, forwarded these rumors of a Russian military settlement in Manchuria to Washington. He used the occasion to speak of the region at some length. He thought Manchuria "might become the seat of an Empire" if its great resources could be developed. The Chinese, according to Seward, were becoming interested in controlling Manchuria more thoroughly, but may have been too slow to recognize the danger of control passing to that "great northern European Asiatic state." "How eagerly would the statesmen and capitalists of America seize upon this opportunity to develop such a region" anticipated Seward.44

However, after nearly 20 years of strenuous activity in Northeast Asia, both private and governmental, neither Russia nor the United States seemed to have the necessary immediate energy or will to sustain any further drive for empire in Asia and the North Pacific. The ambitions of both had suffered temporary frustration and, after the 1860s, a period of relative stagnation followed, as each nation turned attention more to other sectors. The visions of Pacific empire, though held in abeyance, remained alive. Russia's advance southward along the Asian littoral came to a halt, but would be renewed. Russia's plans to contain the Americans solely within North
America were only partially successful, but would be continued. The efforts of the United States to connect the continents across the Pacific had been disappointed, but the concept would be revived. Americans had been discouraged in their expectations of a partnership with Russia to develop the Amur region and an opportunity to gain access to the rest of Asia, but American hopes for Northeast Asia would flower again.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 Gorchakov to Stoeckl, July 10, 1861; Cameron to Seward, June 26, 1862; Taylor to Seward, Oct. 29, 1862. All are contained in Foreign Relations of the United States, hereinafter cited as FRUS.


3 E. A. Adamov, "Russia and the American Civil War," Journal of Modern History 2 (Dec. 1930), pp. 586-602; the same article can be found untranslated in Krasnij Arkhiv, 38:148-58; Golder, pp. 805-806.

4 Golder, p. 809.


7 Frederick W. Seward, Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State 3 vols. (New York: Denby and Miller, 1891), 3:202-03.

8 Seward to Clay, May 6, 1861, FRUS.


10 Clay to Ignatev, May 13, 1863, FRUS; Seward to Cameron, June 9, 1862; Taylor to Seward, Oct. 4, 1862, both contained in U. S. Congress, Senate, Correspondence Relative to Telegraphic Communications between the Amoor River and San Francisco, S. Exec. Doc. 10, 37th Cong., 3rd sess.


12 Ibid.

13 Clay to Seward, March 24, April 2 and 5, 1865, FRUS.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.


18. Ibid.

19. Seward to Clay, March 28, 1867 and attachments, FRUS.


25. Miller, pp. 524-525.

26. Clay to Seward, May 10, 1867, FRUS.


29 Seward to Clay, Dec. 26, 1864, FRUS.


33 Summer, 11:218-19; *Pacific Tribune*, Sept. 7, 1867.

34 Welch, pp. 484-489; *New York Times*, April 1, 1867.


36 Clay to Seward, June 27, 1864, Oct. 27, 1867 and April 17, 1868, RG 59 N. A.

37 Clay to Seward, May 26, 1868, RG 59 N. A.

38 Clay to Seward, Oct. 27, 1867 and April 17, 1868, RG 59 N. A.


42 Ibid.


44 Seward to Fish, Feb. 25, 1876, ADPP-2, 4:16-19.
CHAPTER V
KOREAN PROLOGUE

The United States showed scant interest in the Hermit Kingdom until after the Civil War. Yet the opening of diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Korea was to have far reaching consequences. As a secluded nation, closed to all but the token suzerainty of China, Korea promised little of economic value and posed no military threat whatsoever to its neighbors. Once opened to foreign diplomatic, commercial, missionary and military influences, the Korean scene changed drastically. Korea was to be the fulcrum in Asiatic affairs. The king of Korea became a puppet with too many outsiders striving to manipulate the strings. Neither China, Russia, or Japan--the three most concerned protagonists--could stand idly by and watch either of the others gain control. A weak, neutral Korea could be left in peace, but a Korea under the protectorship of a great power represented a strategic threat to the others. Moreover, Japan soon had a considerable commercial stake in Korea, which from its 1876 treaty with Japan onward provided an increasing amount of food and fiber to Japan. The British empire with its worldwide responsibilities played a supportive role in China's interests. England, concerned about the Russian empire's expansion southward all across Asia, from the Middle East to Central Asia to China's northeastern provinces, was alert to counter any move, real or imagined, by Russia against
Manchuria or Korea. The uneasy balance which surrounded the Land of Morning Calm was irrevocably altered when the United States in 1882 became the first occidental nation to negotiate a treaty successfully. During the next several decades Korea became the site of fierce diplomatic intrigues to control the government and the battleground for two major wars. Political fortunes changed rapidly in Korea as first China, then Japan, and then Russia gained the position of primary influence. Inevitably, the United States, despite early, vigorous efforts to stay absolutely neutral in the power struggles, was drawn in. Attention will be directed at only those aspects of Korean affairs which tended to affect the attitudes of Russia and the United States towards one another.

The American experience in Korea during the years before the Sino-Japanese War represented a marked change from the United States' involvement in the previous China treaty-making process of the 1850s. The first change was the degree of participation in Korean internal affairs and the influence wielded temporarily by the handful of Americans in the field. American missionaries became well-established in the countryside, American entrepreneurs clamored for concessions. American diplomats had the ear of the king and other Americans acted as his advisers in the customs and foreign service. Military instructors were requested from the United States to strengthen the Korean army. The Navy saw an opportunity to lease a strategically located Korean island to serve as a naval base from which to protect growing American interests in Northeast Asia. Had not Washington curbed their enthusiasm with cautious directives, their attempt to foster an independent Korea with its territorial integrity internationally
guaranteed, might have succeeded.

The relationship of the United States toward Russia over the events in Korea was also marked by a distinct change from the close cooperation experienced during the 1850s. Then, American negotiators in China had worked in close harmony with their Russian counterparts, both sides acting under government-to-government understandings. The United States had lent its moral support to the Russian seizure of the Amur and Maritime regions from China. In Korea, the Americans acted independently and often at cross purposes to Russia. They were just as suspicious and alarmed about Russian attempts to control Korea as they were of attempts by China, England or Japan—probably more so. Neither in Seoul nor in Washington was there ever any suggestion of cooperating with Russia in the joint development or occupation of Korea.

By the terms of the Treaty of Peking, Russia had already gained in 1860 a common boundary with the northeast corner of Korea at the Tumen River. One of the Russian objectives in acquiring the Amur territory had been to increase trade with China and its outlying districts. In the subsequent years Russia made repeated attempts to stimulate such trade, but was, in the main, thwarted by the Chinese authorities who feared further Russian advances. Only along the Korean border were the Russians somewhat successful. Without the benefit of a formal commercial agreement, Koreans supplied the Russian settlers around Vladivostok with badly needed foodstuffs. Also, many Koreans crossed the border to work for the Russians, thus easing the shortage of laborers during the construction of the naval base. This gave Russian officials information about Korea and a means of contacting their opposite numbers. Attempts by Russia to open
official ties to Korea spurred a rash of allegations concerning Russian pressure on Korean territory. Most of these and later similar allegations claimed that Russia was about to seize, barter for or purchase the northeast province of Korea, the principal prize being the ice-free Port Lazarev. The first attempt supposedly occurred in 1866 when a Russian man-of-war appeared in Broughton Bay demanding the right of trade and residence for Russian merchants. If the demands were not satisfied, Russian troops, reportedly, would enforce them. This and later reports were given credence at the time and widely circulated in Japan and China. To a great extent the possibility of Russia forcibly opening the Kingdom of Korea created an atmosphere which eased the eventual peaceful overtures of the United States. The opening of Korea was not the competitive race such as Commodore Perry had engaged in with Admiral Putyatin. Nevertheless, the mere presence of Russia to the north aided American negotiations.

The first attempts by the United States turned out to be not so peaceful, however once commenced, they were persistent and determined. The efforts began in late 1866 when Rear Admiral Bell, commanding the Asiatic squadron, received word that an American schooner, the General Sherman, had been wrecked on the Korean coast and that the vessel had been burned by Koreans with the loss of the entire crew. Bell recommended to the Navy Department that an American force be sent to capture Seoul and to demand satisfaction from Korea. At the same time in Washington Seward learned of a French expedition which had been sent to punish Korea for the massacre of nine French missionaries. Seward proposed to the French minister
that the United States and France join in retaliatory action against Korea, but France declined. Meanwhile, Commander Shufeldt in *Massachusetts* had been sent to investigate the incident in 1867. This was followed up the next year by Commander Febiger in *Shenandoah*. From information gathered during these ship visits, it became apparent that the crew of the *General Sherman* had probably been the aggressors and been killed in a melee ashore.³

This incident did lead the United States into taking a more active lead to ensure the safety of mariners along the Korean coast. George Seward, the United States consul-general at Shanghai, in writing to his Uncle William, proposed that a diplomatic mission be sent to Korea to open negotiations. He did not anticipate that a commercial treaty was of "sufficient object... to render it advisable to use force or even the show of force." But he did point out that American vessels already frequented the waters surrounding the Korean peninsula which juts between China, Japan and Siberia where American commerce was bound to increase. According to G. Seward, Admiral Rowan was eager to have the Asiatic squadron cooperate with any diplomatic mission to Korea.⁴

Although Secretary Seward approved of sending the mission, it was unaccountably postponed for two years. The proposal was initiated again by Rear Admiral John Rodgers in 1870. The new Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, decided that the negotiations should be carried out by the American minister at Peking, Frederick Low. It was hoped that Low could enlist the good will of China in the American cause. Low and Rodgers settled on the use of the same tactics which had worked so well for Perry. They agreed to leave
Korean waters after announcing the purpose of the visit and return a month later for a reply. In accordance with the request of the State Department, the expedition was "sufficiently formidable to make an impression on the native authorities." Five navy vessels, including the flagship Colorado, carrying eighty-five guns and more than twelve hundred men provided the "display of force adequate to support the dignity" of the United States.\(^5\)

Despite the show of strength, the mission failed. Arriving at anchorage off the west coast of Korea, Low informed the minor Korean officials who first came aboard about the nature of his mission. He also thought that he had received assurances that the Americans could safely survey up the river. However, while so engaged, the survey party was fired upon from the Korean forts guarding the river entrance. Low and Rodgers decided to preserve the prestige of the United States by demanding an apology within ten days. When no apology was tendered by the Korean government, Rodgers sent a retaliatory expedition ashore. The sailor and marine shore party assaulted and captured five Korean forts, took 481 pieces of artillery, killed approximately 240 Korean soldiers and then withdrew. Finding it impossible to conclude a peaceful treaty, and judging that the forces available were insufficient to reach the Korean capital without great risk, the fleet returned to Chefoo. The navy report on the expedition took some comfort in that the "punishment which was inflicted upon our treacherous assailants . . . has not failed to make an impression upon the people of the Chinese coast." But the mission failed completely in its major objective. "Our little war," as the New York Times editorialized, left "little to be proud

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of." Low concluded that neither conciliatory negotiations nor demonstrations of force would accomplish any practical results in Korea. Only a sizeable invasion force, capable of insuring success without undue risk, could open up Korea. The United States was not yet ready for such drastic action. Instead, Rodgers was cautioned against any attempt at the conquest of Korea. There the matter rested for several years.⁶

Washington learned in 1874 that the young king of Korea had assumed power in the country and had deposed the regent who had been acting for the past fifteen years. It was hoped that the new regime would be more favorably disposed to foreigners. Two years later, Japan succeeded in concluding a treaty of amity and commerce with Korea. This encouraged the United States to renew its overtures. Senator Sargent of California introduced a joint resolution in 1878 which would authorize the president to appoint a commissioner to arrange a treaty similar to Japan's. Aside from the usual arguments concerning commerce, civilization and secure navigation, Sargent raised an important new point, representing a departure in American thinking. The United States, he said, "should seek to extend them (Korea) the protection which arises from our recognition as a safeguard against the aggression of Russia." Curiously, he also claimed that "America is the nearest to Corea of all the nations having European civilization except Japan." Reflecting the growing concern in Washington about Russia's designs south of the Amur, Sargent hoped that a friendly Korea would prove an American lodgement on mainland Asia and a bulwark protecting Japan:

The addition of Corea to the number of the strong, armed powers in friendship with the United States will increase our influence on that continent, besides strengthening Japan. Such strength is necessary, unless the advance of Russia southward on the eastern shore is to be unchecked.
The Russian question is a formidable Asiatic question. That there is a danger of the Russians taking Corea is obvious by a glance at the map showing the relation which the Yellow Sea bears to the frozen country of the Amoor; and Russia in possession of Corea is a standing menace to Japan. 7

The joint resolution was never adopted, but the Navy Department had been listening. Sargent was the chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs. Late in 1878 Commodore Shufeldt, a close friend of the senator's, sailed in Ticonderoga on a commercial and diplomatic mission to various eastern countries. Among his instructions was the requirement to open "peaceful" negotiations with Korea. It was hoped that Japan's good offices could be used to facilitate the negotiations, but attempts to initiate talks by this means failed. While Shufeldt awaited in Nagasaki during the summer of 1880 for replies from Korea, another possible avenue of communication opened up. Li Hung-chang, the viceroy of Chihli province, invited Shufeldt to visit him at Tientsin. Shufeldt, believing that the Japanese were not exerting themselves in behalf of his mission, readily accepted Li's invitation. Li had two apparent motives in approaching Shufeldt. First, he wanted to prevent the United States and Japan from joining together in recognizing Korea's independence from China's sovereignty. Li offered to use his influence with the government of Korea so that it would accede to the friendly request of the United States to open negotiations for a treaty. He was foiled in his aim though. China became the intermediary through which America gained access to Korea, but the United States never relinquished its claim to be dealing with an independent Korea. The second thing which motivated Li was a fear that war between Russia and China was imminent. He sought Shufeldt's
opinion concerning the relative strengths of the Russian Pacific fleet and the Chinese navy. Li also expressed the hope that Shufeldt would be permitted to assist in the reorganization of the Chinese navy.8

The cause of Li's concern lay in the occupation by Russia of the Kuldja region in Chinese Turkestan. When China moved to reoccupy the territory, Russia dispatched a fleet to the Far East. China considered this a "hostile and menacing naval demonstration in its own waters in time of peace." Another concern to China was a report in April 1880 of Russian mission composed chiefly of cavalrymen which had entered Korea's northeast province to propose a treaty. From conversations held in November 1880 with the Chinese minister in St. Petersburg, John Foster, the United States minister, gathered that a conflict between Russia and China "was almost inevitable and not far distant." Foster was also told that if China was driven by the unjust demands of Russia into the maintenance of its honor and independence, that China could with justice appeal to friendly nations for sympathy. Li's offer to intercede for the United States in Korea was an attempt to elicit the friendly help of America in case war with Russia could not be averted. Although the cavalry advance of Russia into Korea never materialized, the threat had a more lasting effect on Chinese policy than the actual punitive American raid on Korea ten years earlier.9

Shufeldt returned to Washington in late 1880, but not for long. Secretary of State Blaine endorsed Shufeldt's new approach to Korea through China. To further the plan, he ordered Shufeldt back to Peking to aid in organizing the Chinese navy, if requested, and
to await Korea’s response to Li. By this time though, the atmosphere had changed. There no longer was any sense of urgency. Russia and China had resolved their differences. Much of the disputed territory had been restored to China. Shufeldt considered that the agreement with Russia lessened Li’s enthusiasm to act as intermediary with Korea. Finally, however, word was received that Korea was willing to discuss terms of a treaty. Most of the negotiations took place in Tientsin under the sponsorship of Li. Nearly a year after Shufeldt’s return to Asia, the documents were formally signed in Korea in May 1882. To Shufeldt his long and arduous task was worth the effort, for he believed strongly that the “Pacific Ocean is to become at no distant day the commercial domain of America.” He was also convinced that Korea needed a treaty with the United States as an “absolute necessity as a matter of protection against the aggression of surrounding powers.” It now remained for American diplomats to provide such protection.

Although Shufeldt garnered little immediate personal recognition for his accomplishment, no one could fault his comprehensive treaty. Within a short period it became the model for the other nations interested in a treaty with Korea, including Russia. By its terms the United States gained diplomatic and consular representation, American citizens were permitted to trade at the open ports at fixed rates of tariff, shipwrecked mariners were assured of good treatment, and the United States was granted most-favored-nation privileges.

From the very beginning of American representation in Seoul, Lucius Foote, the first minister of any western power, became deeply
involved in Korean affairs. Secretary Frelinghuysen had instructed Foote to emphasize that the United States had no ulterior designs on Korea and that the kingdom was to be treated as an independent and sovereign power. This supportive policy, as actively pursued by Foote and his successors, made a profoundly favorable impression on Korea's king. Five months after his arrival, Foote was granted a private, informal audience with the king who asked Foote's advice on a number of issues. They discussed the forthcoming Korean treaties with England and Germany and the United States was urged to request that Russia and France open similar treaty talks. Of more significance, the United States was invited, through Foote, to appoint an "American gentleman" to act as advisor to the Korean Office of Foreign Affairs and to provide military instructors to train a modern Korean army.  

This invitation was repeated over the next several years. The caution, inefficiency and delays at the State Department negated the efforts of the Americans in Korea to prop up a weak government.

Frelinghuysen had expected that the problems facing Foote would stem primarily from the relations of Korea with China and Japan. And, indeed, these relationships were complex and critical. By 1885 the situation grew more complicated when the rivalry of England and Russia spilled over into Korea and threatened its territorial integrity. Foote had by then resigned his post because its rank had been downgraded. During the England-Russia contest of wills, Ensign George Foulk assumed the responsibilities as American chargé. This remarkable young officer started as the naval attaché in Seoul and he, too, gained the confidence of the king. Unlike in earlier periods, American representatives in China and Korea were
concerned about Russian expansion in Asia. No longer were they
singlemindedly in support of Russia as a civilizing force and as
a gateway to commercial enterprise. Their sympathies often sided
with China or Japan. Having gained the credit for opening Korea,
Americans felt some responsibility for its survival as an independent
nation. Foulk and his successors grew increasingly critical of
Russian expansion, viewing it with suspicions which became more
deeply ingrained with each repetition. To some extent this distrust
of Russian motives was influenced by what Americans read in the
English-language periodicals published in the Orient. These over­
whelmingly attacked Russia for its purported aggression. Some of
these stories were also picked up and reprinted in the American
press.

Most of the speculation concerning Russia's next annexation
continued to be centered on the northeast coast of Korea. Observers
were convinced that Russia would never be satisfied until it had
secured an ice-free port for itself. At the time of the Kuldja
incident the American minister to China warned, for example, that
Russia would not disperse its large Pacific fleet "without making
some demonstration in Korea, either to open the country or to gain
possession of Port Lazareff." Nor, once Korea was open, was Russia
content simply to follow the lead of the United States. Russia saw
no ultimate advantage in a commercial treaty permitting trade through
a few selected seaports. She wanted to regulate trade along the
Korea-Siberian land frontier. This desire was not understood by the
western powers. Instead, it was interpreted as another instance in
which Russia "preferred to make her own way without the knowledge or
the interference of the other powers." Behind the cloak of secrecy it was imagined that Russia was attempting to rectify the boundary line with Korea to make it more satisfactory to Russia.13

Another commonly held belief was that in the advance of Russian power in Asia, she never failed "to find her advantage in the perplexities and misfortunes of the Asiatic powers." Thus, when China became embroiled in a controversy with France in early 1885, the American minister to Peking reported the rumor that Russia intended to occupy the island of Quelpart (Cheju) off the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. This rumor was later repeated in the New York Times. Russian forces never set foot on Quelpart.14

By mid-1885 Russia had been drawn into a real intrigue over Korea by a German national, von Mollendorf, who served as Advisor to the Korean Foreign Office. Von Mollendorf owed his position to Li Hung Chang. He was acting as China's man in the Korean government. In anticipation of getting American advisers the king, trying to assert his independence, had dismissed both von Mollendorf and the Chinese military advisers from Korean service. When neither Shufeldt nor any other American advisers arrived, the king was forced to restore von Mollendorf to his position. Perhaps feeling his situation tenuous, von Mollendorf turned to other sponsorship. The king himself may have played a role in the subsequent schemes, though he denied it later. Russia had concluded a standard treaty with Korea in June 1884. However, unknown to most in the Korean government, von Mollendorf began conducting secret negotiations by which Russia was to furnish one hundred military instructors for the Korean army. In return for protecting Korea "against all attacks," Russia was
allegedly to receive the "loan" of Port Lazarev.  

Concurrently, Russia and England were engaged in a struggle over control of Afghanistan. This struggle spread to Korea when, in April 1885, Great Britain seized Port Hamilton, another small island off the southern tip of Korea. Whether the occupation of Port Hamilton was a response to the von Mollendorf secret negotiations or a general precaution in anticipation of a war with Russia has not been confirmed. Ensign Foulk first learned of the scheme in May when von Mollendorf told him that negotiations with Russia had commenced several months previously, but that certainly "Russia would not make any occupation of Korean territory." The Korean government received its first official word of the von Mollendorf negotiations upon the arrival of Alexis de Speyer, Secretary of the Russian legation at Tokyo. This officer informed Foulk that if England retained Port Hamilton, then Russia would acquire "ten times as much territory" from Korea. Foulk was plunged into the center of this crisis, not only in his diplomatic role, but also as the king's confidential adviser. In the latter capacity Foulk became privy to the conversations de Speyer held with Korean officials. From them he learned of de Speyer's threats:

If you do not accept the American Army instructors, there would be no loss; but if you do not take the Russian officers, you must lose a great deal . . . . If you break with America in this, there is no loss, but if you do with Russia, trouble lies directly before your eyes.  

With both England and Russia threatening the autonomy of his country, the king again relayed through Foulk another request for American military instructors. Foulk, fearing that Anglo-Russian hostilities might break out on Korean soil, suggested to the Chinese and Japanese representatives that they postpone the withdrawal of
their troops from Korea. When Secretary of State Bayard learned of Foulk's activities on behalf of Korea, he cautioned Foulk to take a more passive role:

Seoul is the centre of conflicting and almost hostile intrigues involving the interests of China, Japan, Russia, and England . . . . It is clearly the interest of the United States to hold aloof from all this and do nothing nor be drawn into anything which would look like taking sides with any of the contestants.18

Of all the outside powers, Foulk was most concerned about Russia. He was convinced that the von Mollendorf-de Speyer scheme was aimed at nothing less than "establishing Korea as a protectorate of Russia." Whatever the scope of their plans, they failed for the time being. Von Mollendorf was again dismissed from his post and de Speyer returned to Tokyo. Although St. Petersburg disclaimed any intention of acquiring a part of Korea, the New York Times detected in the incident a "suggestion of Russia's irresponsible mania for aggrandizement" and an example of the "Muscovite stealthiness of approach."19

The next Russian chargé, S. Waeber, took a more pleasant and conciliatory attitude than de Speyer. Nevertheless, he persisted for several years in trying to arrange a new treaty which would have effectively extended Russian influence deep into the northeast province of Korea. In late 1886 the terms of the proposed treaty were shown to Foulk by the king who once again sought his advice. The Russian draft called for a free trading post to be established deep inside Korea, about 75 miles from the Tumen River border. The proposition immediately raised suspicions concerning the Russian aims. The Korean counter-proposal, as suggested by Foulk, was to grant Russia a trading post, but on the seacoast in the vicinity of the Tumen River. The king, however, despairing of material aid from
America, may once again have turned to the Russians for protection against Chinese overlordship.20

The Chinese representative at Seoul, Yuan Shih-kai, had gradually been gathering in the reins of power. He had been following Waeber's negotiations closely. Before they came to fruition Yuan claimed to have knowledge of an agreement, bearing the king's approval, which in effect would "turn Korea bodily over to Russian protection." This document may well have been a forgery designed as a pretext for overt Chinese intervention in Korea. England had long urged China to incorporate Korea within its empire. Authentic or not, the document nearly triggered a war between China and Russia, until Li Hung Chang's cooler head prevailed. Li conferred with the Russian chargé at Peking to resolve the future relations of the two nations in Korea. By the terms of their agreement of October 1886, both obligated themselves to abstain from encroachment on the integrity of Korea. This agreement became the basis for Russian policy until after the Sino-Japanese war.21 Despite the peaceful solution, Russia was again portrayed as an aggressor, as when the New York Times mistakenly reported that the occupation of Port Lazarev by Russia was a "menace to Corea too evident to be ignored."22

In 1888 Russia's temporary "hands-off" policy toward Korea was restated by a joint study conducted by the Governor-General of Amur and the Head of the Asiatic Department. They concluded that Korea could not serve as a profitable trade market for Russia, but might have important strategic advantages, being on the flank of Manchuria. However, they recommended no extension of territory, because of the difficulties of defending Korea so far from the centers where Russia disposed of its fighting forces. The study also
emphasized the vulnerability of the Maritime region, should Korea be turned into a Chinese province. The United States, judged the report, was the only foreign power which had been unwilling to encourage the designs of China. Therefore, Russia should not oppose the sending of American military instructors to Korea. Such a reasonable and restrained posture on the part of Russia, if it had been relayed to the United States, might well have allayed American suspicions and formed the basis for Russian-American cooperation in Korea.

Subsequently, the Russo-Korean supplemental trade agreement was concluded amicably. Russia settled for a trading post at the Tumen River and not deep into Korea. Despite the comparatively undemanding terms of the new commercial treaty, the New York Times predicted that the peninsula was "undoubtedly next on the road in Russia's southern advance from Vladivostok." This opinion lingered without any direct cause. Nothing happened specifically in Korea to mar Russo-American relations for a number of years, yet a degree of skepticism concerning Russian ambitions remained. Most American observers in Asia would probably have agreed with Minister Augustine Heard:

The intentions of Russia may be perfectly harmless . . . but we may be permitted to infer the future from the past, and to imagine that she would not regret the pushing of her boundary line further South. But her time has not yet come. She is not ready yet.

As late as 1893 Minister Heard held to his views that Russia would find a suitable opportunity one day to "swoop down on the north of Korea" to find an ice-free harbor.

The United States itself was not entirely devoid of territorial
aspirations. By early 1887 Great Britain was prepared to relinquish Port Hamilton. The American chargé at Seoul, William Rockhill, thought that Korea was not strong enough to hold the islands by itself and that neither China nor Japan could take them without provoking the other. To him the obvious solution was to lease the islands to a "friendly and entirely disinterested power," the United States. He pointed out that the Secretary of the Navy in his Annual Report for 1884 had recommended that Port Hamilton be leased as a coaling station for the fleet on station in northern Asian waters.26 The subject came up briefly again after Benjamin Harrison took office in 1889. He and Blaine, once more the Secretary of State, adopted a more active foreign policy than the previous administration. Horace Allen, an American missionary-doctor in Korea since 1884, had become another confidant of the king. In 1887 Allen resigned his missionary appointment to act as secretary to Korea's new legation in Washington. In conversation with Allen, Blaine expressed a willingness "to pursue an active policy in Korea and ... perhaps ask for a United States coaling station at Port Hamilton thus giving the Koreans genuine backing" against the Chinese and the Russians.27 Although nothing came of this interest, it provoked garbled stories, as Minister Heard attested:

Lately the newsmongers have been very active, and one of their stories was to the effect that the American minister was negotiating for the cession of Port Hamilton, which was to be subsequently transferred to Russia.28

The Asiatic squadron was dependent for receiving coal and other supplies from ports fully under the control of foreign nations. Such ports as Yokohama and Chefoo might well be denied to American ships in time of war. Yet the presence of American citizens in Korea
increased the need for the squadron to be able to operate freely off Northeast Asia. In assessing the requirement to keep a gunboat on station in Korean waters, the navy accounted for 56 citizens of the United States residing in Korea in 1892, considerably more than those of any other western nation. Aside from the legation staff, missionaries had established a school, a hospital and an orphanage. Several Americans served in prominent positions in the Korean government. Others were engaged in commerce and acquiring concessions. Earlier pessimism about the prospects for trade with Korea had changed to guarded optimism, largely through the efforts of Dr. Allen. While in Washington during the years 1887-1889, he actively promoted commercial development in Korea. He kindled the enthusiasm of politicians and entrepreneurs in a variety of projects—gold mining, railroads, lighting and waterworks. Most of these plans never materialized, because the stories of political unrest in Korea discouraged the businessmen from risking their capital for investments. Nevertheless, a growing number of influential Americans perceived the economic potential offered by Korea once that nation achieved political stability. They were also, no doubt, aware that one of the forces undermining such stability was the threat of Russia expanding into all or part of Korea.

As a result of the opening of Korea, the focus of American attention in Asia was shifting perceptibly northward. Deliberately or not, England and France, preoccupied in expanding their own spheres in Burma and Indo-China, seemed to leave the field in Korea, and later in Manchuria, to the United States to compete with the Asiatic powers and, of course, face Russia. Among some Americans
there was a proprietary concern for Korea as a client state. Observing the Russian actions during the Kuldja Affair of 1880, the von Mollendorf-de Speyer secret negotiations of 1885, and the Russian demands for a free trading zone in northeast Korea in 1886, left a legacy of suspicions behind. Rightly or wrongly, the Americans viewed the Russian intentions in Asia with increasing distrust. Attempts had already been made deliberately to exclude American merchants and whalers from Russian Siberia. Now the concept of Russo-American cooperation in Asia was being eroded further. Neither nation saw any community of interests with the other in Korea. Russia showed every indication of "going it alone." The United States hoped that an independent Korea would be another link from which to promote its interests in Japan and China and a buffer to stop the southward advance of Russia. Nor did American newspaper accounts give Russia the benefit of the doubt based on a past tradition of friendship. Instead, they repeatedly printed false rumors of Russian aggression. In Washington these reported Russian intrigues may have seemed far away and inconsequential in the overall context of Asiatic politics, but the record would be recalled when the next round of Russian ambitions in the Far East manifested itself. One of those who would recall was William W. Rockhill who was on the scene from 1884 to 1888, first as secretary to the American legation in Peking and then as chargé at Seoul. As an "old Asia hand" he would find it difficult to advise that the United States remain aloof to further Russian advances.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1 Frederick F. Chien, The Opening of Korea (Shoe String Press, Inc., 1967), gives a detailed account of the diplomacy for the years 1876-1885.

2 Ibid, pp. 56-60. Port Lazarev was an inlet (probably Yong-hung Bay) along the Korean east coast just north of Wonsan. Broughton Bay corresponds to Eiko-kan, the larger bay in which Port Lazarev was located.


4 G. Seward to W. Seward, April 24 and Oct. 14, 1868, FRUS.

5 Fish to Robeson, April 4, 1870; Fish to Low, April 20, 1870, FRUS.


7 Williams to Fish, March 30, 1874, FRUS; Congressional Record, 45th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 2600-2601.


9 G. Seward to Evarts, Jan. 12, 1880, FRUS; Foster to Evarts, Nov. 19, 1880, ADPP-2, 4:82-95; Chien, pp. 58-59.

10 Paullin, p. 305.


15 Dennett, p. 480; according to Chien, pp. 176-181, the king may have been personally involved in the negotiation.

16 Foulk to SecState, May 19, 1885, K-A Rel.


18 Bayard to Foulk, Aug. 18 and 19, 1885 (cited in Tansill, p. 428). Japanese and Chinese troops were in Korea as a result of an attempted coup in late 1884.

19 Foulk to SecState, July 5, 1885, K-A Rel.; New York Times, July 7, 1885.

20 Parker to SecState, Aug. 4, 1886; Foulk to SecState, Sept. 24, 1886, K-A Rel.


23 Chinese Social and Political Science Review, pp. 236-244. The United States did furnish military instructors to Korea in 1888 for several years before they were replaced by Russian officers.


25 Heard to Blaine, July 10, 1890, ADPP-2, 11:264; Heard to SecState, Feb. 10, 1893, K-A Rel. Similar views were also expressed in Heard to Blaine, Oct. 21, 1890 and Herod to Gresham, July 29, 1893, ADPP-2, 11:291 and 398.

27. Harrington, p. 135.


CHAPTER VI

"LET A RAILWAY BE BUILT ACROSS SIBERIA . . ."

The international scramble for position in Northeast Asia, which started with the opening of Korea, might well have stabilized after the Sino-Russian accord of 1886 had not Russia then embarked on a far-reaching new Far East policy of its own. Reacting to the prevailing tension along its long, common frontier with China, Russia decided to strengthen its position in Asiatic Russia many fold by constructing a trans-Siberian railroad. Russia's comprehensive policy, centered on its Siberian rail system, evolved gradually over the years 1886-1894 and then governed Russia's subsequent actions in the region over the next decade. As details of Russia's ambitious program unfolded and became known, the other powers with national interests in Northeast Asia were forced to adjust their own policies. The railroad would take years to complete, but once accomplished, Russia would be able to project its power in Asia far more effectively and truly become a formidable power in the Pacific. The impending threat caused China to look closer to its northern defenses and probably precipitated Japan into instigating the Sino-Japanese war before this Russian power could become a significant factor.

In the United States no such coherent, official policy was formulated until the railroad was nearing completion. While the
United States government was slow in recognizing the importance of the approaching shift in power in Northeast Asia, individual Americans appreciated the commercial prospects of the Siberian railroad from its inception. Many newspaper editors, financiers, diplomats, politicians and railroad men saw new opportunities for hitching American enterprise onto the Russian project. They clung to the belief that Russia both needed and welcomed American participation in its internal development. American interest in Siberia was heightened because, during the years preceding the Sino-Japanese war, there occurred the earliest realizations that the North American continent was rapidly filling up and that a new frontier must be sought. Isolated earlier warnings that American interests in Northeast Asia might eventually collide with Russian goals there were generally ignored in hopes of a new accommodation.

Russia's Far East possessions had languished for years. Far from becoming a replication of the Mississippi Valley prosperity, the Amur basin had remained, three decades after occupation, largely undeveloped and underpopulated. Despite a vigorous colonization policy, most of the settlers never trekked beyond Western Siberia. A more generous grant of land was offered by the government further east, but the long land journey proved too much of an obstacle for most. Only about 600 new settlers reached the Far East annually. With the military obligations taking up much of their attention, the Russian population could scarcely feed itself. The situation improved slightly after 1879 when the government pressed the five ships of the Volunteer Fleet into the Odessa-Vladivostok run. Another 1000 peasants reached the Maritime Region annually by this
means. Because of the slow, cumbersome transportation system, the imperial government was forced to administer the Amur region as a remote colony, much as it had Russian-America. To a government which prized centralized control, being cut off by weather from effective administration of the colony for six months of the year proved to be intolerable.¹

Gradually, the government was brought to the realization that its hold on Eastern Siberia was extremely tenuous. Lines of communication were vulnerable along wide stretches of frontier which were no longer unpopulated buffer zones. After the Treaty of Peking, China reversed its long-standing policy of excluding Chinese settlers from the Manchu homeland. By the 1880s several million Chinese settlers had moved into Manchuria proper and, because of the recurring diplomatic crises with Russia, China had vastly improved its military preparedness there. Most disturbing to Russia, though, were the Chinese who, like the Koreans before them, were moving across the borders and living in Russian territory. The Russians had themselves used this tactic of peaceful occupation often enough to be fully aware of the dangers of this type of reconquest. Some means needed to be adopted to keep "Russia for the Russians."²

A secondary, but nevertheless persistent, concern of the tsarist regime was that the remote Siberian colony might break away from European Russia. Without a rail connection, Eastern Siberia was more easily accessible from across the Pacific. Many areas depended on American supplies and included in these shipments were occasional batches of material from the Russian radicals. One of the reasons that Constantin Pobedonostev, conservative adviser to the Tsar,
organized the sealift of peasants to the Far East was to offset American influence. "If we do not send Russian vessels to those shores, the non-Russian natives of the coast will altogether forget that they belong to Russia," he declared in 1879. The Siberian Russian population too was a source of concern. Russian radicals exiled to Siberia, such as Petr Kropotkin and Mikhail Bakunin, often turned to America for their political model. Among the exiles there was talk of creating "the United States of Siberia" to be federated across the Pacific Ocean with the United States of America. The 1880s also saw the beginning of a Siberian autonomous movement which advocated self-government for the colony and an end to the practice of deporting criminals and political dissidents to Siberia. None of these diverse secessionist tendencies posed any immediate threat to Russia's control, but they did reinforce the idea that a serious problem was in the offing.\(^3\)

The solution was obvious: build a continuous railroad from Europe, across Siberia, to the Pacific. Then the resettlement process of peasants from Europe to Eastern Siberia could be accelerated. Then troops and supplies could be rushed to defend against threats to the frontier in a matter of one to two months, rather than years. The railroads that spanned the North American continent, particularly the Canadian-Pacific, were proof that it was feasible to build a railroad in harsh climate through rugged terrain. Responding to the strategic necessity of defending his possessions, Alexander III in 1886 decreed: "Let a railway be built across Siberia on the shortest way possible."\(^4\)

A five-year delay ensued before any Siberian track was laid.
While the strategic solution was apparent, practical difficulties had to be faced. A route needed to be selected and surveyed among the many competing proposals. And means to finance the huge undertaking needed to be obtained from among other high priority projects. By 1891 these obstacles had been overcome and the momentous decision announced to the world. Tsarevich Nicholas read his father's rescript at Vladivostok: "Let Your auspicious participation in the commencement of this truly national task undertaken by Me serve as a fresh proof of My desire to facilitate the intercourse of Siberia with the other portions of My Empire." The laying of the first stone by the heir-apparent proved to be more than a symbolic gesture. Nicholas was to become the only tsar ever to have visited the Far East. During his journey, his travelling companion, Prince Ukhtomskij, had so impressed upon Nicholas the notion of Russia's "oriental mission," that his interest in Far Eastern affairs remained keen thereafter.

Prince Ukhtomskij, long-time student of the Orient and editor of the St. Petersburg Gazette, was typical of those influential intellectuals, particularly among the Slavophils, who advocated transferring the center of Russia's life to Asia. The views of these "Easterners" (Vostochniki) gained a wider acceptance and influence when Russia's pan-Slavic ventures were frustrated in the Balkans. If the strategic necessities for a Siberian railroad needed an ideological rationale, the Vostochniki had one ready at hand. Though expressing their thoughts in a variety of ways, the Vostochniki tended to believe that the time had come for Russia to turn away from Europe and, instead, work to spread its own unique blend of
Eurasian culture throughout Asia. According to them, Russia, with its partly Asiatic heritage, was better equipped, geographically and spiritually, to bridge the gap between East and West. Dostoyevskij expressed this sentiment:

In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, whereas we shall go to Asia as masters. In Europe we were Asiatics, whereas in Asia we, too, are Europeans. Our civilizing mission in Asia will bribe our spirit and drive us thither. It is only necessary that the movement should start. Build only two railroads: begin with the one to Siberia ... and at once you will see the consequences.

The Vostochniki were convinced that the Asiatic people felt a greater affinity toward Russian culture than the more materialistic society of Western Europe. They conceived that the Russian advance into Asia would essentially be a peaceful, peasant colonization which would not only protect Asia from the barbaric nomad of the Steppe, but also sharply contrast with the commercial and industrial exploitation practiced by the other European powers. To I. S. Aksakov, publisher and political thinker, the ships of the European nations were regarded as "messengers not of peace and happiness, but war and the greatest calamities." According to him the "task of Russia was to reconcile the exclusive features of East and West and to transform the one and the other into one great whole." The philosopher Leontyev predicted that Russia would head "some new Eastern realm" in which the "Slav-Oriental civilization may replace the passing civilization of Latin-Germanic Europe." The contest was foreseen, not just for dominion over Asia, but for the world. The Vostochniki believed that the Asiatic nations looked to the Russians as liberators. They cited Korea as an example of an Asiatic kingdom which had sought brotherly protection from Russia. Ukhtomskij expressed the essence
of this idea:

Asia--we have always belonged to it. We have lived its life and felt its interests. Through us the Orient has gradually arrived at consciousness of itself, at a superior life . . . We have nothing to conquer. All these peoples of various races feel themselves drawn to us, and are ours, by blood, by tradition, and by ideas. We simply approach them more closely. This great and mysterious Orient is ready to become ours.

The path of civilization was, from the Russian standpoint, inevitably progressing from West to East.7

With the decision to construct a trans-Siberian railroad, the Vostochniki were able to leave the realm of theory and enter into the province of real opportunities. Leading them into action was an unexpectedly hard-headed, financially-wise businessman. Sergei Witte was a self-made man who rose to position of enormous power when he was appointed Minister of Finance in late 1892. In him were synthesized the demands of the "Westernizers" for modernization and the ideals of the Slavophils which embraced autocracy and orthodoxy. He was undaunted by the organizational, financial and engineering problems facing the immense railway project. At the same time he could dream of Russia's future in the Orient, predicting that "Russia from the shores of the Pacific Ocean and the peaks of the Himalayas would dominate not only Asiatic, but also European affairs."8

Witte was fully in accord with the strategic necessity for the Siberian railroad. He was also well aware of the need to tie Asiatic Russia to Europe by means of a better transport system. And he entirely supported the practical necessity for re-colonizing peasants from overcrowded European Russian regions, because he favored increasing the agricultural exports in order to help finance the construction of the railroad. His vision, however, went beyond
these immediate goals. He had far more in mind than the Vostochniki dream of peasant colonization. To him, the railroad was a means to stimulate the industrialization of all Russia and particularly the development of Siberia. His plans called for much more than a simple track across the Steppe. In addition, he initiated geological surveys of Siberia and planned spur lines to connect with the locations of natural resources. Waterway improvements were scheduled to supplement and expand the rail system. Even the Northern Sea Route was surveyed as part of a whole Siberian development project. Perry Collins would have applauded his every move. Witte's plans represented the actual execution of Collins' own lofty dreams for the region, except for one important detail. Witte had no intention of inviting the Americans to participate, as this would tend to delay the promotion of domestic commerce and industry.

Indeed, two long-range goals set forth by Witte in 1892 would eventually disturb Americans as they slowly became more cognizant of the full scope of Russian ambitions in the Far East. First, Witte envisioned that the railroad, beyond its strategic purposes, would open up the commerce of Asia to Russia on a far grander scale than that previously carried by the overland caravans and that rail commerce with China would surpass and supplant commerce by sea. He believed that the teas and silks of China would someday move to European markets by way of the Siberian railway. In exchange, he expected an increased demand for Russian manufactured goods which, in turn, would stimulate Russian industry. In time, predicted Witte, the railroad would promote a Russo-Chinese economic unity. The degree of commercial competition that this would afford the American merchants only became
apparent to them over the course of the next few years, as a greater and greater percentage of American trade became concentrated in Manchuria and Northern China.9

The second impact on the United States caused by Witte's blueprint for Asiatic Russia was his projection of Russian influence beyond the Pacific shoreline. He revived Muravev's dream that the Amur region could become, not only an Asiatic bastion, but also the pivotal region through which Russia would be a dominant Pacific sea power. He expected the Siberian railway to provide all the logistic support needed to strengthen Russia's naval forces in Far Eastern waters considerably, which "in case of political complications in Europe or in the Asiatic East would acquire an especially important significance in dominating all commercial movements in the waters of the Pacific." This view was at direct variance with the American opinion which, after the purchase of Alaska, saw the United States gaining the foremost position in the North Pacific. Although not fully exploited as yet, Americans fully expected their own trans-Pacific destiny to prevail. But Witte was not satisfied to await the Americans on the Asiatic shore. Rather, he foresaw the Siberian railroad as an opportunity to open up "more direct relations with the North American States." He only erred in predicting that these relationships would bring a closer "solidarity of political interests" between Russia and the United States.10 Instead, this thrust of Russian commercial, naval and political power into Northeast Asia and out into the North Pacific would increasingly be perceived as a threat to America's own interests in the area. These outreaches of Witte's plans, of which the Siberian rail system was the central
ingredient, foreshadowed an intense rivalry with the United States.

The actual construction of the railroad started to make real progress only after Witte was named Finance Minister. To oversee the railroad project and all its auxiliary enterprises, a Railway Committee was formed, at Witte's suggestion, representing all the major departments of government concerned. This was the forum which Witte used to cut through the normal bureaucracy and to coordinate a consensus for his policies. By a masterstroke, Witte persuaded Alexander III in 1893 to appoint the tsarevich as president of the Railway Committee. Nicholas retained the position after his coronation, thus ensuring his continued concentration on Far Eastern affairs for more than ten years. Both emperors were determined that the railroad would become a monument of achievement during their reigns. Witte was also able to garner public support from both the "Westernizers" who approved of his plans to industrialize and modernize Russia and from the Vostochniki who were eager to carry Russia's "historical mission" to Asia. Prince Ukhtomskij, who remained a close confidant of Nicholas II, served also as a subordinate to Witte when he later headed the Russian-Chinese bank. Under the nominal leadership of the tsar, Witte was able to forge, within the Railway Committee, official backing for his ambitious policies. Andrew White, the American minister to St. Petersburg, was impressed that Russia intended to press forward with such a gigantic undertaking. He noted that in the press and in all the highest quarters of government there was a conviction that Russia had a great civilizing mission in Asia. White compared this strong Russian feeling with the "manifest destiny idea" in the United States a generation or two since. White also
reported that the "ultimate bearing of this Trans-Asiatic railway on our own Trans-American system is so evident as to require no discussion." 11

During the years 1886-1894, when Russian leaders were fashioning a new and comprehensive Far Eastern policy, the United States government took little heed of the political consequences of Russia's Siberian railroad and certainly articulated no foreign policy of its own for the region. Having succeeded in spanning the North American continent with railroads, individual American entrepreneurs could easily appreciate the incentives which drove the Russians to undertake such a railway system. They could also, from their similar experience, predict the significant economic development which would spring up along the route of the railroad. In the construction work, in the opening of the land for development, and in the subsequent commerce, Americans perceived an opportunity for economic advantage. What they failed to grasp at first, was that Russia had no intention of sharing these lucrative prospects with Americans. The Russian advance eastward was intent, not only in protecting its own possessions, but on dominating all of Northeast Asia. Russia was bent on becoming a competitor, not a partner of the United States.

Americans were misled by the comparative ease with which they had previously operated across the North Pacific with little or no opposition. American whalers and fur trappers had scoured the Pacific up to and on to the Siberian shoreline. American naval ships had charted the coastal waters and American telegraphers had surveyed the terrain of Siberia. American merchants had supplied and were still supplying the outlying Russian settlements in Asiatic Russia. However, these efforts, though widespread, were not in response to
or even supported by any stated policy of the United States government. Except for William Seward, Washington officials had been reluctant to support actively an extension of America's economic or naval role in Northeast Asia. The State Department repeatedly ignored all recommendations that the United States acquire a naval base off the coast of Northeast Asia from which the Asiatic squadron could better protect American interests. The department often discouraged American diplomats from using their influence to gain advantage for American businesses in China and Korea, and ignored restrictions placed on American merchants on the Amur. Some of the hesitation, no doubt, sprang from the generally weak staffing of the department, which could not cope completely with all the world situations. The relatively remote region of Northeast Asia was not yet accepted as the strategic key to China and, being outside the Western Hemisphere, received low priority. This reluctance to assert a positive and consistent policy for the region, despite the long-term, but scattered American presence there, stemmed from two prevalent attitudes.

First, until the last decade of the century, most Americans remained unaware of the full economic potential of the region. Manchuria was largely an unknown territory. Siberia was still considered bleak and uninviting. Korea was beginning to be appreciated, but believed to be too unstable politically to risk much. When Americans considered commerce with the Orient, they thought mainly in terms of Japan and China from Shanghai south to Canton. They rarely glanced at the possibilities in the interior of Northeast Asia. The advent of the Siberian railroad was one major factor in dispelling this attitude. American interest was aroused from the beginning of the project and
increased proportionately as each verst of track was laid. Hereafter, the region tended to represent more and more of an opportunity.

The second American attitude which hampered the formulation of positive program for Northeast Asia was the accepted theory that the United States need not be hasty. America's superior position in the North Pacific was assured, went the thinking, once Alaska and the Aleutians were purchased. Time was on the side of the United States. The bulk of the ocean commerce traversing the Pacific would inevitably fall to American merchants. And with commerce would come American influence in Asia and western civilization, courtesy of the Anglo-Saxons. The historical course of empire from east to west would continue to be followed as soon as the North American continent had been consolidated and developed.

Coincident with the commencement of construction of the Siberian railroad that time had now arrived in the United States. The nation was in a transition period. The internal frontier of the West was, according to the 1890 census, largely gone. Energies which had been devoted to developing the interior of the continent were now ready to be turned outward to extra-continental enterprises. To replace expansion in the West, some began advocating overseas expansion, not only as a new frontier, but also as an outlet for the surplus being produced on farm and in factory. A broader world outlook began to be articulated. Senator Platt urged that something beyond the unparalleled activity at home was needed:

The opportunity for the adventurous spirit of our citizens to have free course is being limited as we are settling up our lands, and it is to the ocean that our children must look, as they have looked at the boundless West, for the opportunity to develop their ambitions and their talents.
Alfred Thayer Mahan termed this the United States "looking outward." He and a growing number of spokesmen urged the nation to contest vigorously for overseas markets and to expand commerce to all quarters of the globe. The growing tendency of the United States to look beyond the Western Hemisphere was manifested in a variety of ways: demands for a transit-hemian canal connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific, a program to modernize the navy, acquisition of bases in Hawaii and Samoa, recommendations to increase the merchant fleet, and demands to improve the effectiveness of the consular service. Frederick Jackson Turner summed up this pressure for American expansion:

For nearly three centuries the dominant factor in American life has been expansion. With the settlement of the Pacific coast and the occupation of the free lands, this movement has come to a check. That these energies of expansion will no longer operate would be a rash prediction; and the demands for a vigorous foreign policy, for an inter-oceanic canal, for a revival of our power upon the seas, and for the extension of American influence in outlying islands and adjoining countries, are indications that the movement will continue.

Because of the advent of the Siberian railroad, Northeast Asia became one of the quarters of the globe which attracted increased attention as an outlet for American enterprise and influence. One observer who looked outward for a release of America's pent up energies was Henry Adams. He had sailed to the South Pacific to find an outlet for American pressure, but found the islands not worth touching. Instead, he turned his attention to Siberia:

On the whole, I am satisfied that America has no future in the Pacific. She can turn south, indeed, but after all, the west coast of South America offers very little field. Her best chance is Siberia. Russia will probably go to pieces; she is rotten and decrepit to the core, and must pass through a bankruptcy, political and moral. If it can be delayed another twenty-five years, we could Americanize Siberia, and this is the only possible work that I can see still open on a scale equal American means.
While Adams' opinion of Siberia as America's new frontier may have seemed farfetched and premature, others took a more immediate and practical tack. American businessmen had kept themselves informed of the Siberian project from its inception and speculated about its consequences for them. One result was a revival of the earlier dream of developing the riches of the Amur basin in partnership with Russia. Newspaper accounts began to emphasize the wealth of raw materials and the rich farm lands, rather than the bleak and forbidding aspects of Siberia. The "incalculable treasures of iron, coal, copper, lead, timber, platinum, petroleum, etc. which such a railroad would pour without stint into the markets" were described. It was estimated that the land, particularly the "black lands" in the Lake Baikal region, could support a ten-fold increase in population. The possibilities of this vast country were thought to be "tremendous both commercially and industrially." America, it was expected, would reap the benefit of this "highway of commerce" because the "railroad will take us into the heart of Northern Asia."

The rail system was foreseen as a "commercial trail into the confines of Asia, India and Africa by way of the Pacific and Siberia."

During the famine in Russia of 1891, W. C. Edgar, editor of the Northwestern Miller, headed a relief movement to send flour to Russia. One of the conclusions he derived from his visit was that an enormous trade would flow between Vladivostok and San Francisco, bringing the two nations into closer commercial relations to their mutual profit.15

Commentators in both Russia and the United States were of the opinion that the Siberian railroad would bring the two nations
into closer proximity. Novoye Vremya thought that "when Russia has bound itself by a railway to the Pacific Ocean, it will stand face to face with the new world, and who knows—will not this event contribute to bring into close accord Russia and the United States."

The Commercial and Financial Chronicle agreed that Russia "will have become a next-door neighbor" and that transit between the heartlands of the two nations will become simple and direct. Speculation went so far as to dwell on the possibility of an intercontinental railway linking Asia and North America. In 1888, at an early stage in the planning of the Siberian line, General Annenkoff, the man largely responsible for directing the construction of the trans-Caspian railroad, expressed a wish to extend the Siberian railroad along the Aleutians to connect with an American line on the Pacific coast. Although he reportedly endeavored to interest American capitalists in the enterprise, the scheme apparently never was taken up seriously by the Russian government.16

William Gilpin, the first American geopolitician, had a similar dream of connecting the continents. Land transportation, he thought, had far more advantages than communications by sea. Gilpin noted that both Russia and the United States had followed comparable paths. Both were large and strong and growing more so, while the other powers of Christendom were falling into decay. Both had expanded continentally to the Pacific shores. Pointing to the previous cooperative effort on the intercontinental telegraph project, he proposed that the two nations jointly construct a "Cosmopolitan Railway" which would cross the Bering Strait by car ferry and then cross Siberia to connect with the European systems. By
cooperating on this joint effort, Gilpin foresaw the United States and Russia joining hands against the rest of the world, militarily, commercially, and industrially. The "Cosmopolitan Railway" would become the "chief highway of the nations." Gilpin urged the United States to look to Asia, not Europe, for the future. Speaking of the "boundless expanse of almost uninhabited country," he prophesied that Siberia would be civilized by the railroad and that the "United States will become Asia's schoolmaster." Soon after Gilpin's book was published, the New York Times editorialized that the old project of connecting America and Asia by rail was one step nearer to practicality.\textsuperscript{17}

While the intercontinental railroad never went beyond an exercise of imagination, the news of the trans-Asiatic railroad spurred more practical efforts to link the two continental rail systems by means of trans-Pacific steamship service. Since the inauguration of regular American steamship service across the Pacific, the shipping lines had largely been under the control of the transcontinental railroads of the United States. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company, operating ships from San Francisco to the Orient, was directed by railroad magnates such as Jay Gould, Collis P. Huntington, and Edward H. Harriman. Starting in 1893, the Pacific Mail began to modernize its operations. By 1904 it had a fleet of large, steel steamers in regular service including the Korea, the Siberia, the Manchuria, and the Mongolia. As the enthusiasm for Asiatic trade mounted in the United States, these railroad men would look for means to control the transportation services into the interior of Manchuria and Siberia.\textsuperscript{18}
Of all the American railroad builders, James J. Hill took the greatest interest in trade with the Orient. His Great Northern Railway opened for through traffic to Seattle in 1893. Since his ambitions went beyond the Pacific coast, he began to plan an ocean link to Asia. Hill hoped to create a huge market in the Orient for the wheat of the Dakotas and Minnesota, for the cotton from the South, and for the steel products from the eastern states. For ten years he sent competent men to study Asian markets and their relation to American business. In the process, he spent more money in this research than the government, according to President Cleveland. Although his shipping ventures later failed, during the 1890s Hill offered, through his transport system, rosy prospects for Midwest and Southern farmers and Eastern manufacturers. 19

News of the Siberian railroad also brought great expectations that Americans would actively participate in the construction. Americans had had a long association with Russian railroad building. Two Americans, George Whistler and Thomas Winans, have been called the "fathers of Russian railroads." Invited to Russia in 1842 by a mission studying American rail construction methods, the two were instrumental in building the St. Petersburg to Moscow line, the first major Russian railroad. They also established a plant to manufacture locomotives. The Winans firm continued to manufacture products for the Russian rail system until bought out by the government in 1868. After that, as its rail network expanded, Russia often purchased locomotives from the Baldwin Locomotive Company. It was not surprising, therefore, when Russia initially considered letting concessions for constructing the Siberian railroad, that General Annenkov
broached the possibilities of an American concession with Wharton Barker, a Philadelphia banker. Barker was a familiar figure to the Russians. He had acted as their financial agent in 1878 for the purchase and outfitting of four ships to be used as commerce raiders. In 1892 Barker travelled to St. Petersburg to form a syndicate to finance construction of the railroad, but was unable to raise the needed investment capital without a firm commitment from the imperial government. Meanwhile, Witte had decided to have the state finance the entire enterprise, supported by loans from France. 20

Americans still hoped to furnish the bulk of the railroad supplies, as they were able to manufacture locomotive engines and steel rails far more cheaply than Russia, despite transportation costs. The United States had previously shipped large quantities of machinery into Siberia and it was anticipated that orders would increase. Americans thought that they had a special advocate in Prince Khilkov, the Minister of Ways and Communications. Khilkov had come to the United States in 1857 as an apprentice to learn every facet of railway building. Despite these good omens, American manufacturers were to be somewhat disappointed. Witte's program was designed to promote national economic self-sufficiency, so that, whenever possible, domestic sources were favored. The Baldwin Company did sell hundreds of locomotives to Russia during this period, but at the same time, symptomatic of Witte's policies, plans were made to re-locate an entire locomotive manufacturing plant from Philadelphia to St. Petersburg. 21

Again in 1894, when Daniel Butterfield, a New York banker,
tried to obtain a concession for the building of the rail line to Siberia, his offer was refused. That same year, in response to an application from Senator Gordon, the American minister to St. Petersburg inquired whether American contractors would be afforded the opportunity of bidding for the construction of any of the segments of the Siberian railroad. He was advised that all construction would remain in Russian hands. The refusal of the Russian government to countenance outside contractors did not entirely discourage all Americans. The idea that the United States could gain its economic ends in Asia through cooperation with Russia persisted for many years in the face of these repeated rebuffs. The prospects of opening up a vast new territory proved overwhelmingly tempting. The seeds of optimism sown first by Perry Collins and then repeated by William Gilpin would be planted time and again. This segment of American opinion refused to believe that Russian and American interests in Northeast Asia, far from coinciding, were actually on the verge of coming into direct conflict.

In contrast to its good reception in the United States, news of the proposed Siberian railway was perceived in China, as early as 1887, as a distinct threat to Manchuria. Charles Denby, American minister to China, shared these views. He was persuaded that, once the Siberian railway reached the Pacific, Russia might well become the "greatest power on that ocean" and would not "be slow in seizing a more southern port." To counteract this threat, Denby was convinced that China must build its own rail system to the Amur and Korea. Herein Denby also spotted an opportunity for American business. His work as a diplomat had been criticized, but no one faulted Denby's
enthusiastic support for American business interests in China. Throughout his long term in office, he diligently promoted American rail enterprises. The Chinese viceroy, Li Hung-chang, was the key to any hopes for American involvement in Chinese rail concessions. He was one of the few in government who did not automatically oppose foreign loans and modern transportation systems. Denby worked hard during this period and later to demonstrate to him that the American rail system was best suited for China. Abortive attempts were made by American capitalists in the 1880s to obtain concessions. One of these was by the ubiquitous Wharton Barker who discussed the establishment of a Chinese-American bank with Li to finance railways and mining. However, not until 1891 was the first railway authorized to be built from Peking to the Great Wall at Shanhaikuan, and then only under Chinese auspices. It was intended that this northwest line would eventually be extended into Manchuria for strategic defensive purposes. Ironically, the threat of this Chinese line provided the final spur that goaded Russia into its all-out effort on its own Siberian project. 23

During this period before the Sino-Japanese War, when American interest in Northeast Asia was being stimulated anew, other events were causing the remembrance of the "traditional friendship" with Russia to fade. As transport and communications systems improved, the distance between the two countries narrowed further. The American public became better informed about Russian life and institutions. Criticism of the "remote northern empire" had largely been withheld during the reign of Alexander II in the expectation of genuine reform. By the early 1890s these hopes had been, for the most part,
dashed. News of the Russian advance into Asia was, therefore, received ambivalently. On the one hand, Americans acknowledged that in many parts of Asia, Russia had brought increased security and prosperity. Russia seemed to have a "genius for colonization" and a talent for "assimilating the populations of other races." On the other, Americans had difficulty in reconciling tyranny and absolutism, as they viewed Russia, with a truly beneficent civilizing force. George Kennan sparked indignation in the United States with his exposure of the Siberian penal system. Commencing in 1888, his magazine articles, lectures and his book _Siberia and the Exile System_ forcefully reported on the intolerance, oppression and harsh treatment accorded to political dissidents.

The increasing number of Russian immigrants arriving in America, too, made it more difficult to ignore the despotism of the tsarist regime. The political refugees were especially outspoken against the Russian government. They organized a Russian-American National League to urge a "Free Russia." Toward the same end, another society, calling itself the "Friends of Russian Freedom" was formed in 1891. Among the prominent members were Julia Ward Howe, T. W. Higginson, Mark Twain, William Lloyd Garrison, John Whittier, James Russell Lowell, Phillips Brooks, Lyman Abbott and George Kennan. The cause of the immigrants and their friends were presented with an issue in 1893, when an Extradition Treaty between Russia and the United States was signed. Opponents of the treaty showered resolutions and petitions of protest on the Congress, arguing that between the political institutions of the civilized world there was "no gap as great as that which separates those of Russia and the United States." It was claimed that Russia showed a
"contemptuous disregard of the principles of honor and integrity" and that a convention with a "lawless and barbaric despotism" was dangerous. Political exiles should not be subject to surrender to Russian injustice. 26

Concurrently, Russia was alienating the Jews in America by its flagrant anti-Semitic policies. In 1882 a Russian edict had proscribed certain professions from the Jews, limited their travel, and prescribed places of habitation for them. By 1890 the edict was being enforced strenuously. A number of indigent Jews, who could not subsist within the confines of the Pale, were forced to emigrate, many to the United States. There the full story of their sufferings became known. Prominent Jewish-American leaders such as Jacob Schiff, Oscar Strauss, and Jesse Seligman brought the matter to the attention of Washington. Congress considered several resolutions asking the Tsar to mitigate the severe measures directed at the Jews and President Harrison addressed the issue in his annual message of 1891. Harrison was concerned that upward of a million Jews might be forced to leave Russia within a few years and he remonstrated with Russia regarding this harsh treatment. 27

In reply to the mounting adverse public opinion against Russia, Pierre Botkin, a secretary at the Russian Legation in Washington, attempted to dispel these "erroneous statements" concerning his country. According to Botkin, convicts were not treated inhumanely in Siberia and Jews were not subject to persecution in the empire. He hoped that many Americans would venture to Russia upon completion of the Siberian railway and see conditions in Siberia for themselves. 28 Despite his pleas, never again would Russian authorities be able to
evoke the "traditional friendship" with America without the grim reminders from the Jewish community and the Russian refugees. This growing aversion to the Russian system of government was a factor which increasingly turned many Americans away from a policy of continued acquiescing and cooperating with the Russian advance in Northeast Asia.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI


5Tower to Hay, May 26, 1900, forwarded copies of the Russian official publication Great Siberian Railway which provides background and details of construction, RG 59 N. A.

6Malozemoff, pp. 43-44; "Prince Ukhtomskij, a Russian of the Russians," Review of Reviews 30 (July 1904), p. 72.


11 Great Siberian Railway, p. 7, lists the membership of the Railway Committee; White to Foster, February 16, 1893, FRUS.


16 Novoye Vremya, October 10, 1890, cited by Edward Carroll, "The Foreign Relations of the United States with Tsarist Russia 1867-1900," PhD. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1953; Wurts to Bayard, July 13, 1888, FRUS.


23 Denby to Bayard, September 9, 1887, ADPP-2, 4:155; Li to Barker, July 24, 1887, Barker papers; Shu-lun Pan, The Trade of the United States with China (New York: China Trade Bureau, 1924), p. 324; Denby to Blaine, January 5 and July 28, 1891, ADPP-2, 17:70-75. The latter letter also noted that W. N. Pethick, American Vice-Consul at Tientsin, had been appointed a director of the Chinese railway. Pethick later served as a secretary to Li.


26 S. Stepniak, "What Americans Can Do For Russia," North American Review 153 (Nov. 1891), pp. 606-609; New York Times, February 26, March 17, April 9, May 2, and June 17, 1893 list some of the organizations and individuals opposed to the treaty.


CHAPTER VII
EXPORTERS AND FRANCHISE SEEKERS

The Sino-Japanese War proved to be the decisive turning point in American involvement in Northeast Asia, both economically and politically. Heretofore, individual Americans had been periodically fascinated by the region and lured by the prospects. But American interest had only been sporadic and easily diverted. Large-scale enterprises were usually short-lived and often encompassed unrealistic goals. Lacking sustained government support or sponsorship, initial enthusiasms quickly waned. However, because of these previous activities, abortive though they may have been, there was greater acceptance that Northeast Asia represented a great untapped frontier awaiting American involvement. Russia's planned construction of the Siberian railroad had spurred renewed American interest. And the pace of this new interest was accelerated considerably a few years later as the Japanese victory promised additional access into Asia. Although some Americans still thought of Asiatic Russia as the key to China and Central Asia, many others were coming to the hard realization that Russia was not only stubbornly resisting American penetration of Siberia, but also had designs of its own on the regions south of the Amur. These Russian designs coincided with the increasing attention which Americans were beginning to center on Manchuria as an alternative strategic approach to Northeast Asia.
A wide range of American business interests were convinced, based on diplomatic observations, that China, after its humiliating defeat, would be forced to abandon her age-old lethargy, to modernize, and to reform her ways by accepting western-style civilization. These business interests viewed post-war China as presenting two interrelated economic opportunities, ready for exploitation. First, China appeared to be the much sought after market for the overproduction of American industrial and agricultural products. Although the vast "China market" proved largely illusory in most areas of China, the expansion of American exports into Northern China and Manchuria became marginally important enough to be considered worth nurturing and protecting. As the market opportunities grew steadily, it was expected that the American exports would be further stimulated by the second economic factor--development franchises granted by the Chinese government to American business. Here, too, North China and Manchuria looked to be the most promising region, not just for its reported wealth in natural resources, but primarily for its strategic geographic position. American entrepreneurs, borrowing from Collins and Gilpin, saw Northeast Asia as pivotal to an integrated, world-wide transportation system connecting America's trans-continental railroads via Pacific shipping with Asia and Europe. And whoever constructed and controlled the railroads in this strategic nexus would command the entire system and all the ancillary commercial and industrial activity.

During the immediate post-war years, the remaining years of the Cleveland administration, economic interest in Northeast Asia was on a much larger scale than previously, engaging the efforts of merchants,
financiers, politicians, manufacturers and railroad men from all sections of the United States. As they attempted to put their exploitation schemes into practice, they found, to their surprise, that they would have to struggle to win franchises and to compete actively for commercial advantage. The United States was ill-prepared for this struggle. The chief competition came from an unexpected source, that erstwhile friend, the Russian Empire. The United States had long recognized Russia's penchant for territorial expansion, but now it was faced with the realization that Russia was fully capable of substantial economic penetration on her own. Russia, too, had assessed the strategic potential that Manchuria and North China offered in conjunction with Asiatic Russia. And once the imperial government became directly involved, there ensued an unequal struggle for concessions in the very sphere in which American businessmen thought that they had prior claim. As the American diplomats and businessmen became aware that they were in serious danger of losing the scramble for franchises in China, they urged government backing for their projects. While the Cleveland administration, particularly after Richard Olney assumed office as Secretary of State, reluctantly retreated a bit from its early "hands-off" policy, American entrepreneurs eagerly hoped that a new Republican administration would initiate a policy supportive of United States interests in the Far East.

President Cleveland had been ill-prepared by both temperament and experience for setting an aggressive foreign policy in the Far East. He was generally indifferent to other cultures and lacked knowledge of past diplomatic history. He cared little for affairs outside the hemisphere and opposed any form of extra-continental imperialism
of expansion by the United States. His first Secretary of State, Walter Gresham, was equally loathe to carry out a vigorous foreign policy, either to prevent the hostilities between China and Japan or to exploit the subsequent peace-making process. Gresham, too, was staunchly anti-imperialistic, believing that a free government should not acquire territory outside its own continent. He was opposed to a large army and navy, without which the practice of diplomacy was limited. While both Cleveland and Gresham opposed the imperialism of foreign powers in the Americas, their concerns did not extend to the territorial integrity of Northeast Asia. They deplored the war between China and Japan, but declared that the conflict "endangers no policy of the United States in Asia." They took a friendly interest in the welfare of Korea and its people, but never went beyond advising moderation on the governments of China and Japan before Korea became a battlefield. Korea was cautioned not to expect any intervention on the part of the United States. The two belligerents were well aware of America's neutral stance, as was Russia.

While the Cleveland administration believed that the conflict deserved the "greatest consideration by reason of its disturbance of our growing commercial interests in the two countries," the United States made no determined effort to prevent or end the war. At the outset of hostilities the United States had been invited by Great Britain to join with the European powers in intervening between China and Japan. The Cleveland administration abstained, wishing to avoid the entanglement of joint diplomatic representation. Although cooperation with other nations during previous interventions into China's affairs was not without precedent, the United States, in this
instance, chose to await the outcome in a pose of strict neutrality and impartiality. The distrust of foreign entanglement outweighed any desire, either to protect the Korean people, or to advance American interests in Asia by influencing the peace settlement.4

The attempts to maintain an "attitude toward the belligerents of an impartial and friendly neutral, desiring the welfare of both," were not entirely successful. The United States did become involved in a number of messy, minor situations. The United States volunteered, for example, to look after the interests and property of each belligerent in the opposing nation, which presented some problems for American diplomats. Also, in protecting the lives and property of its own citizens residing in Korea and China, it was found necessary for the American navy and marines to conduct a number of rescue missions ashore on foreign territory.

Nor was Russia anxious to intervene in support of either belligerent during the course of the war, but Russia's reasons were in stark contrast to America's motives. Russia stayed neutral, at the outset, in order to assess which course of subsequent action would be in their national self-interest. The imperial government did not desire to be "captivated by any one-sided proposition made by one or the other of the two powers hostile to each other."5 Instead, the government retained its freedom of action. When it became apparent that Japan would soundly defeat China, a conference of Russian ministers adopted a preliminary policy in February 1895. They decided that Korean independence must be maintained, that the Russian fleet in the Pacific must be strengthened to be superior to that of Japan, and that collective action against Japan would be sought
should Japan threaten any vital interest of Russia. Unlike the passive role accepted by the United States, Russia planned to take action, if necessary, to protect its national interests.

China was desperate after suffering a series of disastrous military defeats. With Japan poised to march on the very gates of Peking, China searched for the least humiliating peace attainable. She pleaded with the United States to mediate a peace settlement. The American government was willing, but Japan insisted on dealing directly with the defeated empire. Therefore, China was reluctantly drawn into direct negotiations, but not before employing a series of diplomatic ploys by which she hoped to mitigate Japan's demands. One of these stratagems was to engage as many Americans as possible, even as private individuals, in the peace process. Viceroy Li, who had been appointed as the chief Chinese negotiator, had been advised "flatly and firmly" that the United States' government would not intervene on China's behalf. Nevertheless, Li learned from Denby that American businessmen were already anticipating increased markets and valuable franchises in post-war China. Li was fully prepared to dangle the commercial prospects in front of Americans. He led Denby to believe that the United States would be in the fore of guiding China into modern ways. In return, Li no doubt hoped that the American presence at the negotiating table would influence Japan toward more lenient terms. Li asked Denby to accompany him to Shimonoseki to assist him, but Denby, because of his position, could not serve. However, a number of Americans were included in Li's entourage: his secretary, William Pethick; a Chinese-American student, Dr. Lin Luen Tai; an American missionary, Dr. B. C. Atterbury;
and most prominent of all, John Watson Foster, former secretary of state under President Harrison.\(^7\)

Foster had been the United States minister to Russia during the Kuldja affair. At the urging of Marquis Tseng, his Chinese colleague in St. Petersburg, Foster had suggested to the Russian foreign ministry that the imperial government moderate its demands on China. Foster was never certain whether his words were heeded, but the Chinese government was grateful, and now hoped for a repeat performance. Between 1886 and 1890 Foster had acted as counsel to the Chinese legation in Washington. In the year before the war Foster had travelled to China and subsequently had maintained business contacts there. When China was forced to sue for peace, it was natural to turn to him again for advice. As a well-known Washington figure, Foster had the aura of an official American representative, despite Gresham's efforts to publicize the private nature of Foster's role.

During the several months of preparation for the peace negotiations, the American legations in Peking and Tokyo served as conduits for the exchange of messages between the warring nations. This communication service gave the American ministers a unique opportunity to proffer advice to each side, but the state department took no advantage of the situation. Washington expressed no opinions on the post-war settlement. It declined to capitalize on this middleman role. The United States exerted no official influence on the peace process, although Foster may claim some credit for ameliorating some of Japan's initial harsh demands. Nor did the United States exact any explicit compensation for its services. Rather,
the American government favored a quick return to peace and seemed utterly indifferent to the terms of agreement.

The United States was apparently unconcerned that the balance of power in Northeast Asia was at stake. Not only was the ascendancy of Japan evident as a future competitor in the area, but also the threatened dissolution of the Chinese empire was certain to bring the European powers into a race to partition China. The American silence on the subject cannot be attributed solely to lack of awareness. The American ministers in Peking, Tokyo, and St. Petersburg kept the state department remarkably well advised in long analytical messages, which accurately forecast the situation months prior to the negotiations. In early October 1894, for example, Denby thought that the dissolution of the empire only a remote possibility. By the end of the month he was reporting that the "empire is crumbling," and if a rebellion should take place that the "formation of an independent Manchu principality north of China would be a natural consequence." Further, this "principality might easily be converted into a Russian dependency." As the negotiations commenced, Denby speculated that "Japan will claim the Liao Tung Peninsula, including Newchwang, Port Arthur and some adjacent parts of Manchuria." To Denby, at least, the troubles in China seemed an opportune time to plan for Americans to carve out their own share. He suggested that American diplomacy be directed toward securing post-war commercial privileges, since "there would no doubt be combinations to form, rivalry with other nations to conciliate, partitions with them, perhaps to be made." Denby's advice was not heeded.

From St. Petersburg, Minister Breckinridge kept Washington
equally apprised concerning Russia's moves. A few weeks after the Russian ministers had agreed on their preliminary policy, Breckinridge presented a detailed prognosis to the state department. He acknowledged Russia's concern for a war being waged on her borders. Russia, in his opinion, was ready to partition China, if that was indicated by the peace settlement. He alerted Washington for the first time that routing of the Siberian railroad directly through Manchuria was a logical outcome. And he correctly surmised that Russia's prime concern would be to prevent Japan gaining a foothold upon the continent. Russia would not mind if China were crushed by a large war indemnity, but most of all, on the Northeastern Asian mainland, Russia wanted a "free hand and a fair field for the future." To back up its policies, Breckinridge reported that Russia had sent a squadron of ships to the Pacific, which brought her fleet there to four times its normal strength.10

In addition to these official notifications, American newspapers were filled with speculation about the fate of a defeated China in face of the expected territorial demands of a victorious Japan and the awaiting European powers, particularly Russia. Confronted with these prospects for the partition of China, the United States did not even register verbal support for China's territorial integrity. The Commercial and Financial Chronicle reflected the American mood that China might not be worth preserving in its present shape:

There has been much foolish talk about the danger of the breaking up of the great Chinese empire. We have been asked to look upon such a possible result in the light of a world-wide calamity. We confess to some difficulty in seeing where the danger lies. Indeed, is it not possible that the world-wide calamity might prove to be
rather a world-wide blessing? . . . Might not the final result be good not evil? Is China worth preserving?\textsuperscript{11}

The complete indifference of the United States to the partition of China was perhaps not surprising in the context of the American tradition of non-involvement outside the Americas, but is noteworthy when juxtaposed with the strikingly opposite attitude adopted by the American government toward this same region four years later. The aloof stance adopted by the Cleveland administration in 1895 may well have misled Russia later in discounting the degree of American subsequent interest in Manchuria.

For its second diplomatic ploy, China tried in every possible way to entice the European powers to intercede in her behalf. During the course of the peace negotiations, China kept the world explicitly informed of the Japanese demands. Though reluctant to relinquish Formosa and the Pescadores, China particularly argued against Japanese acquisition of the Liaotung Peninsula in Southern Manchuria. Chinese diplomats claimed that the occupation of Port Arthur would inevitably lead to Japanese control of the Gulf of Pechili, the complete separation of China from Korea, and the eventual domination of Peking by the nearby Japanese forces. These arguments, unlike in the United States, hit a responsive note in the Russian capital, where these very issues were being debated. Russia had two choices: join in the post-war scramble for territorial concessions in Northern Manchuria, or oppose Japanese claims in Southern Manchuria. The latter course would pose the danger of war with Japan before the Siberian railway was yet complete, but would have the decided advantage, if diplomatically successful, of retaining a weak China for her immediate neighbor, rather than an aggressive Japan. Led by
Witte, the ministers decided at a special conference on April 11, and the tsar approved on April 16, to forego territorial annexations by Russia at China's expense at this time. Instead, it was declared that Russia would "not allow occupation of Southern Manchuria by Japan and that in the case of failure to realize our aim... to take appropriate measure." Should Japan, contrary to expectations, not listen to this diplomatic insistence, the Russian fleet "would be ordered to open hostilities."\(^{12}\)

Next day, the very day that the peace treaty was signed at Shimonoseki, Russia's new Foreign Minister, Aleksej Lobanov, officially asked Germany, France and England to join in the protest against Japan's acquisition on the mainland. Only England refused. The other three powers acted quickly and decisively. By April 23 they had sent identical notes to Japan stating that "the possession of the peninsula of Liaotung, claimed by Japan, would be a constant menace to the capital of China, would at the same time render illusory the independence of Korea, and would henceforth be a perpetual obstacle to the peace in the Far East." At the same time the Russian minister to Peking advised the Chinese government to delay ratification of the treaty until Japan acceded to the three-power demand. To back up its position, Russia assembled its recently augmented fleet off Chefoo, the ratification site. American observers, among others, noted that the Russian ships were stripped down and ready to fight--9 men-of-war and 3 torpedo boats.\(^{14}\) The Russian fleet movements, in conjunction with its allies, convinced everyone that war was imminent if Japan did not modify its demands. On May 5, Japan yielded. In return for a larger war indemnity Japan agreed to retrocede Southern Manchuria back to China, which it did in November 1895. By any standard,
Russia had pulled off a diplomatic masterpiece. The Russian government had clearly assessed its national interests, weighed the risks, and adopted a far-reaching policy. In a short time frame Russia had mustered important allies, marshalled the necessary forces to be convincing, and had achieved its goals. This coup would provide the foundation for the Russian ascendancy in Manchuria for the next ten years. No Russian diplomat had advised Li at Shimonoseki, but China had practical reasons for being grateful to its seeming protector.

In lieu of any policy guidance from Washington, American representatives were content to have China suffer any losses in order to terminate the fighting. Denby had urged Chinese officials to be prepared to face sacrifices and Foster continued this theme. At one point in the negotiations, when Li thought it better to continue the war rather than give up so much territory, Foster reminded him of the "extreme danger to the reigning dynasty and the autonomy of the empire if the war should be renewed and the contest prolonged." When Li returned to China, he discovered that most of the generals and viceroys were petitioning the emperor not to ratify the treaty. Li persuaded Foster to go to Peking in his stead and defend the onerous terms before the privy council. Thus it transpired, during the latter days of April, that Count Cassini was arguing for a delay in the ratification in order to save Southern Manchuria for China, while Foster was defending the treaty which would cede this same Chinese territory. Foster, albeit a private adviser, nevertheless was lodged at the American legation, used a legation interpreter, and his advice was not gainsayed by Denby.15
The United States had hoped to ingratiate itself with both warring nations by its even-handed approach. And no doubt Japan was grateful for the non-intervention of the United States, the open public support in the American press, and the use of American "good offices" to facilitate the peace negotiations. But looking at the situation from the opposing camp, China had little for which to be thankful. The United States had neither intervened to protect China from Japanese aggression, nor been particularly successful in helping to achieve a less humiliating peace. Americans had not shown confidence in China's ability to protect foreign nationals and had arrogated that right to themselves. The American newspapers had castigated China as backward and barbarous, sympathizing overwhelmingly with the Japanese cause. Then, before the war had actually ended Americans were already scurrying for economic advantage.

From a Chinese perspective it was not surprising for China to look elsewhere for post-war support. Nevertheless, Americans naively persisted in the view that the China market would be opened primarily to them, because, as Denby put it, the United States has an "enormous prestige and overshadowing influence in China." John Foster, that other close observer on the China scene, agreed. He thought that the American diplomatic efforts had come out of the war with "better grace" than other countries, because the United States was "recognized by both belligerents as purely disinterested."16

The Cleveland administration may have failed to recognize that China would have appreciated material help rather than a disinterested approach, but Americans were forced by the war to face a few military and political realities concerning their interests in the Pacific.
The Sino-Japanese War had caused a significant change in the United States' naval posture in Far Eastern waters. At the outset of the war the Asiatic squadron had declined in strength to two ships, and one of these was far from seaworthy. Three gunboats from the Bering Sea patrol were quickly ordered to the China coast and these were soon thereafter reinforced from the West Coast. The American government, while pursuing a neutral course, was nevertheless sensitive to pleas for protection from its citizens threatened by riots in China. The war increased the difficulty of operating off Northeast Asia without assured coaling stations and nearby bases. The new ships being constructed for the modern navy were all steam driven and completely dependent on coal supplies. In peacetime, shore support was readily available, but once hostilities commenced Japan declared that only two foreign warships could visit her ports concurrently. China went further and threatened to close its ports entirely by blocking the entrances and removing navigation buoys. If American gunboats were to become the "forts along the Asiatic frontier," as suggested by the New Orleans Picayune, the Asiatic squadron badly needed a safe haven in Northeast Asia for upkeep and replenishment. Once the war was over the Cleveland administration made no move to resolve this base issue. By 1895 the American squadron still only consisted of 8 ships, displacing approximately 18,000 tons. Russia, by contrast, supposedly committed primarily to land power, had dispatched a potent squadron of 17 ships, displacing 59,000 tons. They, too, were searching for suitable ice-freeports to support their forces. This became one of their primary aims in their post-war talks with China.17
The at-sea phase of the Sino-Japanese War, particularly the Battle of Yalu, provided renewed stimulus for the proponents in congress of a big, modern navy. The supporters of a more vigorous foreign policy believed that an accelerated battleship construction program and a "few outposts" would serve to promote and protect America's foreign commerce. During the debate on naval appropriations in early 1895, proponents from all sections of the nation cited Japan's naval actions as vindication for Captain Mahan's theories on seapower. They urged the immediate construction of a large number of battleships so that American naval forces in the Pacific could be expanded. Doubts were expressed whether the Asiatic squadron, despite its build up, was sufficiently strong to protect American lives, property and commerce. It was recommended that as many as 10 battleships be based in the Pacific. Congressmen were concerned, not only for the defense of Hawaii and the West Coast, but also for the protection of the "agricultural products of the South and the West on the seas." The Sino-Japanese War helped embark the United States on a "big ship" navy concept, justified in part by expected Asiatic commitments in the years ahead.18

Nor could the American public completely ignore that, as a result of the war, the political balance in Northeast Asia was precarious. The post-war diplomatic and editorial assessments differed, but most agreed that further changes and threats of war in the region were probable. No one seriously believed that Russia would not eventually seek compensation from China for its services. The only question was where and when. The predictions included Korean ice-free ports, a railway right-of-way across Manchuria, and according

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to one prescient observer, Russia really coveted the strategic Liaotung Peninsula for itself. Minister Breckinridge, echoing the Russian press, raised the vision of a unified and regenerated "Yellow Race" more powerful than all of Europe. Others saw the ascendant Japanese as posing a danger to Hawaii. ¹⁹ However, most American comment concerning Japan was favorable. The Commercial and Financial Chronicle, which was unconcerned about a Japanese hegemony in Asia, thought Japan had been robbed of her rightful conquests. The Chicago Tribune thought that all the western nations owed a "debt of gratitude" to Japan which had earned the "respect of the world" for civilizing China. The New York Times was comfortable with the idea that the war had added to Japan's power and prestige enough to make her dominant in Asian affairs. Americans were ready to welcome the "Yankees of the Orient" as partners in western civilization. They especially appreciated the commercial reforms which China had been forced to accept as part of the peace treaty. The United States anticipated sharing equally in the benefits deriving from these reforms. Because of this overwhelmingly favorable opinion toward Japan, the United States was much more likely to side with Japan in any future conflict in Northeast Asia. Japan was pictured as "good" and "progressive" and upholding a free marketplace policy. ²⁰

During the treaty ratification process, there were even rumors that the three maritime, merchantile powers with the greatest stake in China, that is, England, Japan and the United States, would band together to oppose Russia and her allies. American sympathies, according to the New York Times, were against the
aggression of Russia. While the United States at that time was unwilling to be more than a very silent and inactive partner, such a concept would germinate in the ensuing years. Heretofore, the United States had consistently been content to follow along and take advantage of any concessions that England had won in opening up China. Now, Americans were perfectly willing for Japan to act as its surrogate. Japan had showed what it could accomplish and England was no longer evincing the same interest in maintaining the balance of power in Northeast Asia. It was visualized that Japan could be useful as a counterweight to Russia. Theodore Roosevelt, for one, in commenting on the capabilities demonstrated by Japan in the war, considered that Japan would be a "formidable counterpoise to Russia in the Far East." 

The post-war economic possibilities of increased trade with China loomed, for the time being, far larger in the American mind, than any worries about new power struggles in Asia. American manufacturers and growers were eager to sell to the 400 million potential customers. As a result of the commercial reforms, it was anticipated that the market for American goods would be wide open. New ports were to be opened. Trade into the interior was to be allowed. Foreign industries were to be permitted to be established in Chinese cities. And best of all, China's internal provincial tax levies were to be abolished. Forecasts of future trade volume in China's trade needed only to compare the growth statistics of the trade with Japan's mere 40 million customers over the previous thirty years to determine the enormity of the China market potential.

American consular officials were particularly energetic in
stirring up interest in the China market. Consul-general Thomas Jernigan in Shanghai typically predicted greatly increased trade relations with China. According to him, the field for American businessmen was very inviting since the United States held a "commanding position" because China was convinced that the United States had "no aggressive design save in the legitimate field of commercial and industrial enterprise." During the week that the peace treaty was being ratified, Jernigan urged the presence in China of some of the most enterprising American merchants so that the "opportunities presented by the general 'break-up' can be utilized." American newspapers also hailed the beginning of a "new industrial and commercial epoch for China." The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* foresaw:

> The awakening of the people of Eastern Asia and the development of industry among them cannot be contemplated by the citizens of the United States but with hopefulness. Such awakening—such development—will be an immediate gain to us, and will build up and give an entirely new character to our Western coast.  

Regardless of their early start and their high expectations of good fortune, Americans achieved only a modest success in increasing exports to China. Looking back, the magnitude and the importance of American-Chinese trade had grown steadily until the American Civil War. For the next four decades, however, the trade activity had leveled off at between 20 and 30 million dollars per year. In relative terms, the importance of this trade had declined sharply from 3.2% of the United States total foreign trade in 1860 to a mere 1.75% in 1894. Only about 6% of China's trade was with America at the time of the war with Japan and the bulk consisted of imports into the United States.
Of the many causes for this decline in trade, most were still applicable in 1895, despite the renewed interest in trying to revive the China trade. Consular officials had repeatedly called attention to deficiencies in the American approach and would continue to do so. First, the decrease in trade was caused, in part, by the steady decline in the American merchant marine. In 1860 nearly all the China trade with the United States was carried in American ships; by 1893, only 13%. Of the 2,178 merchant ships which visited Shanghai in 1897, only 50 were American. James J. Hill complained that his Great Northern Railroad had to refuse shipments of 60,000 tons of steel rails and 30 million pounds of cotton for lack of sea transport from Seattle to Asiatic ports. Even allowing for some exaggeration on Hill's part, the lack of American shipping hindered the United States from seizing a larger share of the China market.24

Second, was the failure over the years of many of the pioneer American mercantile establishments in China and the seeming lack of ability and vigor on the part of those remaining. Only one new American trading firm was established in China after the Sino-Japanese War. For the most part, American goods were not only carried in foreign hulls, but also displayed and sold by foreign merchants. Moreover, the American commercial community was severely handicapped by the absence of a single American-controlled banking and financial establishment in China. Yet American consuls warned, year after year, that to expand the export trade properly American merchants needed to be on the scene, have the proper credentials; spend time to cater the product to the customer; show the Chinese the actual products, not depend on brochures; be
acquainted with the fluctuating currency exchange; and be ready in person to settle disputes and pay claims. Although many American businessmen visited China for short periods, they were unwilling to risk the long-term commitment in time and effort which was required to increase American export trade significantly.²⁵

Third, the American consular service in China was undermanned for providing a full range of service to American businessmen. And the consular staffs which were available, were stationed in the wrong places to stimulate American exports. American consuls were available in the southern ports where the bulk of the trade consisted of Chinese exports. In the North, at such ports as Chefoo and Newchwang, where American export goods predominated, the United States depended on merchants, often foreign nationals, to act as part-time vice-consuls. An American consulate was not established at Chefoo until 1896; at Newchwang, not until 1900. Thus, the Shantung peninsula and Manchuria were poorly served during a period crucial to market expansion. In sum, the circumstances which led to the stagnation of American-Chinese trade over the past four decades left a legacy which was difficult to overcome in a few years. A high degree of interest and optimism were not sufficient to build a substantial market. When the glowing prospects failed to materialize fully in the first few years, American businessmen were reluctant to blame their own practices and shortcomings. Rather, they attributed their lack of instant success to the political machinations of the other foreign powers in China, especially Russia, and the lack of a business-oriented administration to support American economic interests overseas.
The story of American successes in exporting to China can be summed up by considering just two key products: manufactured cotton goods and refined petroleum (kerosene). The statistics in Table I tell the tale. From these data one may conclude that in absolute terms, the American exports to China were negligible, being only about 1% of the total annual exports world-wide. Cotton products and kerosene represented the only sizeable export, accounting for 80-90% of the exports to China. Of more significance to those two industries, the China market turned out to be a considerable portion of their world-wide exports: 40-50% for cotton and 5% for kerosene. The port of Chefoo alone, for example, received more American cotton goods than any country or colony in the world and received more American kerosene than the United States sold throughout the Caribbean. The market for these two products was excellent and the prospects for expanding sales was good. In 1897, when foreign cotton piece sales to China dropped off due to local manufacture, American sales actually increased slightly. In quality and price, the American goods were competitive and they sold the market.27

The most remarkable statistic concerns the geographical distribution of American exports to China. In 1897 Consul Fowler in Chefoo noted the overwhelming importance of North China and Manchuria to American trade, a situation that had apparently gone unnoticed heretofore. Nearly 8.4 million dollars worth of American goods, about three-fourths of the total, entered the three ports of Chefoo, Tientsin and Newchwang. American exports into Chefoo alone exceeded those from Great Britain ten times. This emphasis on North China cannot be explained either by a more elaborate consular system or
### TABLE I

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<th>1895</th>
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<td>(in millions of dollars)</td>
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<td>Total U. S. exports worldwide</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>1,006</td>
<td>1,100</td>
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<td>U. S. exports to China</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
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<td>Total U. S. imports worldwide</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>743</td>
<td>635</td>
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<td>U. S. imports from China</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
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<td>U. S. cotton exports to China</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<td>Total U. S. cotton exports worldwide</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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<td>U. S. kerosene exports to China</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>U. S. kerosene exports worldwide</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>54.6</td>
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### TABLE II

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<th>1880</th>
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<th>1894/95</th>
<th>1900</th>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
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a more efficient American mercantile network, quite the contrary. One reason for the American success may have been that American mills produced heavier cottons, more suitable for northern climates. It seems more likely that England deliberately chose to concentrate her economic sphere along the Yangtse River and south. For whatever reason, the path of American trade expansion was unconsciously set to the North of China and Manchuria. Of all the regions of China, the United States would be most sensitive to keeping an open market there.28

Already, Russia was a strong competitor in the sales of kerosene. Before 1890 the United States was the sole supplier of kerosene to China. By 1900 the Russian share of the market was nearly on a par with the American, as shown in Table II. American consuls kept careful track of Russia's progress in selling this commodity. American oil was reported to have the edge in quality, but sold fractionally higher. The New York Times, noting that the price of oil had risen in two years from 53¢ a barrel to $1.80, complained that "should oil continue to go higher . . . the miserable Russian oil will take its place."29

Aside from these two products, the American concept of the China market, limited as it was by its own mercantile system, was largely based on wishful thinking. A consul could predict a "market for millions of bushels of wheat and corn annually," but the tastes and customs of the Chinese did not change all that rapidly. Increasing amounts of American wheat flour did reach China late in the century, but the consumers were mostly the growing English, German, and Russian communities in Northern China. Similarly, such claims as "the
National Association of Manufacturers can find no better field than China" were empty unless American entrepreneurs could obtain mining, railroad, and like franchises.30

When it became obvious that China was losing the war, Denby accurately forecast the economic necessities which would face the imperial government in the post-war years. The situation offered unlimited opportunities to American enterprise. Realizing that China would be hard-pressed to pay off her war indemnities, Denby concluded that China would be forced to sell valuable franchises to meet her obligations. It was Denby's purpose to alert American syndicates, at an early stage, to be prepared to bid successfully for the rights to build railroads, construct ships, open mines and establish banks. He considered that the United States would have every advantage. Repeatedly he urged that diplomatic influence be exerted to assist American groups in securing these privileges against expected rivals. In interviews with Viceroy Li he went so far as to recommend that the franchises for modernizing China be placed only in the hands of "English speaking people."31

By the time that the peace treaty was signed, a great amount of interest in China was being exhibited by American businessmen. As early as May 1895, Denby was overwhelmed by applications for assistance. Existing instructions, however, limited the direct assistance that he could render. Denby had previously been directed to abstain from furthering any individual plans or contracts connected with China until they had first been approved by the state department. Seeking up-dated, explicit instructions to guide him in the new post-war situation, Denby recommended that, in the absence of any relaxation
of the rules, the department select among the dozen or so competing American syndicates so that he could advocate its interests and disregard the others. Otherwise, Denby warned, China would rely on those European powers which had provided her with the signal service of forcing the retrocession of Southern Manchuria.32

In an ambiguous reply, Denby received little relaxation from the restraints under which he was operating. In exercising his best judgment, Denby was advised by telegram that he might hereafter:

introduce American citizens to the Chinese government with such representation as their character and responsibility as known to warrant, but without using your diplomatic character or influence to further their business enterprises.

Though Denby stretched these rules to the limit, he was not able to capitalize fully on whatever store of goodwill that the United States may have engendered. He continued to express to Chinese authorities, "on all proper occasions," the preeminence of American railroad construction and manufacturing products, but essentially he wielded little leverage. American syndicates were forced to scramble for concessions against foreign competition without United States backing or guarantees.

When Foster's role as adviser to the Chinese peace negotiators became public in December 1894, he, too, was besieged by friends and would-be clients with a multitude of grand schemes for the exploitation of post-war China. Financial firms were interested in lending China money to cover her war indemnity. Shipbuilding companies wanted to modernize China's navy. A steel company offered to sell and transplant an entire plant to China. Standard Oil thought they might have some business requiring his attention. The most numerous applicants were those with railroad projects in mind. According to his memoir,
Foster put aside all these various schemes and gave his undivided attention to his "imperial client." In return for his services, the Chinese government offered Foster an opportunity to reside in Peking and act as an adviser to the cabinet and the emperor in moves to reform the government. In this capacity he would have been able to give material help to American syndicates, but, convinced that the task was too difficult, he declined the post. Nevertheless, through his previous service and with his wide acquaintance among Chinese officials, he managed to act as adviser to a number of American concerns. 34

The large war indemnities did make China seek foreign loans. Recognizing that the lending institution chosen would gain substantial leverage in China, financiers of many countries vied for the opportunity. Among these was a syndicate represented by John Foster. Unlike other bidders, the American group was unsupported by its government, and its bid was not accepted, probably because the privately sponsored American syndicate could not, or would not, match the favorable terms of the Russo-French combine.35

Russia had severe handicaps of her own in contemplating a loan to China. She was just recovering from a period of famine, the expenses of the Siberian railway construction were heavy, and, on balance, Russia had generally been a borrower of foreign capital to support her own industrialization. Nevertheless, Witte jumped at the chance. At his instigation a combination of six French and four Russian banks granted the loan to China at four percent interest, the lowest rate ever offered to China. France, with a surplus of capital, supplied the bulk of the loan. Russian financial participation
was minimal, but the Russian government did guarantee the loan. By successfully negotiating this loan, Russia had gained advantage over the other foreign competitors in the scramble for economic influence in China. Denby thought that Russia, being the practical creditor of China, "will exercise an overwhelming influence over this weak, distracted country." 36 Russia's lead was somewhat overcome when China went to the world's financial markets again in early 1896 to meet the second installment on her payment. This time an Anglo-German syndicate granted the loan. A persistent effort by a group of American banks represented by the American Trading Company was again unable to offer suitable terms. 37

To the same consortium of French and Russian bankers, Witte next proposed the formation of a Russo-Chinese Bank. As before, the French would provide the major portion of the funding and the Russian government would guarantee their investments in the event of international crisis. The bank was deliberately organized for the purpose of spearheading the economic penetration of China. In addition to normal banking operations connected with the Russian tea trade, fleet operations and government loans, it was planned that the bank would set up subsidiary commercial and industrial enterprises within China, such as the construction of railroad and telegraph lines. The bank was chartered in December 1895, and within a few years had branches in Peking, Shanghai, Tientsin, Chefoo, and Vladivostok. The bank was placed under the sponsorship of the Railway Committee. In this way, Witte was able to control its affairs. Prince Ukhtomskij was named the chairman of the bank. One of its first functions was to provide a special fund from which the Russian minister to Peking could bribe Chinese officials.
Looking at the success of Russia in establishing her own financial apparatus in North China, Denby could only wistfully note that he had "greatly hoped that American financiers would enter this field."  

Only one did, but in a very feeble manner. Wharton Barker returned to China in August 1895, with an elaborate scheme to establish an American and Oriental Trust. He hoped that the Trust, in turn, would be granted contracts for railroads, ships, mines, steelmills, and textile factories. To capitalize this far-reaching plan, Barker had only been able to raise fifty thousand dollars of venture capital from his backers. Like so many other American franchise seekers in China, Barker hoped to secure the franchise first, and then use the franchise as the basis for raising money. The Chinese were too astute for that. Li encouraged the formation of a private American bank, but he was not prepared to grant unrestricted economic power to foreigners, not even Americans. Barker made repeated proposals over the next several years, chiefly through the Chinese consul in New York. Unlike other frustrated American franchise seekers, Barker did not blame his failure on the political machinations of Russia. Barker was one of those Americans who never lost faith that Russia would endorse American development in Northeast Asia.  

The most sought after concessions in China were franchises to build railroads. Americans were convinced that control of the rail system would not only bring profit, but would open the interior of China to subsidiary industrial franchises. It was thought that the railroads would modernize China and permit the resources and productive capacity throughout the great nation to be harnessed under foreign, hopefully American, direction. Both the American and
the Russian railroad promoters chose to concentrate their efforts in the same geographic sector, Manchuria. Both looked to control that vital transportation link between the markets of populous North China and the Siberian railway. Before the war, Americans were interested in being charged with extending a railroad northward from Tientsin into Manchuria, but China had decided to commence the project on its own, reaching the vicinity of the Great Wall. The war strengthened and revived American resolve. Since the days of Perry Collins, they had held the thought that Northeast Asia was an open field for American expansion and now the time had arrived. The cooperation of Russia was believed to be assured, only the permission of China was required.

The best organized, most persistent, and nearly successful effort to win a railroad franchise was displayed by the American-China Development Company. The plan was originally conceived by A. W. Bash, an ex-collector of customs in the state of Washington. Representing a nucleus group from the Northwest, including Governor McGraw, Judge Hoyt of the Supreme Court, and ex-Senator Dolph of Oregon, Bash arrived in Peking before the peace treaty was ratified. With the aid of Foster, he was able to present his ideas to Viceroy Li and to the Dowager Empress. Receiving sufficient encouragement from Chinese authorities, Bash returned to the United States to enlist financial support. By December 1895, the American-China Development Company was incorporated with a capital stock of one million dollars. The announced purpose of the company was to operate railways, steamships, telephone and telegraph lines in China. Former Senator Calvin Brice of Ohio became president of the company which
numbered an impressive list of stockholders associated with a wide spectrum in the mainstream of American business and government: Levi P. Morton, former vice-president; Thomas C. Platt, senator from New York; W. D. Washburn, former senator from Minnesota; Frederick P. Olcott, president of Central Trust Company; John Waterbury, president of Manhattan Trust Company; James Stillman, representing Rockefeller interests; George F. Baker, president of the First National Bank of New York; Charles Coster, of J. P. Morgan and Company; Jacob H. Schiff, of Kuhn, Loeb and Company; E. H. Harriman, chairman of the Union Pacific Railway; G. R. Hegeman, president of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company; Clarence Cary, New York lawyer; and others representing the Chase National Bank, Bank of America, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, the American Sugar Refining Company, and Carnegie Steel.  

Denby used the first visit of Bash to China to underscore and remind the state department of the restrictions which were hampering him from helping Bash in any material fashion. He told Washington that if the "administration could get the glory of greatly increasing and spreading American interests in China, it would be a grand consummation." The administration did not give in to this appeal to their vanity. Bash and his associates had to rely on their own resources. Denby himself may not have been completely aware of the extent that the Bash plan called for interaction with Russia. He certainly knew that the plans were "farreaching and comprehensive" and were confined initially to North China.  

The full scope of the ambitions of the American-China Development Company were included in Russian correspondence, for they were extremely sensitive to the idea of American encroachment into Manchuria,
however tentative and immature.

In the spring of 1895, during his first trip to Peking, Bash broached his plans to the Russian minister, Cassini. According to Cassini, he was informed that a large American syndicate composed of prominent politicians, financiers, and commercial activities planned to construct railroads and extract mineral riches, preferably in Northern China and parts of Manchuria. The syndicate fully understood that Manchuria, especially, would enter into the Russian sphere of influence and did not wish to act without the full approval of the tsarist government. When asked for support and sympathy for the American project, Cassini evaded the question by referring the matter to St. Petersburg. Prior to Bash's second trip to China, Foster laid the groundwork by enlisting the aid of William Pethick. As secretary to Viceroy Li and a director of the Shanhaikuan railroad, Pethick was a valuable point of contact with Chinese officials and a conduit for inside information. Foster assured Pethick that the American-China Development Company had the "capacity to command control of all the capital necessary for the accomplishment of any enterprise in China." In his turn, Pethick attempted to smooth the way for Bash by writing to Cassini on behalf of the syndicate. He advised Cassini concerning the eminent membership in the syndicate, the vast scale of their financing, and their lofty intentions "in harmony with Russia to open the gates of Northern China" to security and progress.

As Bash further explained the American plan to the Russians in the spring of 1896, it was indeed grandiose. The first step was the "construction of a line through Manchuria in order to join the
Siberian line with the railways of Northern China." Connecting lines would then be extended to Korea and the Gulf of Liaotung. This undertaking was conceived as a complete monopoly with the "right to exploit mines and timber in Manchuria and adjacent areas of Mongolia." For a period of thirty years the Chinese government would be unable, without the consent of the company, to construct any other railroads or rail branches in Manchuria. The next step planned was for the syndicate to "swallow up the existing Chinese railroads--Tientsin to Shanghai and Tientsin to Peking" whose operation was impossible under the clumsy Chinese management." Finally, the syndicate planned to extend or join trunk lines southward to Hankow and then on to Canton. In presenting the American plan to Cassini, Bash claimed to be able to tap capital funding of 250 million dollars. The only hurdle visualized was the attitude of the Russian government. The prevalent view was that Russia would seek compensation in Northern Manchuria for passage of the Siberian rail line. To the Bash group, the route of the Siberian line was immaterial, as long as their system could connect with it. Bash again recognized the preeminent influence of Russia in Manchuria and acknowledged that his group could only proceed with their plans with the "full knowledge and approval of the Russian government." To make the American plan more palatable, Bash offered to give preference to Russian investors interested in purchasing shares in the American-China Development Company.44

In trying to reach this "secret understanding" with Russia, Bash and his associates foolishly disclosed the entire scope of their endeavors, while the plans of the Russians were truly being
kept secret. Like their predecessors, the American syndicate held the illusion that Russia would welcome, or at least tolerate, the involvement of American business and industry in Eastern Siberia and Manchuria. As late as June 1896, the American consul at Tientsin, Sheridan Read, was predicting that the Bash syndicate had the "inside track" to build the Manchurian railways under the protection of China:

I believe Russia would look with favor upon the building and owning of railroads in China by Americans and I think China can be persuaded to see such a course as a safeguard to herself.

It must have come as a complete shock to the American-China Development Company to have their plans for Manchuria thwarted, not by China, but by Russia. Cassini flatly advised them that the Russian government, unknown to them, was proceeding with its own plans for Manchurian railroads and was not going to apply to any foreign company for help. Having conceded the political influence of Russia in Manchuria, and being unable to contest with Russia, unsupported by its own government, the American-China Development Company had no other choice except to give up its original plans and change goals. The syndicate decided to concentrate its efforts on franchises for railroads in central and southern China to serve as feeder lines to the Manchurian-Siberian network. The forlorn hopes of working together with a friendly Russia in Northeast Asia were seriously dampened, but not completely dashed. Bash himself held on to his Manchurian dreams until at least late 1897. And Denby, even while reporting that the Russian survey parties were already engaged in Manchuria, still hoped that Americans would construct the connecting lines to the Siberian railroad.45
The details of the American plan had been received by Cassini at a fortuitous time, for he had been instructed concurrently to negotiate with the Chinese government concerning Russian railway concessions in Manchuria. The stakes were high. The outcome of the railroad negotiations of 1896 were pivotal as to which nation would dominate Manchuria. Witte insisted that Russia not only must be allowed direct access through Manchuria for its Siberian rail line, but also "must make every effort to divert into her own hands the network of rails in Northern China."\(^{46}\) Russia intended for Vladivostok to become the principal port of entry into Manchuria. Witte feared that another terminus, constructed and controlled by a foreign power, such as the United States, would give the commercial advantage to the seaborne powers.

The American-China Development Company had pointed out the advantage to China in "entrusting the development of Manchuria to citizens of a power which is uninfluenced by political interest or ambition touching on the affairs on this continent." That argument was simply not persuasive enough to counter Russian political pressure and willingness to offer protection. Concessions to Russia were inevitable. The only question was one of dimension and what China might expect in return. Unknown to the Americans, the setting for the negotiations had already shifted to St. Petersburg, both to avoid the diversions of foreign claims and to use the coronation of Nicholas II as a cover. Viceroy Li was designated in February 1896 to be the Chinese representative to the coronation with plenipotentiary authority to conduct negotiations with Russia. To hasten discussions and to bypass the other European capitals, Prince Ukhtomskij arranged to
meet Li at Alexandria and to transfer him and his entourage to a
Russian ship for a passage direct to Odessa. The Chinese delegation
arrived in Russia three weeks before the ceremonies, which allowed
for the parties to come to an understanding. In June, Witte,
Lobanov and Li signed a secret treaty of alliance between China and
Russia. The treaty was facilitated by a bribe of three million
rubles to Li. The terms of the treaty called for the joint defense
of either country in the event of an attack by Japan. The agree­
ment also permitted Russian naval vessels to use Chinese ports as
part of the defensive alliance. For this increase in security
China had to pay a price. The Russo-Chinese Bank was given the
privilege of constructing and operating a railroad through Manchuria
to connect at each end with the Siberian line. A few months later
the bank let a contract for the construction of the railroad to a
newly formed joint stock company, the Chinese Eastern Railway
Company. By purchasing the majority bloc of the shares in the company,
the Russian government, i.e., Minister of Finance Witte, was able to
control the company, hire employees, administer the settlements
along the railroad and police the leased right-of-way. In addition,
Russian and Chinese tariffs were lowered on all of their own goods
transported on the railroad. For the time being, Russia was denied
the right to exploit mineral rights or to construct branch lines
into Northern China. Nevertheless, Russia had achieved its immediate
objectives. Russian penetration of Manchuria had commenced and the
Americans had been shut out. 47

Aside from the Russians, the Bash syndicate had to contend
with rival American franchise seekers, the principal group being one
headed by General James H. Wilson and John J. McCook. Though never as formally organized as the American-China Development Company, Wilson and McCook had equally pretentious ideas. They, too, conceived of a vast, integrated Eurasian rail network with the core of the system lying in North China and Siberia. They aimed to form an American syndicate of the "best men" to build and operate this core system. Wilson was familiar with the rail needs in China from his travels there in the mid-1880s. McCook was already a prominent railroad promoter. Instead of rushing in like the Bash group, Wilson-McCook bided their time, gathering information and cultivating what they hoped were useful contacts. They probably were expecting that the overseas investment climate would improve if a Republican administration were elected. Although invited to join the Bash group, they chose to follow their separate enterprise, often engaging in undercutting the rival syndicate. John Foster kept Wilson apprised of the peace process. Major J. G. Pangborn of the World's Transportation Commission provided them with the results of his eighteen-month study of the Chinese and Russian transportation needs. News from the state department was passed along by William Rockhill. In Korea they corresponded with Horace Allen. From China they were in touch with Minister Denby and with Pethick. Their Russian contacts were both Minister Breckinridge and Herbert Peirce, secretary of the legation.48

Wilson and McCook saw as their first step the winning of preliminary approval from Russia and China for American participation in developing the rail network. Since McCook was attending the tsar's coronation also, they used this opportunity to sound out the two
individuals that they deemed were key to gaining this approval: Viceroy Li and Prince Khilkov. McCook had several audiences with each and arranged for further talks later, when each was scheduled to visit the United States. Being encouraged by these preliminary discussions, McCook and Wilson began to approach the "best men" to finance the second step of their plan. They hoped to raise $250,000 in order to send a businessman, a lawyer, and a diplomat to St. Petersburg to work out details with the Russian government. They were undeterred by news from Pethick concerning the Russo-Chinese treaty. Pethick's opinion that all Manchuria, Mongolia, and Northern China would come under Russian control, only confirmed to them that the proper approach was through Russia. Wilson and McCook were gripped by the same delusion that the traditional friendship between the United States and Russia was still in full force, that Russia needed American knowhow and would welcome American participation in Northeast Asia. Wilson went so far as to advocate the outright partition of China.49

The objective of the Wilson-McCook syndicate being formed was to make a vigorous, systematic "effort to control the railway building and kindred business, not only in China, but in Siberia." Among the prominent businessmen whom Wilson and McCook approached for backing were: George Westinghouse, Chauncey Depew, George Pullman, Collis Huntington, Philip Armor, August Belmont, John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, Frank Thompson, John Converse, and Henry Flagler. The results were disappointing. They were generally met with either disinterest or a refusal to consider the project at such a preliminary stage.50
With their grand plans temporarily side-tracked for lack of financial support, Wilson and McCook turned to a third step in their scheme. They proposed placing William Rockhill as minister to China, Wilson as minister to Russia, and McCook in the cabinet. By occupying these strategic posts, they anticipated that the "plant" would have been established whereby the project could flourish. An impressive list of business and political figures importuned McKinley on their behalf, but only McCook received an offer. Thus, without capital and without political position, the Wilson-Mccook scheme came to a halt.

American franchise seekers across the Yalu River found a completely different set of circumstances from those prevailing in Manchuria. In Korea, many nations competed for concessions, with Japan initially having the predominant influence. Russia was satisfied with the simple independence and territorial integrity of Korea. She had no missionaries, no franchises, and only thirteen subjects in all of Korea. Then, in October 1895, the Japanese made the mistake of supporting an unsuccessful coup which backfired. The king sought asylum in the Russian legation and again petitioned the Russian government for protection. A secret Russo-Korean protocol was arranged, which called upon Russia to protect the king and palace; to train and officer the Korean army; and to provide financial and economic advisers to the Korean government. Until late 1897, Russia held primary sway over Korean affairs. The tsarist government moved cautiously during this period. Witte considered Korea a secondary theater to his main objective, Manchuria. In this time of Russian ascendancy, Horace Allen saw an opportunity to push for
an American concession for the Seoul-Chemulpo railroad. He had been striving to win such a contract for six years, but had always been thwarted by Japanese claims. Having worked closely with the Russian Chargé Weber during and after the coup, Allen again requested that the grant be awarded to the American Trading Company. This company had been unsuccessful in its bids for several franchises in China, but with the concurrence of Russia won the Korean railroad contract in March 1896. Unlike the situation in Manchuria, Russia was endeavoring to offset Japan's growing monopoly in Korean economic affairs. Or, as Allen thought, Russia approved the American contract because "it gives a fine appearance to Korean independence on the outside." From here on, Allen would hold a pro-Russian bias, at least vis à vis the Japanese. However, this attitude did not become widespread enough to countervail the hostile picture of Russia being engendered by her advance into Manchuria. American investors were still wary of Korean projects, and, in the end, the American Trading Company was forced to sell their concession rights to the Japanese, because insufficient American capital was available. 53

The fate of the other major American concession in Korea was more profitable for its investors. In July 1895, with Allen's help, James Morse was awarded the Unsan gold mining concession, which eventually proved to be very valuable. Morse sold the franchise rights to Leigh S. J. Hunt, a Seattle financier, and J. Sloat Fasset, a New York businessman. They established the Oriental Consolidated Mining Company to exploit their claim. Although some of the officers of this company had political connections, they did not become involved in any international quarrels with Russian officials in Korea. Korea
remained a relative backwater for American interests. 54

Stymied by Russia in the North, the American-China Development Company had focussed its efforts on securing the Peking-Hankow franchise through which the Americans again hoped to "control the industrial progress of China." Alert to the importance of the negotiations, Denby was concerned that the American capitalists would look only to the immediate profits and not have the long-range vision to obtain lasting results. Denby feared that, if the opportunity represented by this franchise were lost, the economic domination of China would pass into the hands of men of other nationalities.

Sensing the seriousness of the situation, Secretary Olney strengthened Denby's hand by directing him, for the first time, to:

use your personal and official influences and lend all proper assistance to secure for reputable representatives of such concerns the same facilities for submitting proposals, tendering bids or offering contracts, as are enjoyed by any other foreign commercial enterprises in the country.55

Having been encouraged to use his judgment and experience, Denby took his strongest stand yet with the Chinese government. Treat Americans fairly, he insisted, or else "Americans might develop bad feeling among our people at home and make them less friendly than they always had been to China." For a time it appeared as if the pressure was successful. The American company held a temporary contract, but in the end, the Americans wanted more stringent terms and more guarantees than the Chinese were willing to concede. A Belgian syndicate won the contract under such unfavorable terms that Denby suspected that the syndicate was a blind for political maneuvering. Later, it was confirmed that the Belgians were fronting for French and Russian interests. The Russo-Chinese Bank acted as their
financial agent. Again, what seemed to have been a promising American franchise was thwarted. In the opinion of Denby, and no doubt shared by others, the long American effort to secure railroad and other franchises had "failed because it was frowned on at St. Petersburg."56 Serious American efforts to construct and control railroads in Northeast Asia had been thoroughly frustrated and were not to revive until after the Russo-Japanese war. In the interim, the United States was chiefly concerned that Russia not obtain too solid a foothold.

In the scramble for concessions, the Americans were overmatched by the Russians at every turn. From the outset, Americans proceeded under the false premise that China and Russia, out of friendship and good will, if not necessity, would welcome Americans to their continent. Americans were too optimistic concerning their prospects and not prepared for a long, hard struggle. With only lukewarm government support at best, the American syndicates were at a severe disadvantage against the other foreign powers which did not hesitate to exert imperialistic political pressures. Often the Americans had to operate with only spotty intelligence information—they were unaware of key negotiations going on elsewhere or tried to influence lesser leaders, instead of the top officials, such as Witte. Nor was the Yankee business always conducted in an effective manner. American businessmen failed to realize that their success in developing America was not necessarily transferrable overseas. Far more capital investment, far less undermining of other Americans, far more patience, far more attention to foreign customs—all were needed. Most of all, private enterprise was unwilling to assume any
The concept of American investments in foreign countries was still in its infancy."57

Russia, on the other hand, had a singleness of purpose, which eluded the American companies. The Russian government could offer China the security of a defensive alliance and the semblance of a return to normal self-respect. The treasury of Russia could be used to guarantee against short-term losses. Through the facade of joint stock companies, Russia was able to control the franchises, while giving China a face-saving device to cloak foreign ownership of Manchurian railroads. The relative success of the United States and Russia in gaining franchises can be measured by the amount invested: by 1902 the United States investments in China amounted to 19.7 million dollars; Russia's, 246.5 million dollars.58

Before the McKinley administration fairly got underway, American interests in Northeast Asia appeared to be at a dead end. Details of the secret treaty between Russia and China remained murky, but rumors credited Russia with gaining far more than she had actually accomplished. Russian spokesmen did nothing to discourage the impression that they were invincible in the area. The Governor of Vladivostok, General J. Dolanka, commented, while passing through Saint Paul, Minnesota, that the "Tsar might be emperor of Asia tomorrow. Vladivostok will be the principal port on the Mongolian seas, and America will not have the interest she now has in the quarrels of the Orient." The Chicago Tribune apparently agreed, repeatedly crediting Russia with becoming the "master of the situation on the Pacific coast" and poised to annex Manchuria, Korea and all China north of the Great Wall, if not absorb all of China. Prince
Khilkov also made the sweeping claim that a Russo-Chinese company would not only operate the trans-Manchurian line, but also the extensions into China proper. Denby, too, was convinced that Russian influence now predominated in Peking and that Russia scarcely veiled her dictation of policy to the Chinese government:

In all important matters touching Manchuria the Russian legation is consulted and no enterprise within the borders thereof is undertaken without Russian consent.

Li Hung-chang, upon whose influence the Americans had previously depended, was now considered an "obedient servant of Russia." Despite this gloomy assessment, Denby saw a ray of hope. He thought that future American commerce and contracts could depend that the "goodwill of Russia will prove a valuable assistance." Therefore, Denby recommended, in the teeth of much contrary evidence that: "in the interest of our manufacturers, our friendly relations with Russia should be enhanced. She ought to be encouraged, in every way, to deal with Americans, who are her historic friends." Only a few weeks later Denby had decided that "Russia intends to pursue a separate and imperious course in China." This ambivalence was typical of the changing American attitude toward Russia. They had been forced to acknowledge that American interests had collided with Russian interests in Northeast Asia and Russia held the upper hand. At the same time Americans were reluctant to give up their ambitions in Manchuria and resisted the abandonment of the concept of a traditional friendship which might re-emerge to their advantage.59

Russia, in the immediate post-war years, took little pains to mollify the Americans. In previous decades her policy had been to dangle promises and offer a semblance of cooperation to the United
States in order to avoid potential conflict. Even in Eastern Siberia Russia had acted circumspectly toward American surveyors, whalers and traders. Whether Russia was too wrapped up in its own projects to curry favor with American opinion or whether she believed that its relative military and political strength no longer required a tactful approach, was not clear. Whether through miscalculation or deliberate action, Russia's impending advance into Manchuria had weakened the ties of the "historic friendship" in the eyes of Americans. From his vantage point in St. Petersburg, Minister Breckinridge, in November 1896, sensed the growing rift and reported his misgivings:

I fear that our country has ceased to be warmly or seriously taken into account by Russia. Pleasant memories remain among the people, that is all . . . . we abstain from any policy that could make our resentment seriously effective upon other continents, and thus we are practically left out of the count. The neglect of our claims, the disregard of our representations, the marked contrast . . . in the reception of our men of war . . . all show a distinct change and disregard . . . . Our people cherish the mistaken ideas that in time of trouble Russia would help us. That time is past . . . . I should predicate nothing more upon traditional friendship . . . . I believe it would be well, when occasion affords, if in some suitably marked way our government would show conspicuous disapprobation of the course of our relations with Russia. She does not reciprocate--she does not deserve the consideration we have always shown her.60

Breckinridge had unequivocally set forth the new circumstances affecting relations between the United States and Russia. In a large measure, it depended on the next administration whether to allow the relationship to drift aimlessly or whether to confront Russia in Northeast Asia where the national interests had most closely intersected.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VII


2Gresham to Dun, November 6, 1894; Gresham to Denby, November 24, 1894, FRUS.


4President Cleveland's Annual Message to Congress, December 3, 1894; Goschen to Gresham, October 6, 1894; Gresham to Goschen, October 12, 1894, Gresham papers.

5Russian Foreign Minister to Minister at Peking, August 8, 1894, "Russian Documents."

6Minutes of a Meeting of the Special Committee, February 1, 1895, included in A. Popov, "First Steps of Russian Imperialism in the Far East," Krasnij Arkhiv, 52:34-124, translated in CSPSR, 18-2 (July 1934), pp. 251-260.

7Denby to Gresham, February 23 and March 5, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

8Denby to Gresham, October 3, 23 and 31, 1894, RG 59 N. A.

9Denby to Gresham, December 26, 1894, RG 59 N. A.

10Breckinridge to Secretary of State, February 18, April 24 and May 9, 1895, RG 59 N. A.; Peirce to Secretary of State, June 1, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

11Commercial and Financial Chronicle, November 3, 1894.

13 Ibid, p. 66.


16 Denby to Gresham, December 26, 1894 and January 17, 1895, RG 59 N. A.; New York Times, July 9, 1895.

17 New Orleans Picayune, July 31, 1894, cited in Dorwart, p. 30; Denby to Olney, December 9, 1895, enclosed a clipping from the North-China Daily News listing the relative strengths of foreign squadrons, RG 59 N. A.

18 Congressional Record, 53rd Cong., 3rd sess., pp. 2247-2261, 3043, 3105-3110.

19 Breckinridge to Secretary of State, April 24, 1895; Peirce to Secretary of State, June 1, 1895, both RG 59 N. A.

20 Commercial and Financial Chronicle, May 25, 1895; Chicago Tribune, April 17, 18 and 19, 1895; New York Times, April 22, 1895.


23 Shu-lun Pan, The Trade of the United States with China (New York: China Trade Bureau, 1924), pp. 30-35.


26 Selected statistics from Commercial Relations, 1896, 1897, and 1898.
27 Commercial Relations, 1898, p. 128.

28 Ibid, pp. 128, 1010-1011.


30 Commercial Relations, 1897, pp. 172-174.

31 Denby to Gresham, December 26, 1894 and March 5, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

32 Denby to Olney, May 10, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

33 Olney to Denby telegram, May 15, 1895, confirmed by letter, June 22, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

34 Foster 2:106-09.

35 Thomas J. McCormick, China Market (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967), pp. 67-68; Dorwart, p. 176; Denby to Uhl, June 24, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

36 Malozemoff, p. 70; Denby to Olney, July 8, 1895, RG 59 N. A.

37 Denby to Olney, March 16, 1896, RG 59 N. A.


41 Denby to Gresham, May 10, 1895; Denby to Olney, May 25, 1896, RG 59 N. A.

42 Kantorovich, p. 99; Romanov, p. 63.


44 Ibid, p. 100; Romanov, pp. 76-78.

45 Kantorovich, p. 100; Read to Rockhill, June 1, 1896; Denby to Olney, September 2, 1896; Read to Day, August 27, 1897, RG 59 N. A.
Romanov, pp. 74-75.

Malozemoff, pp. 74-82.

Breckinridge to Secretary of State, April 4, 1896, RG 59 N. A.; Young, p. 57; Rockhill to Wilson, October 27, 1896; Breckinridge to Wilson, October 7, 9 and 14, 1896; Pethick to Wilson, August 29, 1896; Wilson to Allen, December 25, 1896, Wilson papers.

McCormick, pp. 79-82; Young, pp. 60-62; McCook to Wilson, May 24, 1896; Wilson to McCook, December 29, 1896, Wilson papers.


Among those supporting Rockhill's appointment were: Henry Adams, John Hay, Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt. Young, p. 68; Rockhill to Wilson, May 10, 1897, Wilson papers.

Sill to Olney, April 16 and July 17, 1896, ADPP-3, 4:88-121; Malozemoff, pp. 84-92.


Denby to Olney, November 5, 1896; Olney to Denby, December 19, 1896, all RG 59 N. A.

Denby to Olney, January 10, 1897; Denby to Sherman, March 15, April 2 and May 24, 1897, all RG 59 N. A.


Denby to Olney, November 3, 1896; Peirce to Olney, November 28, 1896; Denby to Sherman, April 2 and June 10, 1897, all RG 59 N. A.

CHAPTER VIII
THE RELUCTANT EXPANSIONISTS OF 1898

Until 1898, Russia and the United States had pursued similar goals in North China and Manchuria. Each, although by totally different means, had sought the peaceful economic penetration of the region without territorial aggrandizement. The Russian govern­ment, through deliberate policy decisions, had eschewed the territorial partitioning of China at the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War. Since that time, led by Finance Minister Witte, Russia had opted for a course which overtly called for a "free hand and fair field" in Manchuria, while covertly using pressure to gain economic monopoly. Witte had hoped to continue Russia's economic advance into North China without the use of political force and at a deliberate pace. Russia had to forego this policy when Germany occupied Kiaochow on the Shantung peninsula in November 1897. Germany's action forced Russia reluctantly to reexamine its position with regard to the partition of China. Russia's subsequent acquisition of Chinese territory revealed more clearly than ever Russia's ultimate designs on the region. Thus alerted to the threat to American interests, a strong reaction advocating opposition to Russia's domination of Manchuria was set in motion in the United States by the press, by business groups and within governmental circles. Russia's actions stirred just the sort of attention that Witte had hoped to avoid by
his own more cautious approach.

The strain on Russo-American relations was aggravated again a few months later when the United States had suddenly to confront the consequences of Admiral Dewey's victory at Manila. Gradually and reluctantly the United States, too, was forced to adopt a policy toward Asian colonial possessions. The acquisition of the Philippines altered America's perspective of its own role in Asian affairs. By its adventure into trans-Pacific imperialism the United States had demonstrated the military means and the will to support national interests overseas. Russia was rightly concerned whether this new attitude and this naval militarism would extend to Northeast Asia, particularly if coupled with the existing English opposition to the Russian advance into Manchuria. Heretofore, the competition between Russian and American interests had been one-sided in favor of Russia. No diplomatic governmental clashes had yet occurred. When Russia easily blocked American railway projects, only a degree of private ill-will had been engendered. As a result of the territorial expansion of each, undertaken however reluctantly, both nations moved closer to abandoning their traditional friendship in favor of an old-fashioned rivalry for the domination of Northeast Asia.

The first step which brought the possibility of this conflict closer to reality was taken by Russia. Having nullified previous American attempts to gain an economic development foothold in Manchuria, Russia still had a long way to go before consolidating its own economic hold on the region. Russia needed, as its next logical step, permission to build a branch rail line from the Chinese Eastern Railway to a port on the Yellow Sea. However, throughout
1897 Li Hung-chang had rejected Russian overtures to this end. In order to regain some independence of action in Manchuria, China once more proposed to extend its own rail system northward under the supervision of a British engineer. Aggravating the Russians further, an Anglo-American group of mining engineers had also been permitted to make a survey of mineral deposits in Southern Manchuria. The Russian chargé in Peking in June 1897 thought that any further extension of Russian railroads into Manchuria might prove hazardous "when the feeling of distrust and suspicion among the Chinese toward our plans in Manchuria is still far from dissipated and when the feelings are being specifically encouraged in them by foreigners." Included in those "foreigners" were representatives of the American-China Development Company, who inspired articles in the Shanghai press critical of Russia.¹ Also lending a sense of urgency to the Russian demands, was news of a renewed attempt by the Bash group to build railroads in Manchuria. Bash claimed to the Russian chargé in Washington in January 1898 that he had concluded a contract with the Chinese imperial railway administration for building and operating lines from Shanhaikuan to Mukden and Kirin, and from Port Arthur to Mukden. As a result, the Russian foreign officer notified Peking that permitting the Americans to build railways in Southern Manchuria was absolutely undesirable. Coupled with this action, Russian diplomats themselves advised the American engineers travelling in Manchuria to leave the country or else face "various inconveniences."²

This stand-off ended dramatically in November 1897, when the German navy precipitated matters by occupying Kiaochow in retaliation for the murder of two German missionaries. China immediately appealed
to Russia for assistance and, hoping to invoke their defensive alliance, opened up all Chinese non-treaty ports to Russian naval vessels. This invitation confronted the Russian ministers with an entirely new situation. The new Russian foreign minister, M. N. Muravev, favored using the German action as a pretext for the immediate compensatory seizure of an ice-free port on the Yellow Sea, long one of the goals of Russian expansionists, and a goal shared by Nicholas II. Witte argued successfully, for a time, that the acquisition of such a port should remain secondary to a policy of restraining the European powers from a scramble for Chinese territory. Witte feared that, if others gained territorial compensation, then Japan would seize territory also, which might very well lead to war. The Russian government decided to equivocate. With the "consent" of China a Russian squadron was ordered to be "temporarily stationed" at Port Arthur in December 1897. Unlike the Germans, no occupying troops were sent ashore for the time being. Two British cruisers entered Port Arthur shortly thereafter to emphasize that England demanded equality of treatment in Chinese ports. No American ships were dispatched.\(^3\)

Concurrently, the Chinese government was faced again with the necessity of negotiating for a foreign loan in order to pay off the last installment of its war indemnity. Witte agreed to undertake the loan, but only if China accepted a virtual Russian monopoly of all railways, mining and industry in all of Manchuria and Mongolia. And, bowing to the tsar's desire for an ice-free port on the Pacific, Witte also demanded that Russia be permitted to construct a harbor on the Yellow Sea to serve Russian ships.
China, desperately trying to stave off these concessions, turned to the British. Their initial offer, which was none too generous either, included the ingenius demand to open Talienwan as a treaty port. This would have tended to stall Russia by ensuring an open door for commerce into Southern Manchuria. Faced with two sets of onerous conditions, China at this point probably would have welcomed an American loan offer, despite higher rates of interest. None was forthcoming. Finally, the Chinese government accepted a loan on February 1, 1898 from an Anglo-German banking group with the stipulations that there would be no alienation of the Yangtse basin except in favor of England and that Germany would be allowed to lease Kiaochow.

With the loan question settled, Witte lost his financial leverage for attaining the economic monopoly which he preferred. Muravev was successful in pressing China for a lease of the southern part of the Liaotung peninsula, including both the ports of Talienwan and Port Arthur. Russia also gained the right to construct a Southern Manchurian Railway connecting the Chinese Eastern Railway with these ports. The final lease was signed March 27, 1898. Russia had not yet achieved its maximum goals, but had taken a giant stride toward securing Manchuria as its fief.

The other powers quickly availed themselves of the opportunity to help themselves at China's expense. To counteract Russian influence in the North, England leased Weihaiwei in April. France extended its sphere of influence in the South. Fukien province opposite Japanese Formosa was recognized as falling within the Japanese sphere. Also, to placate the Japanese, Russia agreed to withdraw its military
and financial advisers from Korea and to acknowledge the special economic interests of Japan in Korea. Of all the Pacific powers, only the United States refrained from seeking advantage from China, though the Navy Department considered it. In February 1898, Secretary John D. Long asked Admiral Dewey for his recommendation regarding the best obtainable Chinese port "for the benefit of our ships, and the extension of our commerce, as are enjoyed by some other nations." 5

While Great Britain had actively opposed the cession of Chinese territory to Germany and to Russia, the United States government decided "to keep a watchful eye upon the situation as it developed." It was generally agreed that American interests and privileges should be protected, but that it was unnecessary to act until these interests were specifically threatened. Expressing these views in an interview with the Philadelphia Press, Secretary of State, John Sherman, claimed that the partition of China was unlikely, but even if partition were to occur, American "commercial interests would not suffer." 6

This "wait and see" policy of the administration was a disappointment to those growing segments of American opinion which were increasingly sensitive to American successes and possible failures in Northeast Asia. From China, Charles Denby, perhaps emboldened by his lame-duck status, expressed his anxieties in late January. He warned that "armed strife" between England and Russia might occur should Russia attempt to dominate Manchuria. Further, if "Russia should claim to control Manchuria and exclude other nations from equal rights . . . the question may come up between the United States and Russia." Partition of China "would tend to destroy our
markets" in the Pacific which was "destined to bear on its bosom a larger commerce than the Atlantic." Having such an interest in China, why should the United States "remain mute should her autonomy be attacked," asked Denby. Instead, Denby recommended that the United States make a stand, take an interest in the "territorial question," assert a "moral influence" and not hesitate to announce disapproval of acts of "brazen wrong, spoliation, perpetrated by other nations towards China." 7

Upon his return to the United States, Denby refined his "Doctrine of Intervention" and published it in the Forum. Simply stated, the doctrine pronounced that it was the duty of the United States' government to "intervene in all matters occurring abroad in which it is our interest to intervene." In a similar vein, his son, Charles Denby, Jr., who had served as the secretary of the American legation in Peking, writing for the North American Review, concluded that there must be a "manifestation of a greater interest by the American government in the political and commercial affairs of the Orient ... the American merchant should be assured that his government is supporting him." 8

The tenor of the Denbys' opinions was echoed in other quarters. The United States should "do something" positively; not be bound so tightly by strictures against "entangling alliances." Richard Olney put these views into a legal framework as he decried the "International Isolation of the United States." During his term as secretary of state, Olney had gradually toughened his stance in favor of aiding American businessmen in China. Consequently, in his address at Harvard in early March 1898, he was not nearly as sanguine as Sherman.
Olney found nothing in Washington's Farewell Address which would prevent America from exercising its "right and duty" to resist any European state from setting "vexatious and discriminating duties and impositions, to utterly ruin the trade" between China and the United States. Moreover, Olney recognized that the United States had previously benefitted by the British single-handed struggle to keep the ports and territory of China free and open to trade. From this he concluded that it was time for the United States to offer Great Britain more than "moral support" in continuing this aim. He suggested that a temporary Anglo-American alliance, for such an extraordinary emergency, would be a more creditable part for a great nation to play.9

Clarence Cary, who, as lawyer for the American-China Development Company, knew first-hand the odds facing American businessmen when they competed against government-sponsored foreign rivals, made the most direct attack on the administration's "somnolent policy of merely trusting to luck" in the Far East. Cary thought that Sherman's views were "quaint and dangerous." Any assurances that the territorial cessions would be open freely to trade were discounted by Cary as temporary at best. Instead, he looked ahead to a time when "the territory north of the Great Wall . . . when in possession of Russia may be surrounded by a Russian tariff expressly calculated to create an exclusive market for her own people." Urging that Washington not "let matters drift in happy-go-lucky fashion," he recommended that the United States make "one forceful protest now," rather than a volume of tardy diplomatic remonstrances and inquiries later. The United States, no longer able to depend solely on Great
Britain to act, must itself watch over and safeguard American trading rights in China.¹⁰

New York City, perhaps because it was more susceptible to London influence; or perhaps because the cotton merchants were headquartered there, was the center of those advocating a more vigorous policy in safeguarding American interests in China. The New York Times, taking the lead among American journals, was appalled that China was threatened by Russia with becoming a "field for colonization and conquest." For nearly a year the newspaper had published only one editorial concerning China. Then, in the space of four months, commencing in December 1897, more than a dozen editorials dealt with the crisis. At first, the comments were limited to expressions of sympathy for the British efforts to guarantee free trade. By January, the danger of a monopoly developing was recognized more clearly. It was concluded that England should not be alone in championing the forces of progress and civilization against the forces of reaction and barbarism; the United States should declare its "entire and hearty approval" of the British stance. There then began a series of complaints that the administration was slow in acting to "assert the rights of American commerce and defend its field from hostile encroachment." While applauding Cary's article, the New York Times claimed that the "headless" state department was displaying "ignorance and apathy about our commercial interests."¹¹

The Commercial and Financial Chronicle was slower to recognize that the partition of China represented any danger to American interests. Spheres of influence are "no misfortune to trade and civilization." By April, however, the Chronicle had made the
significant correlation between Northern China and the expanding export of American cotton goods. Apprehensive about the "contingency of Manchuria being added to the Czar's dominions" the Chronicle thought:

The loss of this trade by absorption of Manchuria in the Russian customs area would be of considerable importance, and this fact obviously strengthens the motive for opposing such a serious change . . . . Russia would be disposed to yield to strong representations in favor of keeping trade on equal terms to all nations . . . if these be pressed with sufficient earnestness and decision.

For the purpose of preserving free trade, the Chronicle agreed that no "union of the two great Anglo-Saxon powers could be more creditable."12

Another "old China hand," General James Wilson, assessed "America's Interest in China" during this period. He assumed from his observations that the Russians intended "to hold on to what they have taken, and even take more as opportunity offers." Reluctantly, he concluded that American interests corresponded with that "ancient antagonist, England" and against those of our "ancient allies, France and Russia." Having occupied the whole of America's own vacant land, the Americans "must necessarily turn their attention more and more to the commerce of the Pacific islands and beyond." Therefore, circumstances might arise in Asia, according to Wilson, when it would become the duty of the government "to exert its power to the utmost" and, if need be, "to accept even the cooperation of Great Britain . . . for the maintenance of our common interests beyond the Pacific."13 More explicitly, John Proctor, president of the U. S. Civil Service Commission, urged that the United States, as a nation with large interests in the open ports
of China, should join with England and promulgate a new Monroe
Doctrine proclaiming that China was no longer regarded as a "place
for conquest or colonization by any European or other Power."\textsuperscript{14}

In addition to the press criticism of the administration's
inaction, a group of businessmen, whose firms were financially
involved in China, organized a Committee on America's Interest in
China. James McGee of the Standard Oil Company presided. The
committee began its campaign to transform America's policy by per-
suading sixty-eight firms to sign a petition urging that chambers of
commerce in major cities send resolutions to the government demanding
that American commercial interests in China be safeguarded. Within
four months ten resolutions to this effect were sent by chambers of
commerce, commercial or trade organizations around the nation. The
New York resolution served as a model and had the greatest impact
when it earnestly urged:

\begin{quote}
that such proper steps be taken as will commend themselves
to your wisdom for the prompt and energetic defense of the
existing treaty rights of our citizens in China, and for
the preservation and protection of their important commercial
interests in that Empire.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Concurrently, there was a virtual tide of British public and
private pressure exerted on the United States to join in the mainten-
ance of an "open door" in the Far East. Both Ambassador John Hay
and the secretary of the legation, Henry White, had abundant oppor-
tunity to learn of and sympathize with the English conviction that
it was imperative to check Germany and Russia from obtaining a
monopoly. British statesmen were far more skeptical that these
powers would keep their promises to keep their ports open to trade
any longer than it suited their convenience. White reported that
the consensus in England was that the British government would have "the sympathy and the support of the people of the United States and not improbably of our government also." In this they were due for disappointment. Sympathy was forthcoming; support, no.\textsuperscript{16}

Despite these pressures to "do something," the American government did not immediately react. In early March the British Ambassador to Washington inquired confidentially whether his government "could count on the co-operation of the United States in opposing action by foreign powers which may tend to restrict freedom of commerce for all nations in China either by imposing preferential conditions or by obtaining actual cession of Chinese coast territory." In reply, the United States advised that there was no indication of foreign occupation which interfered with trade or aimed at exclusive privileges. Therefore, there was no "present reason for the departure of the United States from our traditional policy respecting foreign alliances."\textsuperscript{17} In this instance, the McKinley administration sounded much like its predecessors.

When the formalities were finally signed, the state department made no protest, jointly or unilaterally, to the cessions of Chinese territory, but did bestir itself to ascertain from the Russian government what it proposed concerning foreign trade through its ports in Southern Manchuria. Muravev explained to the new American ambassador, Ethan Hitchcock, that Port Arthur would be developed solely as a military and naval base, but that Taliênwan would serve as a maritime commercial terminal, replacing Vladivostok. Further, according to Muravev, Russia had no desire "to interfere in anyway with the trade of other nations with China, her policy being to
develop home industries for supplying her home markets, under a protection policy, aided by increased transportation facilities . . . and toward the maintenance and profit of which last she would be only too glad to have foreign commerce contribute." To Hitchcock, this ambiguous statement appeared to be an assurance of "equality of opportunity" to all nations. 18 No one seemed to question how Russia expected to profit from the enormous expenses of its Siberian and Manchurian railroads.

Not all departments in Washington were prepared to ignore completely the Russian advance into Southern Manchuria and the possible consequences. Frederic Emory, Chief of the Bureau of Foreign Commerce, in his April 1898 introduction to the annual Review of World's Commerce, noted two recent trends: the "American invasion of the markets of the world" and the increasing preoccupation of European diplomacy to secure new spheres of influence "for their own special benefit." Specifically, he went on record that:

China has for some years been one of the most promising fields for American enterprise, industry, and capital . . . . The solution of the problem of the future commercial conditions of the Chinese Empire has, therefore, an immediate and most important relation to the expansion of our export trade, especially that of the Pacific slope.

Because of economic requirements, Emory concluded that "international isolation" of the United States was a thing of the past and the government could "no longer afford to disregard international rivalries." 19

William Day, the assistant secretary, replaced John Sherman as secretary of state in late April. This change permitted a gradual shift in the administration's Far East policy, but, of necessity, the
United States was by then concentrating the bulk of its efforts toward prosecuting the war with Spain. The surprising element was that Americans devoted as much concern as they did over Northeast Asia during the four months of the developing crisis in Cuba. Even in wartime, China was not completely forgotten. In June, Day submitted a proposal to Congress to send a fact-finding commission to China to study commercial conditions now that "European powers have established themselves at points of vantage in that Empire which will enable them to exercise direct influence upon its commercial destiny." The proposal made it clear that the present was a "golden opportunity" for enlarging commercial intercourse, "not only in China itself, but in the contiguous possessions of Russia... provided the conditions are thoroughly understood and proper advantage taken." The Congress did not authorize the commission, but the shift in the administration's thinking was evident. A month later, in explaining to Ambassador Hay why the war precluded any Anglo-American effort in China, Day did foretell that "the outcome of our struggle with Spain may develop the need of extending and strengthening our interests in the Asiatic continent."20

The aggressions of Germany at Kiaochow, and especially of Russia in Southern Manchuria, had done much to clarify American thinking toward Northeast Asia. First, these seizures created an atmosphere which tended to soften the historic antipathies which some Americans held for the English. In the Pacific, the United States had generally cooperated, at least tacitly, with the British policy. During this crisis period, the realization of an Anglo-American identity of concerns for an open door policy was reenforced.
Two influential Republican members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations turned away from an independent policy abroad and professed a willingness for the United States to work jointly with the British to protect free trade with China. Cushman Davis stated to the press that if American commerce were threatened in Asia, the United States would be "justified in departing from its time-honored policy and if necessity required seek a coalition with England."

And Henry Cabot Lodge, erstwhile Anglophobe, was sufficiently concerned about the seizures in Northeast Asia to declare: "I should be glad to have the United States say to England that we would stand by her in her declaration that the ports of China must be open to all nations equally or to none."

Americans, then, were variously prepared to do nothing, to offer "sympathy" to the British, to tender "moral support" for their stance, to enter into joint protests, or to take the ultimate break with the past and make a temporary Anglo-American alliance to forestall the exclusive systems the continental European powers might impose on Chinese trade. This half-way change in attitude from hostility to friendship was only one facet of the Anglo-American understanding which was reached at the end of the century, but, because of the locale and the issues involved, it tended to undermine one of the bases for the traditional Russo-American friendship. The latter had always relied rather artificially on each partner holding an equal grudge against Great Britain. In Northeast Asia it was now abundantly apparent that the grudge was not against England; the rival was Russia.

Second, the government became more prone, though still cautious, to offer its support to American commercial endeavors in
the Pacific region. In Manchuria particularly, the direct stake that American cotton mill owners and cotton exporters had there was becoming more widely recognized. This new willingness at least to contemplate backing American business in China was reflected in President McKinley's annual message to Congress:

The United States has not been an indifferent spectator of the extraordinary events transpiring in the Chinese Empire, whereby portions of its maritime provinces are passing under the control of various European powers. . . . Our position among nations, having a large Pacific coast and a constantly expanding direct trade with the Orient, gives us the equitable claim to consideration and friendly treatment in this regard, and it will be my aim to preserve our large interests in that quarter by all means appropriate. . . .22

This increased willingness to engage in "commercial imperialism" in China, though coincident in time, did not spring directly from the so-called "large policy" of imperialism. The Lodge-Mahan-Roosevelt group of imperialists were preoccupied with the approaching conflict in Cuba. Mahan, while a staunch advocate of Pacific naval bases, such as in Hawaii, did not seriously address the "Problem of Asia" until two years later. Roosevelt, when asked to support the New York Chamber of Commerce position replied uncommittedly:

I do not believe in any entangling alliance, but neither do I believe in any entangling antipathies. Russia, and Russia alone, of the European powers, has been uniformly friendly to us in the past. I have no question that this friendliness came almost solely from self-interest, but with that I need not deal. . . . If our trade relations with China are valuable, I should most unquestionably side with or against any European power out there purely with regard to our own interests.23

The American reaction to the threatened partition of China, though an accidental adjunct of the new aggressive mood in the nation, was more defensive in nature and, at the beginning, a far cry from any thoughts of territorial aggrandizement. Later, the idea of readier access to
the China market would serve as one more justification for the annexation of Hawaii and the keeping of the Philippines, but beforehand, there was no connection between the foreign cessions in China and the American conflict with Spain. Even many of the anti-imperialists who spoke out against the war and colonialism favored the more subtle form of economic expansion. Men like Edward Atkinson, Carl Schurz, David Starr Jordan and William Graham Sumner preferred an "informal" empire based on American economic superiority and equal, if not special, access to commercial privileges and naval support facilities. They appreciated the importance of American trade with regions such as Northeast Asia, but failed to specifically address how a commercial empire could be achieved in the face of any concerted effort by another nation, such as Russia, to deny American equal participation in the market.  

Third, Americans were far more concerned by the Russian acquisitions than by those of the other powers. The others, particularly Germany, as the first to seize territory, drew some adverse comment, but the intentions of Russia provoked overwhelming distrust. Americans realized that their prime market now lay within the Russian sphere with the dire prospects that the sphere might eventually extend into all of Northern China. Russian promises to keep the region open to trade and not to discriminate against other nations were not completely accepted. Unlike the other foreign spheres of influence which were distant from the European states, Manchuria was contiguous to Asiatic Russia. Americans knew from their own experiences in continental expansion that an initial presence can be transformed into absolute sovereignty. Moreover, the parallel examples of Russian absorption
of the Central Asian states and the Amur region did not encourage optimism. The American consul in Tientsin expressed this sense of unease: "Russia is rapidly fortifying Port Arthur and the feeling is growing that as soon as the Siberian railroad is completed and a secure foothold is gained that Manchuria will be forever lost to China." 25

American observers, intent upon the approaching conflict in Cuba during the early months of 1898, may not have entirely appreciated the full scope of these nascent changes in the American attitude toward events in Northeast Asia. But the Russian government was fully attuned to the subtle hints emanating from New York and Washington that American policy in the Far East might be on the verge of shifting toward a rapprochement with the English in blocking the Russian advance into Manchuria. As early as 1895, the foreign minister had advised the Tsar that England was "our most dangerous adversary in Asia," but "as soon as any kind of Asiatic difficulties cropped up the friends of England always were our enemies and vice versa." To this assessment Nicholas II commented "Naturally." During the next few years, the Russian foreign ministry became "well aware what kind of aspirations direct Americans in their commercial and trade enterprises on the entire Western seaboard of the Pacific Ocean." The ministry was also in receipt of estimates from both London and Washington of the "English agitation" attempting to draw the two Anglo-Saxon nations "toward a common position on Far East events." Russia's objective was to counteract the growing American spirit of cooperation with Great Britain and to forestall the American government from engaging in more vigorous competition for Manchuria.
Russia did not want to quarrel with the United States and sought to avoid any overt economic or political rivalry.\textsuperscript{26}

To accomplish this end, the tsarist government took several measures, the first of which was to nominate, in early February, Count Cassini, a veteran diplomat and Far East expert, as the Russian representative to Washington. At the same time each nation's diplomatic envoy was raised from the ministerial level to that of ambassador. Muravev lost no time in attempting to re-cement the "traditional friendship." On the occasion of the mutual exchange of acceptances of the new diplomatic rank, he confidentially informed Hitchcock that the Spanish government's solicitation for support over Cuba had been plainly refused since "the warm friendship existing between our Governments made it quite impossible for the Imperial Government to entertain any propositions which could be construed to be unfriendly to the United States." Hitchcock was gratified at this "expression of the cordial and friendly feeling of Russia."\textsuperscript{27}

The instructions provided to Cassini upon entering his ambassadorship also were revealing of the Russian strategy. Having been provided with a summary of the historical foundations of the Russo-American friendship, Cassini was directed to maintain and strengthen ties with the United States and to "evince complete sympathy with the interests of the Americans." Of the current American concerns, the foreign ministry believed that the two nations could find a solution to the problem of pelagic seal hunting in the North Pacific. Similarly, the self-interest of the two nations coincided over Hawaii. Russia was pleased to support the United States in the
annexation of the islands rather than have them fall into the less
friendly hands of Great Britain or Japan. Second, Cassini was
instructed to "make every endeavor to create conflicts between the
Federal Government and England and Japan" while at the same time
"remaining in the aura of Russo-American friendship." In particular,
he was to pay careful attention to the relations of the United States
and Canada. The secession of Canada from Great Britain was important
to Russia, but the foreign ministry was not quite certain whether
the union of Canada with the United States might not strengthen the
latter into an even greater Pacific threat and competitor. The last
and most difficult task assigned to Cassini concerned American
enterprises in Asia. He was to use his background knowledge to pay
"special attention to the significance to us (Russia) of the develop­
ment of American industry in the Far East." Cassini was supposed
to make a distinction between American enterprises, promoting those
which would be favorable to Russia and taking energetic action
against those which would "impinge on our sphere of influence."28

In this delicate policy of distinguishing between good and
harmful American enterprise lies the key to understanding what appears,
at first glance, to be an incongruous strategy. For, over the next
several years, American exports into Asiatic Russia tripled and
quadrupled. And more dramatically, millions of dollars worth of
American goods were suddenly in demand in the Russian sector of
Southern Manchuria. To build the port facilities, to construct the
Manchurian railroads and to feed the growing Russian population there,
the tsarist government needed to import foodstuffs, coal, steel rails,
locomotives and all manner of machinery. It was estimated that 80%
of the equipment and material used in Russia's Manchurian zone was purchased from the United States, by 1900 perhaps four million dollars worth. American exports to Asiatic Russia increased sharply also during a four-year period (in millions of dollars):

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>.45</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>2.64</td>
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Selecting the United States to be the major supplier, not only seemed to make good economic sense, but also good diplomatic sense. It was a tactic that Russia had used successfully before. By appealing to the short-term commercial instincts of the Americans, Russia may have hoped to divert attention from Russia's long-term political and economic penetration of Manchuria. Instead, the tactic tended to emphasize that all Northeast Asia was a market to be prized and protected.²⁹

During 1898 there were numerous examples of Russia exercising this cautious trade policy with the United States, wary of becoming economically dependent on the United States, but yet hoping to soften relations through the offer of temporary trade advantages. To stimulate trade through Vladivostok, for example, no tariffs were imposed on imports. In view of the growing importance of this trade, the United States proposed placing an American consul there, but this was rejected by the Russian government. Only a commercial agent was allowed in Asiatic Russia. Again, Russia repeated once more its intention to construct the Manchurian railroads by itself, but awarded a contract for 36,000 tons of steel rails for these lines to the Maryland Steel Company. Later, when some contract difficulties
arose, Witte settled the matter personally by directing that "financial conditions being equal, the order for rails should be given to the Americans." Similarly, Russia was prepared to give an American firm a lumbering concession in Siberia, but only for the 6-8 year period necessary to learn American technology. Also, while Russia was placing large orders for American locomotives and air brakes, the long-term prospects for this type of export to Russia were limited by the successful trial run of the first locomotive built domestically, albeit with American machinery and under American supervision. The prospects for the sale of American ships, sewing machines and agricultural equipment were all encouraging, at least for the time being.30

Hitchcock had been sent to Russia with instructions to push trade and he was making progress. Why then was American foreign policy not affected by this sizeable "Siberian market" to the same extent as by the "China market"? For one thing, the Siberian market never received the same ballyhoo from the American press, consular officials or business circles. No Siberian lobby was formed to influence the government to safeguard commerce with Asiatic Russia. Most Americans were no longer deluded that friendship with Russia meant American access to the development of the Amur basin. The Americans knew that Russia, unlike China, was capable of and intent on establishing domestic industries and once in operation would, like the United States, protect their output with high tariffs. Reports had already been received from Enoch Emory, an American merchant engaged in importing American goods into Siberia, of rumors that tariffs were about to be reimposed at Eastern Siberian ports.
Emory operated on a large scale, having eleven warehouses. Siberian merchants had already complained about American competition and demanded that American products be excluded. When queried as to this possibility, Witte acknowledged that the matter of duties on imports was under consideration, but not for the immediate future. The Novoye Vremya, a few years later, portrayed the Russian dilemma:

Siberian merchants are beginning to feel the pressure. Some are demanding the exclusion of American imports. The buyers of American products protest against any such action on the ground that in Siberia there is an industrial standstill, no enterprising spirit exists, and that the prices are extremely high. During the time that we are quarreling about a tariff and the abolishment of the free port of Vladivostok, the Americans will have taken possession of the Siberian markets and erected factories and mills of all kinds. We are now building a railway into China, but the chances are that the Americans will benefit more from the Chinese markets than the Russians.

Eventually, it was expected that American exports into Asiatic Russia would have been restricted and the United States would have no recourse to prevent that happening. For that reason, American diplomatic efforts were concentrated on Manchuria and North China where there was a better opportunity to keep the avenues open indefinitely.31

The Spanish-American War brought a further testing of Russo-American relations. Though sympathetic with a fellow European monarchy, the tsarist government could not afford to antagonize the United States by seriously considering joining any European concert to intervene in the conflict on Spain's behalf. Instead, Muravev assured Hitchcock officially of Russia's strict and impartial neutrality in the war. Unofficially, he offered friendly assurances personally and on behalf of his government.32 If the war had been confined to the Caribbean, these declarations would have sufficed. When, however,
Admiral Dewey gained his naval victory at Manila, this Pacific
dimension to the war complicated Russia's problem—what stance should
she take on the disposition of the Philippine Islands? This question
placed the Russian foreign ministry in a quandary. Outright opposi-
tion to America's ambitions in the Philippines would alienate the
United States further and bring the Anglo-American rapprochement
one step closer. Supporting permanent occupation of the islands,
on the other hand, would be to encourage the full-fledged participa-
tion of the United States in Asian affairs, not just as a passive
voice of moral persuasion, but possibly as a first-class naval power
with forward bases. In any new role as an active Pacific power,
the United States might well be more inclined to unite with England
in trying to stop Russian expansion into Manchuria.

At first, one month after the American victory, Muravev
assured Hitchcock that "Russia felt no interest whatever in the
Philippines," implying that Russian interests were centered entirely
in North China. Nevertheless, rumors persisted that Russia was about
to join Germany and France in settling the future status of the
Philippines. These rumors gained some credence when a St. Petersburg
newspaper insisted that "America must voluntarily submit her pretensions
to a tribune of the powers." Other press comments urged the Russian
government not to lose a moment in seizing a portion of the Philippines
for itself as a coaling station. American diplomats had difficulty
in gauging the degree of government influence on individual newspapers.
All, they were certain, were cautious of censorship; some, they
believed, actually reflected government policy accurately. Again,
Muravev dismissed these rumors, declaring that toward the United States
"we were friends, we are friends and we intend to remain friends." 33

From Washington, Cassini reported his belief that the United States intended to annex all of the Philippines. Rather than console himself with the "passing of the Philippines into the hands of our friends, the Americans, whom we love and value," Cassini regarded the impending annexation with "considerably less well-wishing." He foresaw the Americans using the Philippines as "a point of departure in the Far East" and bringing a new factor into the Far Eastern political situation. He was particularly concerned that the circumstances would lead to a closer agreement between the "two great naval powers," should the United States share or transfer the islands to Great Britain. 34

In July the influential Novoye Vremya published comprehensive recommendations regarding the policy that Russia should follow on the Philippine question. Russia should not join any concert of European powers. Russia's interests in Northeast Asia were too far removed from the Philippines to coincide with the commercial interests of the others. The islands should remain undivided under the control of the United States. An immediate categorical declaration by Russia on this point would be as decisive as the movement of the Russian squadrons to American ports during the Civil War. In reward for this friendly attitude, Russia would "get what would be necessary for us," including the lease of coaling stations in the Philippines. 35

However, the Russian government hesitated and never made such a categorical statement backing the United States. Both England and Japan did. When Herbert Peirce, American charge, took the
initiative and inquired specifically of the Russian foreign office whether Russia intended to interpose any objection to the American claim to the islands, Count Lamsdorff disingenuously answered that his government had never occupied itself with the matter. When word of this unauthorized query reached John Hay, the new Secretary of State, he was greatly irritated. Peirce was told, in no uncertain terms, that the acquisition of the Philippines was solely the concern of Spain and the United States. Hay had no intention of the United States appearing to be beholden to Russia for its war-won gains. Far from seeking cooperation and backing in Asian affairs, as had been frequently sought in previous decades of American policy, Hay was determined to strike a course independent of Russia. 36

Russia had hoped that America's newly demonstrated "naval militarism" could be confined to the distant Philippines and kept entirely separate from America's previously passive and purely private commercial concerns in Northeast Asia. Despite the two thousand mile separation, this proved to be wishful thinking. Once the United States commenced to occupy the islands, American affairs throughout Asia were inextricably intertwined. Although Americans who favored annexation primarily prized the intrinsic commercial value of the islands and their potential as a trading entrepot off Southern China, interest was not limited to the immediate geographic sphere. Imperialists saw the islands as a gateway to all the markets of East Asia. Heretofore excluded from the territorial scramble on the mainland, here was a chance for getting a "share of what is going on in Asia." Holding on to the Philippines would serve to protect American trade with China, provide "naval and military force on the western shores
of the Pacific," and pave "the way for future interventions on the part of the United States in the affairs of the East." Far from providing a substitute for their commercial interests in Manchuria, American businessmen were encouraged that this taste of imperialism foreshadowed more active governmental backing in keeping the China market open in the North. Instead of forestalling or diverting a potential conflict of Russian and American national interests in Manchuria, the acquisition of the Philippines brought the rivalry one step closer to reality.37

In Russia it was also recognized that the American victory probably presaged a new era in American diplomacy throughout the Pacific. Novoye Vremya, in acknowledging the now proven naval power of the United States, thought that Manila Bay would only be the "first trial of the American fleet." The newspaper, probably reflecting the government's own views, went on to examine Russo-American relations in light of these developments:

We really cannot understand what could induce the government of the American republicans and democrats to break the century old friendship and alliance which exists between Russia and the United States or that it would allow the lightest cloud to darken these relations. It is impossible that the reason could be the empty question of the "open door" in Corea or Manchuria. For our opinion the Americans should not be blinded by such narrow ideas . . . The desire of Russia as one of the Asiatic Powers is much more modest: we only claim that the countries touching Russia's boundary in Asia not be disputed . . . the extent of Asia is great enough to satisfy all the other Powers including the United States . . . Neither on this account nor on account of the cession of the Philippines shall we in any way interfere . . . but we feel a moral right to claim from the United States a reciprocation of this kind feeling by not interfering in Russia's political action in the Far East.38

But the United States had no intention of so reciprocating and leaving
Russia a free hand in Northeast Asia. American eyes were turned to the Pacific as never before and keeping trade open to Manchuria remained an important consideration. Having faced down the possibility of foreign interference in the Philippines and in its new mood of confident imperialism, America was far readier to meet challenges to its commercial interests in North China. One instance of this feisty mood cropped up in response to reports that Russia had prevented British investors from constructing a rail line to Newchwang, Manchuria's principal seaport. To the *New York Times*, this was a premonition of a Manchurian shut-down. The United States should stand by Great Britain against the "unjustifiable aggressiveness of Russia." According to the *Times*, the United States should be heard with more respect since the Battle of Manila and, if necessary, the American navy should keep Newchwang open.39

Russia's concern about America's growing militarism had some validity. Dewey's victory had been a dramatic demonstration of the use of seapower as an instrument of national policy. While the ultimate disposition of the Philippines was being debated thoroughly, few doubted that the United States should, as a minimum, acquire a naval base there. Nor were the arguments favoring a trans-Pacific projection of naval strength limited to Hawaii and the Philippines. It was also recognized that a base further north would be required, closer to the center of America's commercial interests. Admiral Dewey had not had time in early 1898 to find a suitable port in North China and, unfortunately for the United States, the spheres of influence established within the next several months had reduced their availability drastically. In October the American consul in
Chefoo was urging that the United States secure a base along the North China coast "to protect our interests in North China, by our own guns, and by our own coal." A month later the new minister to Peking, Edwin Conger, recommended that the United States "either by negotiation or by actual possession" should "own and control at least one good point from which we can potently assert our rights and effectively wield our influence." The navy, too, had been considering this problem. The Naval War Board studied the navy's need for coaling stations worldwide. Among their findings was the requirement for a station one thousand miles north of Manila in the Chusan Islands off the mouth of the Yangtze River. Commander R. B. Bradford, chief of the bureau responsible for supplying coal to deployed naval ships, also thought that "with the recent concessions made by China in the way of granting territory to other first-class nations, it would appear that the United States might, with becoming modesty, ask for one of these islands (the Chusans)." Intermittently in the past, individual Americans from Perry to Rockhill had foreseen the need for an American base along or off the coast of Northeast Asia. By the end of 1898 the need was becoming more apparent and being expressed from a variety of quarters.40

Once the fighting ceased, the McKinley administration was better able to view the Far East situation as an interconnected whole. Another concept which tied Manchuria to the Philippines was the idea of an open trade policy. The New York press had early pointed out that the United States, to be consistent with its demands for equal trading opportunity in all parts of China, must afford the same treatment in its own Asiatic possessions. In this vein the President first outlined an American concept of a broad open door commercial
policy for his peace commissioners to follow: "We seek no advantages in the Orient which are not common to all . . . . Asking only the open door for ourselves, we are ready to accord the open door to others." 41

Using Robert Beisner's concept as a model, 1898 was the year of the transition of the United States to a new diplomacy toward Northeast Asia. The components of the "new paradigm" began to take shape. Americans had long believed that the United States would eventually become the dominant force in the North Pacific. Now it appeared as if this was no longer in the indefinite future, but about to happen. Americans commenced to see the United States as a first-class world power with its share of responsibilities to assume in the Far East, unshackled by the shibboleths of the "old diplomacy."

Events in Northeast Asia assumed a more direct impact and a more immediate significance. American exports to Manchuria and elsewhere in North China became a "vital" concern. Safeguarding that commerce, even at the expense of vitiating a traditional friendship, became a matter of national priority. All that the new diplomacy lacked in 1898 was a "policy," crafted and planned from Washington, not solely as a response to outside opinions or individual actions, but as a carefully considered determinant in controlling events. 42
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VIII


2Romanov, p. 152.


7Denby to Sherman, January 31 and March 19, 1898, RG 59 N. A.


11New York Times, December 24 and 27, 1897; January 1, 4, 5 and 22, 1898; February 2 and 7, 1898; March 6, 15 and 22, 1898; all during a period when growing tensions with Spain competed for editorial attention.

12Commercial and Financial Chronicle, January 15, February 12, April 2 and 16, 1898.


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15 Campbell, pp. 34-55.


18 Hitchcock to Secretary of State, March 19, 1898, RG 59 N. A.

19 "Review of World Commerce," April 25, 1898, Commercial Relations, 1897.


22 President McKinley's Annual Message to Congress, December 5, 1898.


25 Ragsdale to Adee, June 16, 1898, RG 59 N. A.


27 Hitchcock to Secretary of State, February 7, 1898, RG 59 N. A.


29 Commercial Relations, 1899, pp. 131, 186; Commercial Relations, 1900, p. 44.
30 Hitchcock to Sherman, February 15, March 7, April 7 and 9, 1898; Hitchcock to Day, June 25, 1898; Peirce to Hay, December 10, 1898, all RG 59 N. A.; George S. Queen, The United States and the Material Advance in Russia, 1881-1906 (New York: Arno Press, 1976) has further details of American business interests in Russia.

31 Peirce to Hay, December 13, 1898 and February 25, 1899, RG 59 N. A.; Novoye Vremya, August 13, 1900, cited Commercial Relations, 1900.

32 Hitchcock to Sherman, April 27, 1898, RG 59 N. A.

33 James K. Eyre, "Russia and the American Acquisition of the Philippines," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 28 (Mar. 1942), pp. 552-553; Hitchcock to Day, June 2 and 22, 1898, RG 59 N. A.

34 Cassini to Muravev, June 22, 1898 and to Lamsdorf, June 23, 1898, cited in Zabriskie, pp. 203-205.

35 Novoye Vremya article July 12, 1898 forwarded by Hitchcock to Day, July 14, 1898, RG 59 N. A.

36 Peirce to Hay, November 10, 1898; Hay to Peirce, November 29, 1898, both RG 59 N. A.

37 Julius W. Pratt, Expansionists of 1898 (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), pp. 266-278 citing a number of business and trade journals; New York Times, May 25 and August 7, 1898.

38 Novoye Vremya article (undated) forwarded by Peirce to Hay, November 30, 1898, RG 59 N. A.

39 New York Times, August 7 and 9, 1898.


41 New York Times, August 30, 1898; Commercial and Financial Chronicle, May 14, 1898; Foreign Relations, 1898, p. 907.

CHAPTER IX
CHANGING SIDES

At first glance, the most puzzling of the many questions raised by the American intervention into China's affairs that resulted in the first "open door" notes, was why did the United States Government, during the latter half of 1899, suddenly consider it necessary to engage in this diplomatic venture outside of its hemisphere? Why this drastic departure from a long-standing policy of governmental non-involvement at a time when no new, major crisis in China seemed imminent? The most recent cessions of Chinese territory, which had taken place eighteen months previously, had hardly caused a ripple in the administration. Since then, minor attempts by Italy and France to nibble away at the Chinese Empire had easily been turned aside. The predominant influence of Russia in Manchuria had apparently been accepted in the United States as an accomplished fact. American goods were not only still flowing into Manchuria and North China, but business with Asiatic Russia was booming as well. As yet, Russia had raised no obstacle to commercial equality in the region. Under the old diplomatic rules the state department would have let the situation be. No initiative would have been taken without being provoked by some immediate, direct cause, and perhaps not even then. By choosing to champion the open door policy at this time, the United States was, for a change, attempting to anticipate events and take
This change in diplomatic stance was facilitated by the rapid dissipation in the traditional Russo-American friendship, which had previously obscured a realistic appraisal of America's prospects in Northeast Asia. At the same time, the full extent of the stake that Americans thought they had forged across the North Pacific and thought that they should be allowed to lay claim to was not only being appreciated by a larger segment of the American public, but in most cases greatly exaggerated. During the century, the Americans and the Russians had met in the North Pacific in a multitude of situations and been able to accommodate each others' ambitions in a reasonably amicable fashion. But over the past decade, deeply held suspicions had accumulated as the United States watched Russia's unilateral advance into Manchuria. These suspicions were based partly on factual diplomatic observation, partly on an extrapolation of Russia's previous behavior, and partly on conjecture and rumor. And, beginning during the latter part of 1898, these suspicions were aired and given widespread credence by a spate of publicity, which borrowed heavily from the anti-Russian views expressed by English writers. Joining in this propaganda campaign were "old China hands," academicians, business associations with interests in China, the New York press and a few members of the administration. The publicity ranged from discussions of the very real dangers to American commercial interests in Northeast Asia to the more extravagant, and perhaps more irrational, fears that Slavic Russia was intent on the successive domination of Asia, the Pacific, and the world.

For their part, the Russians, too, were experiencing a growing
feeling of anti-Americanism. The old friendship was ebbing in the
course of heightened American imperialism. Russian leaders no doubt
distrusted this new mood and reappraised the aggressiveness of the
Americans, who seemed to be pushing their own interests, at the
expense of Russia, and on the Russian side of the Pacific. In a
counter-campaign of propaganda, Russian spokesmen attempted to offset
the British influence, to allay American fears, and to persuade the
United States to concentrate its ambitions in its own hemisphere.¹

The backdrop of British and Russian propaganda attempting to
capture the American mind and influence policy was only quasi-official.
Although the arguments did not always emanate directly from either
of the foreign offices, the opinions offered to the American public
coincided closely with the official positions. The propaganda did
not present any strikingly new information or concepts, but it did
tend to focus American attention more sharply on the potential pro-
blems in Northeast Asia. Materially and ideologically, the arguments,
particularly those of the English writers, struck a responsive chord.
These same ideas had been gathering in America's collective memory,
but now were being expressed comprehensively and with a sense of
urgency. The debate clarified the issue and narrowed the choice:
either follow Britain's course and try to stem the advance of Russia,
or follow Russia's advice to remain neutral and trust, based on
past friendship, that American interests would not be discriminated
against.

Lord Charles Beresford was one of those prominent in the
development of an American climate of opinion favorable to a
reaffirmation of an "open door" for China. Under the auspices of
the British Associated Chambers of Commerce, Beresford travelled extensively in China commencing in October 1898, inquiring into commercial matters with British merchants. Before leaving England, he discussed his plans with Ambassador Hay, who urged him to talk with American merchants also. What Beresford observed alarmed him. At nearly every stop he found the merchants apprehensive of Russia's increasingly dominant military position in North China. Manchuria, he discovered, was rapidly becoming a Russian province, garrisoned with Cossacks. English influence in China was correspondingly slipping, as the position of the "hostile northern power" improved. The commercial open door to North China was entirely dependent on the goodwill of Russia and then, Beresford asked, what would happen in a few years when the completion of the Siberian railroad closed Russia's strategic gap? To counteract this threat to "Anglo-Saxon" trade, Beresford urged first, Anglo-American collaboration in securing the integrity of the Chinese Empire against the impending break-up. Second, he recommended that the "four trading powers"--England, Germany, Japan and the United States--join together to reorganize and unify China's internal defenses, a move obviously designed to check Russia's military advance.2

In February 1899, Beresford toured the United States on his return trip to England. He spoke to the Chambers of Commerce in San Francisco, Chicago and Buffalo, as well as to the American Asiatic Association in New York. In Washington he met with President McKinley and had lunch with Secretary Hay.3 Everywhere he stressed that the "open door" was essential to American trade in China. His trip and speeches evoked wide interest in the press of other cities and he

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was the recipient of much correspondence on the subject. His complete report, *Break-up of China*, was published in book form soon after his return and was widely reviewed in the United States. This was followed by a special appeal to American readers in an article for the *North American Review*, in which Beresford summed up his recommendation for a coalition to guarantee the independence of China—implicitly against Russian aggression. Or, as Beresford put the question in his book: "Are the great trading nations of the world going to allow the powers that seek only territorial aggrandizement to blockade the wealth of China and shut the door in their faces?"

The *New York Times*, in reviewing Beresford's work, knew precisely which power the coalition should be directed against:

> Has not Russia shut a long line of doors very tight in the northern street of China? And is she not preparing for future encroachments? And there is no power on earth that will prevent future rulers of Russia from possessing an extensive seaboard on that Pacific Coast which was once called China.

His solution might not prove to be entirely palatable, but Beresford had successfully transmitted his sense of urgency to the American public as well as to key members of the McKinley administration.⁴

Archibald Colquhoun, an English engineer, explorer and commercial pioneer, in his widely read and reviewed *China in Transformation*, had presented an even gloomier prognosis of the political situation in China. In his opinion, England had lost its opportunity to influence imperial China. British diplomacy was failing to stem the Russian advance, which was obeying the law of "sunward and seaward." He was deeply concerned about the rise of Asiatic Russia, which being semi-Asiatic, knew how to deal with China and make itself feared. England only wanted Chinese trade; Russia wanted Chinese provinces.
Having posed as a protector of China against Western aggression, Russia would organize Manchuria and advance on Peking and the Yellow River basin. Then, utilizing resources of China and with millions of Chinese to work and to fight for her, Russia was destined to dominate all of East Asia. To Colquhoun this outcome was patently unjust. Russia did not deserve a place in China because its trade was insignificant. Russian promises of "equal trade" in Manchuria were illusory. Manchuria, in particular, was too full of valuable resources, too splendid a country to let fall to Russia. Manchuria, according to Colquhoun, was a "white man's country." Therefore, the mercantile, maritime nations must press on China administrative reforms and a "comprehensive policy of opening the country." Colquhoun called on England, Australia, the United States and Germany to stop the "new Genghiz." The "Anglo-Teutonic races" must avoid domination by the Slav. 5

For his American readers Colquhoun wrote two articles, one in Harpers and the other for the North American Review. In these he emphasized that, commercially and politically, the United States, as a nation with an enormous stake in the future of the Pacific, should be deeply concerned about the China question. Americans would be hard pressed to sell their cotton and oil in Northeast Asia without some guarantees of equal treatment, but commercial enterprises must go hand in hand with government policy. China and the Far East now lay practically at the back door of America because of its recent acquisitions in the Pacific. The United States had a "great mission" and an opportunity for "national enlargement," but must choose between the "sweet words" of Russia or join England.
in the struggle to prevent the Pacific from being turned into a Russian lake. Colquhoun, also believing that the ultimate question was the future of the Teutonic race, appealed to the Anglo-American bonds of race, language, religion and form of government.  

Colquhoun's dire predictions were echoed in the Outlook: 

More important than the development of commerce is the great issue--ominous of dire results if Russian ambition is unchecked--whether a crushing autocracy shall, by military conquest and political intrigue, use the three hundred hundred and fifty million inhabitants of China as an instrument to bind Asia to itself and threaten the world.

The Sewanee Review, noting that Manchuria was rich in valuable minerals and populated by an industrious people, was concerned that the region was becoming a "Cossack camp." The completion of the Siberian railroad would further endanger China and the peace of the world. No longer, according to this journal, could the United States ignore events in the distant Far East, which more properly should now be considered the "Near West."  

After these opening salvoes, Vladimir Holmstrem and Prince Ukhtomskij, in a "Plea for Russo-American Understanding," offered a rebuttal to the English commentators. They argued the Russian case at length along two main lines. Their first plea, renewing an earlier concept, urged that Russia and America each concentrate its efforts in its "own half of the globe." America was a "universe" in which the United States predominated. The "absorbing, all-embracing and determining interest" of Americans should center on their own continent and foster healthy "Americanism." North America should be emancipated from English influence, casting off the "shackles of British tutelage." At the same time, Russia, as an Asiatic power,
must assume guardianship of the East, because "its consolidation means our consolidation." The influence of Asia had been the dominant factor in the history of Russia—"she crushed us, but has also regenerated us." It was now the duty of Russia to develop peacefully the Asiatic nations along strictly national lines in accordance with the characteristic individuality of its races. Only if forced by the machinations of non-Asiatic nations, would Russia adopt a "policy of absorbing a nation of four hundred million souls."^8

Too many Americans had played a role in the North Pacific and in Northeast Asia, over too many decades, and with too many expectations to retreat now to the North American continent. From fur traders to whalers, from Commodore Perry to Secretary Seward, from Perry Collins to William Gilpin, from railroad entrepreneurs to cotton sheeting exporters—the vision of an American North Pacific economic empire had persisted and grown. One terminus of this empire was conceived as being firmly planted in Northeast Asia. For many the "Far East" had, in reality, become the "Near West."

Americans were not surprised to meet an expanding Russia on the Asiatic side. That had long been foretold. The only question was whether the meeting would result in confrontation or cooperation. And the former was seeming more likely, for Holmstrem's veiled threat to absorb all of China accorded more and more with the idea which many Americans held was the true, underlying purpose of Russia in Asia and that the first step was nearing completion in Manchuria.

Realizing, at this juncture, the improbability of the United States completely abandoning its interests in Northeast Asia and confining its attention to the Western Hemisphere, Holmstrem developed
a second plea. The United States and Russia should cooperate in supporting the independence and integrity of China. The presence of Russia in Asia, it was claimed, was the only factor inhibiting English aggression against China. The cry for an "open door" was only an English subterfuge. If the United States joined in any anti-Russian combine, it would only lead to the immediate dismemberment of China. Instead, Holmstrem argued that the destinies of Russia and the United States in the Far East were interwoven and drawn together by "invisible ties of friendship and goodwill."

Only one condition was necessary for continuing this fine relationship: America "must come over to our (Russian) side and accept the Eastern conception," as opposed to the concept of imposing Western, revolutionary reforms in China. Among those who sympathized with this Russian view was Andrew Carnegie, a fervent anti-imperialist, who believed that the United States should not hold onto the Philippines and certainly should not enter a contest for further possessions. Carnegie was afraid that a war in the Far East was in the offing, but thought that the United States was too ill-prepared militarily to engage in a major power struggle. He did not want America to be at the mercy of stronger nations or the "cat's paw" of England. Carnegie had no illusions about Russian intentions in Northeast Asia, but Russia had always been the "friend of the United States." Besides, the Russian expansion was "legitimate, because it is over coterminous territory, which Russia can absorb and Russianize." Of those who rushed to print in the 1899 debate over the Far East question, Carnegie was one of the few who still evoked the memory of Russian friendship.
The Reverend Gilbert Reid was another who did not consider Russia an aggressor in Manchuria. Reid had been attempting to establish an International Institute of China in Peking, ever since 1898. During the course of his work he became well acquainted with Prince Ukhtomskij, who praised Reid's educational mission, comparing it favorably in a number of editorials as the antithesis of the normal crass materialism of the other Americans in China. In turn, Reid thought that Russia's intentions toward China were entirely friendly and peaceful. Russia had not, in Reid's opinion, yet possessed Manchuria and the area was still open to foreign trade. Only if the other nations began the dismemberment of China would Russia be prepared to seize Mongolia and Manchuria. 11

American missionaries in China and those that had returned home were an important factor in keeping public interest in the China situation at a high pitch. As a group, the missionaries were deeply concerned about keeping China open to Western civilization and American commerce, so they generally welcomed state department initiatives along these lines. Whether they yet recognized, by 1899, any threat posed by Russia's advance into Manchuria is problematical. Manchuria was not in the American sphere of missionary endeavor and may not have held the same degree of significance for them as it held for American merchants. 12

Through the lengthy Holstrem-Ukhtomskij plea the administration no doubt gained a clearer understanding of Russian objectives, but in return, no long-term guarantees were vouchsafed that American trade would continue to enjoy equal opportunity within the Russian sphere. Significantly, no further commercial enticement was dangled
before the American businessman to sway his opinion, as had been
tried in the past. Russia's plea for understanding failed to con-
vince the New York Sun

that Russia does not contemplate the acquisition of all
that part of China which lies north of the Yangtse basin
and of the section of Shantung claimed by the Germans;
that is to say, the part of the Celestial Empire to which
most of our trade is, at present, confined. Neither does
he (Holmstrem) give us reasons for believing that, after
Manchuria, Liaotung and Chih-li and the rest of Northern
China have been absorbed by Russia, which is wedded to a
protective policy, American products will have as free
access to that vast region as they have today.13

Nor was the New York Times persuaded. Holmstrem's article was dis-
missed as a plea for an "Anglo-American misunderstanding." It saw
no basis for an understanding between an Asiatic despotism and a
Western Republic, whereas the Anglo-American understanding was a
reality. The United States no longer needed to "take sentimentally
and at least passively the Russian side." The plea to "hate England
. . . because Russia hates her" proved no longer to be an effective
appeal.14

The Russian ambassador to the United States, Count Cassini,
having been briefed along lines similar to the Holmstrem plea, tried
valiantly to stem the tide of hostility which he saw in the American
press. In one interview he explicitly declared that Russian policy
did not conflict with the interests of the United States in China.
It was not the purpose of the Russian Government to annex Chinese
territory. In his opinion, there would be "no real partition of
China." In another interview Cassini did his best to counteract the
arguments of Lord Beresford, emphasizing once more that the door to
China was not shut. According to Henry Adams, Count Cassini "let
few days pass without appealing through the press to the public."
The New York Times thought that "the very able representative of Russia to Washington" was doing too good of a job and "was able to befog the minds that were never clear upon the question (open door)." In his endeavors Cassini was reportedly aided by certain American newspapers which had "actually been subsidized from the secret service fund at the disposal of the Russian Embassy, so difficult was it to explain their utterances on any other hypothesis." While Cassini had prevented the "administration from perceiving and pursuing our National interests in the East" previously, Secretary Hay, it was hoped, would not be duped by the "cleverness of a Russian Ambassador."\(^{15}\)

The countrymen of both Russia and England were assiduously courting the favor and support of American public opinion on the open door question. Soon after the publication of the Ukhtomskij-Holmstrem article, two English re-rebuttals appeared, one in the North American Review by Archibald Little, an English author who had travelled extensively in China, and the other in the Forum by A. Maurice Low, an English journalist writing on American affairs. Aside from a rehash of previous arguments, Little elaborated on one point which had only been touched on by Beresford. He stressed the importance of the treaty port of Newchwang as the major entry point for American exports to Manchuria. Also, he reviewed England's unsuccessful negotiations with Russia concerning rail concessions in North China. Russia had refused to promise not to discriminate against non-Russian merchandise, thus raising the spectre of American products being subject to premium transportation rates, while competing Russian goods would have their transportation costs subsidized. Low
took another tack. He began the process of debunking the historical myths which had been used previously to underpin the traditions of Russo-American friendship. He summed up by reiterating the proposition that the United States must choose between the way of Russia or the way of England, between the "militarism of the Slav" or the "freedom of the Saxon."\textsuperscript{16}

In this broader dimension the debate began to assume geopolitical, ideological and even racist overtones which had been latent in American thinking since mid-century, and which were now being revived and expanded upon by American writers. The growing concern that Russia was bent on the military domination of China which would, in turn, lead to the control of the Pacific, all of Asia and then the world took two general forms. Most frequently, the explicit question was posed: "Which shall dominate--Saxon or Slav?" David Mills, the Canadian Minister of Justice, raised exactly this issue in the \textit{North American Review}. He predicted that, as a natural consequence of the commerce of Asia falling to Russia, it would then be the dominant sea power and the "Pacific Ocean would be a Russian Lake." Unless the United States joined the Anglo-Saxon community in stopping the ascendancy of Russia, the "leadership of the Saxon would be at an end and that of the Slav would begin." George Burton Adams, a professor and historian, writing in the \textit{Atlantic Monthly} was more optimistic about the prospects for Anglo-Saxon expansion. He saw the nineteenth century as only an "age of preliminary and introductory expansion" preparing the way for vaster expansion in the twentieth. But this would only be accomplished if the whole Anglo-Saxon race were brought into line on a common policy and shared common burdens.\textsuperscript{17}
Gardiner Hubbard, founder and first president of the National Geographic Society, thought that the destiny of Asia was most intimately connected with Russia and that Russia would "become the leading nation of the Orient," but voiced no particular alarm at the prospect. On the other hand, James K. Hosmer, minister and historian, believed that the Anglo-Saxon fraternity must inevitably confront Russia. He thought the world faced two alternatives: the reduction of the human race to vassalage under a "Czar installed in the position of dictator," or the development of the human race with "Anglo-Saxon freedom." 18

Frederick Wells Williams, son of Commodore Perry's interpreter and a prominent Orientalist in his own right at Yale, also viewed the Slav and the Anglo-Saxon as competitors for control of the world:

These are the only races whose territories and consequently whose potential strength in population and material resources, are adequate to the stupendous task, whose subjects are colonizers in the true sense that comprises both the peopling of vast spaces and the assimilation and subjection of foreigners to their institutions. These great rivals have already been long at work, each in characteristic fashion, fulfilling . . . their manifest destiny, each a participator in the conquest of Asia . . . . Behind one or the other must sooner or later be ranged all the potential forces of the world.

The contest, which according to Williams had already begun, allowed "no alternative between victory on the one side and destruction on the other." 19

Andrew Raymond, President of Union College, saw the prominence that Russia had gained in the affairs of China as the "greatest danger that threatens." For him, the heart of the Far East question was whether Anglo-Saxon or the inferior Russian civilization would prevail in China. Russian ambitions were unquestioned. Unless checked, that
nation would absorb more and more of China. Such an extension of power by the Slav would become a "serious menace to the rest of the civilized world." To prevent this from occurring, Raymond advocated that England and America work together through diplomatic means and the presence of naval and military force to preserve the integrity of China.  

The concern about Russian world domination took a second, related form. In this, the semi-Asiatic nature of Russia was stressed. The point of this argument was that Russia had demonstrated a great capability for assimilating people. If Russia should arm and train the legions of Central Asia and North China, history might repeat. For as Williams noted, it was here that have been "bred in the past the races which overran and dominated the civilized West and where these swarms were once raised other millions may spring in the future to obey the call of the conqueror and spread devastation among those more cultured but less lusty people who represent our race." Theodore Roosevelt had much the same thought, suggested first by his friend Cecil Arthur Spring Rice, a British diplomat:

Indeed, Russia is a problem very appalling . . . Russia seems bound to developing her own way, and on lines that run counter to what we are accustomed to consider as progress. If she ever does take possession of Northern China and drill the Northern Chinese to serve in her Army, she will indeed be a formidable power . . . The growth of the great Russian state in Siberia is portentous.  

This growing concern for the strategic necessities in the Pacific stemmed, in part at least, from the increasingly prevalent view that the United States was now a world power and that certain responsibilities accrued to this new status, especially in Asia. The United States, the one major power which had not seized Chinese
territory was looked upon as the "arbiter" of China's future. If China were to be saved from breaking up, it depended on America. England had proved incapable of stemming the Russian menace alone. Now it was up to the United States somehow to take the lead to preserve and reform the ancient civilization. The first necessity was to sustain and press for an open door policy for China. According to the New York Times:

Since it (open door) tends strongly to promote not only the prosperity of the American people but of the world, and general peace, it is clearly our duty to maintain it with all the resources at our command. It is the true mission that we have to carry out as a "world power."

The Nation agreed that interest and honor both prompt such a course. Again, the Times called upon:

Americans to organize her vast resources during the next four years when the trans-Siberian will be finished . . . . American individuals and American capital can put strength into the inert mass without involving our Government in the least. Let us pursue our way without alliances and see whether the Great Democracy cannot win the prize from the Great Despotism by raising the Chinese to higher levels without asking them for an acre of land.

The idea of the "Great Democracy" competing with the "Great Despotism" for the sway in Asia harked back to a long tradition. Which would prevail--"plowshares" or "swords;" "freedom" or "servitude?"

Could American reliance on the "unguided exertions and common-senses of the citizens" offset the authority of a society centered in a single arm? Alexis De Tocqueville had asked these questions as early as 1835 when he observed:

There are, at present time, two great nations in the world which seem to tend towards the same end, although they started from different points . . . . Their starting-point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.
De Tocqueville's oft-quoted prophecy remained a portion of the intellectual legacy of both Russians and Americans and was still being cited during the 1899 debates.

The idea that America and Russia would contend for supremacy was, at the end of the century, being expressed more frequently and vociferously, less encumbered by constraints of friendship. Moreover, the drumbeat of warnings strongly suggested that the United States, as a young, increasingly powerful partner in the Anglo-Saxon community, must take the lead, and soon. Many of the concepts of manifest destiny, which had provided the rationale for American expansion across a continent and into the distant Pacific, were viewed as having equal applicability to Northeast Asia--perhaps not by outright, blatant territorial acquisition, but certainly through economic development, political guidance, and the civilizing influence of Christianity. In 1899 one needed only to renew the precepts trumpeted by Strong, Fiske, Mahan, Turner and Burgess to accept the responsibility for the salvation of China. A new frontier beckoned in Siberia, as well as in Manchuria. Henry Adams had earlier conceived of the notion for the Americanization of Siberia. Now with the increasing trade with Asiatic Russia there began a resurgence of interest in the region that Collins had first travelled. Within a few years, a number of articles, books and travel accounts would focus on Siberia. The Harper's Weekly visualized "Siberia as a field for Americans" urging American youth to "Go West, young man, go West to the Far East." Vladivostok was depicted as the "doorway of American interests in northern Asia."25

A scattering of Americans had long predicted that the North Pacific would become an avenue of foremost strategic importance to
the United States. By the end of the century, this perception had heightened. Trans-continental railroads had reached the Pacific west coast and soon Asia would be spanned by rail. The Pacific states were rapidly increasing in population and the same phenomenon was occurring in Northeast Asia. Men like John Proctor, head of the U. S. Civil Service Commission, and John Barret, former minister to Siam, revived the forecast of Seward fifty years earlier that the placid Pacific would soon supplant the Atlantic as the "theatre of stirring events." The time was at hand when points of advantage were being occupied. If the United States were to assume its rightful position as the "paramount power in the Pacific," it must take cognizance of this threat. Any occupation of the Chinese Empire by Russia would be "dangerous to the peace and safety" of the United States. The development of Russia into a great naval power would introduce a "disturbing factor" into the Pacific Ocean. If necessary, Barret thought it advisable to "secure a port in northern China." Mahan saw Russia's "aggressive advance moving over the inert Asiatics like a steam-roller." To him, only the prospect of America and England, side by side, demanding that China be left open for trade, would cause Russia either to change her policy or go to war.26

Paul Reinsch, political scientist at the University of Wisconsin, assessed the great importance of the Pacific as a highway of commerce in glowing terms:

More than half the population of the globe lives in countries approachable by the Pacific. The resources of this portion by far exceed those of the older parts of the world, so that the commercial and industrial possibilities are of a dazzling nature. To no country is this change more important than to the United States, because, of all civilized nations, we are nearest to China. Even Russia, although connected with
China by railroad, is, for commercial purposes, much farther off than the United States.

Similarly, in summarizing the history of America in the Pacific, William Eliot Griffis, educator and clergyman, traced the movement of American pioneers into the great ocean over the past century and predicted that the main body of the American people had now joined up with the advance guard and were preparing for further national development and new enterprises. 27

Charles Conant, prominent New York banker, likewise pictured Americans as the "children of the Anglo-Saxon race," embarking, for the purposes of self-preservation and survival, on the path of imperialism. But Conant's imperialism had an economic basis. He called for energetic political action to keep the markets of China open to American commerce. In an analysis of Russia as a world power, he warned that Russia was organizing the machinery of its economic system such as to make it an "early and dangerous rival" in the "competition for political and commercial supremacy."

Specifically, he observed that, while Russia had always been a grain producing rival, it had also become a serious competitor as an exporter of petroleum. He also predicted that the completion of the Siberian railroad would shift the centers of trade away from the existing ports and create new centers in the heart of Asia around which would gather civilization. From this heartland Russia, in a generation, would be the great competitor of the Anglo-Saxon race for the commercial and military supremacy of the world. 28

Brooks Adams synthesized these various attitudes of imperialism, racism and militarism and added in a mixture of his own perspective of
historical processes and his own analysis of economic forces. All of this was tempered by ideas and critical comments from his brother Henry. Previously discouraged about the course of civilization, Brooks was stimulated by the American successes in the war with Spain into believing that vigorous national action could reverse the "law of decay." In two articles, Brooks presented his arguments for an Anglo-Saxon coalition, under the leadership of the United States, to form a great empire extending over a goodly part of Asia. He believed that the economic center of the world had already moved across the Atlantic and that within two generations, American interests would center on the Pacific, which it would cover like an inland sea.  

Shading Brooks' optimism was the real and clear danger of Russia thwarting these plans. He, too, was worried that Russia intended to reverse the flow of the China trade away from the maritime powers. But American expansion depended on an available market for its surplus products, which only China had the boundless capacity to absorb. Manchuria was already in Russian hands and all of North China was threatened. Should these natural outlets for American trade be closed, Brooks thought that American society would be shaken to its foundations. He was also worried about Russia's seemingly limitless capacity to assimilate adjacent populations. In the case of China, this would permit Russia to concentrate powerful economic forces, based on the abundance of natural resources and a mass of inexpensive labor. East Asia was a prize awaiting an energetic nation to grasp. To Brooks, the struggle for survival of the two competing systems--the Anglo-Saxon maritime coalition and the Russian-led continental system--seemed imminent. He saw the inevitable conflict
breaking out on the "shore of the Yellow Sea." In his view the United States must compete for this "seat of empire" and it was his duty to bring this message home to the American public and their leaders in Washington. 30

It is difficult to measure how seriously these various public expressions of the coming global confrontation between the Anglo-Saxon and the Slav, American and Russian, were taken by the McKinley administration. In the face of dealing with a real-life Philippine insurrection, they probably seemed somewhat exaggerated and futuristic. Nevertheless, the repeated airing of these concerns about Russia dominating Asia and the Pacific probably provided additional incentive for the solving of the most immediate problem, safeguarding American commercial interests from Russian encroachment. We can be positive that Henry Adams, intimate friend and adviser to John Hay, seriously believed that the future portended a struggle between the two world powers, Russia and America.

Though far more cautious and less an avowed imperialist than his brother, Henry did provide a conduit for Brooks' ideas. Henry's own approach to Asia was far less simplistic. He thoroughly agreed as to the importance of Asia and the Pacific. But while he believed that American interests would inevitably move eastward, he could not help seeing the difficulties. He drew back from his earlier predictions concerning the Americanization of Siberia, perhaps in light of Russia's recent demonstration of might in Manchuria. For a time Henry thought Germany might be submerged into the Russian Empire as a province. Together, the two nations would then represent too large a mass, too central a position, and an unassailable opponent for the United States.
whose geography stopped at the oceans. But all this wavering took
place before the Spanish-American War.  31

When Hay was summoned from London to Washington to become
secretary of state, Adams followed shortly thereafter in response to
Hay's request for Adams to be an associate in his new responsibilities.
Hay's experience and background suited him for his new position admirably,
except for his lack of any first-hand knowledge of Asian affairs.
Hay probably thought that Adams could be of assistance in Washington
in dealing with problems arising in that sensitive region. Adams
had travelled in the Pacific area, and though he had intended his
trip to include China, he never reached there. But he had studied
and read about China under the tutelage of Rockhill in preparation
for the journey. William W. Rockhill, then serving in Athens, did
have the requisite China experience, so Adams urged that he be returned
to Washington to bolster a "very weak" state department staff. As
for himself, Adams concluded that:

Hay will greatly need some man who can take real
responsibility. Even Rockhill is not quite strong
enough for that. Hay needs an alter or double; some-
body like me . . . .  32

Adams was to be disappointed. Hay had no power to select his
own staff. A position was eventually secured for Rockhill in Washing-
ton as the Director of the Bureau of American Republics, from which
he could also serve as a Far East consultant. Adams was forced to
remain in the background in his familiar role as a "stable companion
of statesmen." Although Adams modestly disclaimed any influence on
Hay's foreign policy, he had ample opportunity to share his views with
his inseparable friend. The two lived in adjoining houses in Washing-
ton and it was their practice to take an hour's stroll together each
afternoon discussing the "day's work at home and abroad." This interlude lasted from November 1898 until the end of March 1899. Adams then departed once more for Europe, months before the open door notes were actually being drafted, yet he was present during a period when Manchuria's fate was much discussed. Not being privy to the Adams-Hay conversations on the subject, one can only glean Adams' input from his views expressed in earlier and contemporary correspondence.33

Adams habitually gave vent to wide-ranging geopolitical views, alternating between extreme confidence and deepest pessimism in his world view. Of all the world powers he remained "more immediately curious about Russia." He never claimed to fully understand the secret of Russia. Following Russia's successful intervention at the close of the Sino-Japanese War, Adams made a new assessment of Russian power. To him, Russia then appeared as a "great new element" which had just given a "prodigious example of her energy in the East."

At that time, Adams considered that the United States itself was at the "end of our rapid expansion" and would henceforth be forced to face more "favorably situated competitors." His field of vision extended into Asia, but there he saw Russian "omnipotence" which he feared greatly. To Adams, Russia was the "great disintegrator" and the chief cause for the "political perturbations in the world." He alternated from a belief that Russia could sweep both England and America "out of her path without a squeal" to a hope that the Russian advance in Asia would "throw England into our arms, and make things easier for us."34

By early 1898, Adams noted to Hay with satisfaction, prematurely
it turned out, that "Russia had been obliged to drop her plunder in the East, and to let herself be corked up on the Amur." Adams regained more confidence in America's capabilities with the naval victories in the Pacific. For the future, Adams repeatedly forecast two centers of power in the world, an American center, offset by a Russian center forming across Asia. By February 1899, he was predicting:

There are two future centres of power; and of the two, America must get there first. Some day, perhaps a century hence, Russia may swallow even her; but for my lifetime I think I'm safe.

With returning confidence he could predict, before he left Washington, an advance by the United States toward the Orient:

The country is big, and our energies are vast, and, sooner or later, to the East we must go, for a situation is always stronger than a man's will.\(^\text{35}\)

It is not difficult to imagine that this was the thought that Adams left behind with his friend Hay.

The Anglo-Russian debate would have been of little moment had it not reflected a topic much on America's mind. The articles favoring each side of the controversy and the furor they were creating were very familiar to the framers of the open door notes. While still ambassador, Hay had already heard the official English position and was entirely sympathetic to it. The debate also served the purpose of marshalling the opinion of the American business community to which the Administration also was listening closely. While the actual amount of trade with China had not increased substantially over previous years, the American estimation of their current and future economic stake in the region had increased tremendously by 1899. Much of the heightened interest was created by the American Asiatic Association. The association had among its officers and honorary members
men such as Everett Frazer, Clarence Cary, Edwin Conger, Charles Denby and John Barrett, all knowledgeable concerning conditions in China. A large number of financial, trading and industrial companies, principally from the northeastern states, were listed as members by May 1899. The association also had established connections with a number of Chambers of Commerce and was attempting to set up branch offices around the country and in the Far East. Of particular significance, the association had its own journal and an energetic publicist, John Foord. Through this journal, the reprint of articles, speeches and the minutes of meetings provided an effective sounding board to cover Asiatic political and economic affairs. The association used all its means to focus attention on America's national interests in Northeast Asia. The association also had sufficient political influence to gain direct access to administration and congressional leaders.

Another influential pressure group consisted of all those who manufactured and exported cotton textiles to Northeast Asia. Within this group the manufacturers in the South were rapidly acquiring the greatest share of exports. Between 1889 and 1899, the number of spindles in the South increased over 190 percent and consumption of cotton in southern mills over 206 percent (compared to 11 and 29 percent in the North and 71 and 88 percent in India, which showed the second largest growth). Since most of this increase was directly attributable to increased shipments to Northeast Asia during those ten years, the South could justly claim a vital interest in the open door policy there. Overwhelmingly, the cotton manufacturer in the South joined the northern industrialist in being concerned that they
continue to receive fair and equal treatment. The only foreseeable threat to their prosperity came from Russia's possible future moves against them. As D. A. Tompkins, a southern mill owner expressed it:

Unless we soon take steps to maintain permanently our trade in Manchuria or other Chinese States, we shall see the day when that trade will be annihilated. The time is rapidly coming, unless there is a change of policy, when Russia will be strong enough to show us the door out of Manchuria, instead of keeping the door open.36

As the opening of their campaign to safeguard their interests, the Pepperell Manufacturing Company and numerous other prominent cotton manufacturers and merchants sent a petition to the state department in January 1899, pointing out the "danger of being shut out from the markets of that portion of Northern China which is already occupied or threatened by Russia." Unlike the lack of official reaction that the petition might have provoked in years past, the department was quick to examine the situation on behalf of persons of such "high character and standing." Conger in Peking and Tower in St. Petersburg were directed to give serious attention to the subject. Interestingly, the directions to Tower included Siberia as well as Manchuria as an area of concern. When Muravev was queried, his answers were far from reassuring. His replies were generally evasive, claiming that Russian policy had not yet been completely formulated. Besides, Witte, the minister of finance, had the prime responsibility. Muravev did tell Peirce that "due profits on the railway lines would be exacted." Peirce also related that Witte had previously pronounced a policy to him of "absolute protection of Russian industries to the point of a prohibitive tariff, whenever the conditions will permit." Peirce's report back contained no more specific Russian guarantees of an open door for the future than
Hitchcock had received a year earlier. This did not end the matter. The administration had been alerted to a situation of prime importance. To Peirce's report the First Assistant Secretary, Alvey Adee appended the following note:

Ambassador Tower will continue to watch this matter which has from the outset of the recent move of various foreign powers to gain a foothold in China had the President's most serious consideration. Mr. Tower will be expected to use every opportunity to act energetically in the sense desired by the numerous and influential signers of the petition.37

The public debate concerning what America's course of action should be in Northeast Asia served several purposes. It concentrated attention on Russia as the primary obstacle to American interests in the region. It blunted any criticism that the McKinley administration might expect from joining in an open door cause already espoused by its former nemesis, Great Britain. It coalesced business groups into bringing additional pressure to bear on a Republican administration already sensitive and sympathetic to their cause. All of which tended to overcome previous caution and permitted a departure in policy to be contemplated. To John Hay and his associates, the future of American interests in Northeast Asia augured so poorly that it seemed necessary to make some unprecedented move to forestall Russia. The United States was ready to change sides, away from Russia and toward Great Britain.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IX


3 Ibid, pp. 433-435. According to Tyler Dennett, *John Hay* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1933), p. 288, fourteen were invited to lunch including many senators, some army and navy officers, and "Speck" von Sternburg of the German embassy. Count Cassini was not mentioned as attending.


9 Ibid.


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12 Sidney A. Forsythe, An American Missionary Community in China, 1895-1905 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 70 states categorically that from 1898: "missionaries expressed their distrust and fear of Russian maneuvers, financial and political. Russia's ambitions in Manchuria and China were believed to be the greatest power threat to the integrity of China."


21 Anschel, p. 188.


30 Ibid.


34 Ford, 2:72.

35 Ford, 2:144, 119, 200, 213 and 214; Cater, p. 354.


37 Hay to Conger, February 2, 1899; Peirce to Hay, February 25, 1899, both RG 59 N. A.
CHAPTER X
CLOSING THE DOOR ON A FRIENDSHIP

Although the United States had previously evinced interest in the entire Northeastern Asia, including Siberia, the provinces of North China, and to a lesser extent Korea, by 1899 Manchuria had become the center of attention. It was in Manchuria that Americans considered the open door most threatened. And the key to Manchuria, from the American standpoint, was the treaty port of Newchwang. If Newchwang could be kept open, the mercantile, maritime nations had an alternative to the Russian transportation system for the distribution of their merchandise and a means to assert their influence inland. A system of native transshipment of goods inland by water and land had long been used effectively. Russia was awake to competition to its Manchurian enterprises from this quarter and that is why Russia had vigorously opposed any non-Russian rail terminal there.

Manchuria-watchers, then, looked closely at developments in Newchwang for clues to Russia's intentions. Unfortunately, the United States had no consul of its own as yet stationed at Newchwang for direct observation and reports. Secretary Hay had, in view of the now recognizable importance of the port, asked Congress for authority to fill such a post. Meanwhile, the state department kept abreast of events there through reports from the other consuls in North China,
particularly the one at Chefoo, nearest to the scene, and from newspaper accounts published in China. This mixture of fact and fancy must have given Hay and his advisers cause for more concern. A grim picture was painted.

Already by 1899, Russia was remorselessly and surely strengthening its grip on Manchuria and proceeding with the Russification of the province. Thousands of Russian Cossacks and railroad guards were stationed throughout the region, many at locations where the railroads were not yet planned. The Russo-Chinese Bank was establishing branches throughout Manchuria in order to control financially all enterprises in the interest of the Russian Empire. Agricultural and mineral resources were being exploited for the sole benefit of Russia. Land was being acquired, by force, at artificially low rates. The Russian language and currency were more and more frequently used by the Chinese inhabitants. Russia had virtually occupied Newchwang. Chinese customs were ignored. At Newchwang the Russians paid not the "slightest attention to the Chinese government, nor do they pay duties to that government on the millions of dollars worth of stores and materials which they are now landing." During a November 1898 visit to Port Arthur, Consul Fowler was impressed by the urgent preparations the Russians were making. He came away convinced that in a short time all of China north of Chefoo, including the port of Newchwang would be annexed outright by Russia.

To Fowler, the United States, like it or not, was inextricably involved in Asiatic politics and must decide whether "to be respected or annihilated commercially, as well as politically." In order to protect American interests in North China "by our own guns, and by
our own coal," he recommended again the acquisition of a nearby coaling station. The most feasible base was in the Miao-tao island group. These islands were strategically located in the middle of the narrow strait guarding the entrance to the Gulf of Chihli, approximately half-way between Chefoo on the Shantung peninsula and Port Arthur on the Liaotung. Steamers belonging to the Russo-Chinese railroad were already making regular runs between the two ports. Then Fowler received word, probably exaggerated, but nevertheless disturbing, that Russia claimed the Miao Tao island group as part of its Southern Manchurian cession. In addition, Russia planned to construct its own port facilities at Chefoo. Such a Russian presence at this choke-point could, in time of conflict, conceivably deny the maritime powers access to both Newchwang and Taku, the port for Tientsin and Peking.

By mid-1899 most observers probably agreed with John Foord of the American Asiatic Association that the North China market "was threatened by the virtual supremacy of Russia in Manchuria and the Liaotung peninsula and the consequent danger that the treaty port of Newchwang ... might at any time be declared a part of the Russian empire." The American Consul-General in Shanghai agreed:

Our trade in China is now most largely with the Northern part which today is almost in Russia's grasp. Our interest is great but the emergency is so pressing that only the promptest and most effective measures can safeguard our interests.

The question had become, not would Russia take unequal advantage of commercial opportunities in Manchuria, but when would they shut the door. Most estimated that Russia would wait no longer than the completion of the Siberian-Manchurian rail system, scheduled for
completion no later than 1903.³

The pressure for the United States to take a more active role in Northeast Asia intensified when it was learned that England intended to retrench. England, having been unsuccessful in single-handedly preventing the cession of Southern Manchuria to Russia, was, by mid-1898, prepared to negotiate a settlement with Russia to prevent any further advance of Russia southward toward the region of England's paramount interest, the Yangtse basin. For its part, the Russian foreign office was anxious for a breathing spell in order to consolidate its gains. The negotiations, which were conducted on-and-off for nine months, were capped by a bilateral agreement in April 1899. The principal area of contention centered on railway construction. Each nation had plans which included building within the other's loosely defined sphere of influence. An English syndicate was ready to finance a Chinese rail line running from Shanhaikuan to Newchwang and thence on to Mukden. This railroad would have furnished severe competition to Russia's Southern Manchurian system. At the same time, Russia was intervening in the Yangtse basin by its backing of a Belgian syndicate's efforts to construct the Peking-Hankow railroad. The main provision of the Anglo-Russian agreement called for each to recognize the railroad sphere of the other with a line of demarcation variously interpreted as being drawn through the Great Wall or through Peking.⁴

This Anglo-Russian agreement had a great impact on American diplomatic planning. The United States, as the New York Times was want to point out, had missed the opportunity in early 1898 to side with England to prevent cessions of Chinese territory. From now on, the English government was making its best deal to protect its
own interests. The United States would have to face alone the con­sequences of a hardening sphere of Russian influence in Manchuria and Mongolia. The understanding also highlighted the vulnerability of Newchwang as a point of entry for American goods. The only likely rail service to the port would be a Russian spur line, subject to discriminatory rates. More ominous was the complete refusal of Russia to agree to an English proposal calling on both powers to forego preferential tariffs and rates on railroads in their respective spheres. Witte had vetoed this proposal, for it would have had the effect of establishing an open door policy in Manchuria, which would have seriously hampered Witte's plans for the commercial and industrial exploitation of the province.5

To the New York Times, the announced agreement marked the final abandonment by England of the struggle for an open door in China: "Russia will of course erect barriers in Manchuria against the entry from the sea of commerce upon equal terms" and the "one port (Newshwang) in which we have found our chief market for manu­factures is within the Russian sphere of influence." In this respect, the government had not "adequately perceived or protected the National interests."6 Henceforth, the United States must look to its own resources to keep the door open to Manchuria.

The consensus reaching the state department from these various sources was: (1) Russia had, or would soon attain, a dominant position in the region of Manchuria and possibly extending into Northern China proper; (2) Russia would soon disregard assurances otherwise and discriminate against American trade with the region; (3) The United States should lead a coalition of maritime powers to prevent this from
happening; and (4) time was short. This sense of urgency was rapidly eroding the administration's policy of "watchful waiting." Although Hay personally favored joint Anglo-American action and had pressed such a course from his London post, he fully realized that, despite the growing understanding between the two nations, no formal alliance could possibly receive the necessary approval of Congress and the public. Besides, the British were drifting toward war with the Boers by the middle of 1899 and, having come to an accommodation with Russia, were liable to be too preoccupied in Southern Africa to give the Far East their prime attention.

Most of the other options available to Hay were equally unattractive. To do nothing was tantamount to permitting Russia full sway in its ambitions. To threaten the use of force would have been recognized immediately as a bluff. To make the best of any partition by preparing to grab a portion of China for the United States held little interest for Hay, but had some tentative adherents. Minister Conger had laid out a possible strategy for the United States:

If it wishes to be a party to the division and sharer in the assets, then it is necessary that the place be selected and its cession or lease demanded at once; even now it may be too late .... There is practically nothing left for the United States but the province of Chihli. This, however, with Tientsin as the entrepot for all northern China, is destined in the future to be commercially one of the most valuable permanent possessions in the Orient .... if all China is to fall into the hands of European powers, a strong foothold here by the United States, with something tangible to offer them, might compel them to keep permanently open doors for our commerce.

President McKinley may have entertained some such idea himself.

Some of the dimensions of Hay's dilemma were outlined by him to the editor of the New York Sun, who had inquired: "Is it impossible for the government to exert some influence against China's partition?
Has that gone too far?" To which Hay replied in a private letter:

We are, of course, opposed to the dismemberment of that Empire, and we do not think that the public opinion of the United States would justify this Government in taking part in the great game of spoliation now going on. At the same time we are keenly alive to the importance of safeguarding our great commercial interests in that Empire. . . . We do not consider our hands tied for future eventualities, but for the present we think our best policy is one of vigilant protection of our commercial interests, without formal alliances with the other Powers interested.9

One recourse, which might have proved fruitful, had it been pursued vigorously, was direct bilateral negotiations with Russia to obtain the long-term guarantees that Americans sought in Northeast Asia. American diplomats in St. Petersburg had, from time to time, questioned the Russian foreign ministry as to their intentions in Manchuria and been turned aside with vague, not completely satisfactory, assurances. But no serious talks were held. Toward the end of 1898 and early into 1899, the United States had an opportunity to reopen with Russia the old prospects for joint economic development of Northeast Asia. Since the end of the Sino-Japanese War, Russia's extraordinary railway expenditures in the Far East had amounted to 1,442 million rubles, a great drain on the Russian treasury. Moreover, Russia was experiencing difficulty in borrowing further capital from Europe and had turned to American bankers for financial assistance. A syndicate formed by J. P. Morgan and Baring, Magoun and Company offered its services to the Imperial Government. On behalf of the syndicate, William Ivins proposed to take 80 million dollars in Russian bonds. The two parties never reached final agreement on the financial terms. Nor did the United States, though aware of Russia's financial position, use this situation as a wedge for government-to-government
negotiations for a cooperative policy in Northeast Asia. Perhaps this was too great a leap into the new diplomacy for Hay to consider. He certainly doubted whether the Senate "would accept any treaty of consequence with Russia." Nevertheless, negotiations might have succeeded. Later, when confronted by the open door note, Witte advised Muravev that it would be possible "under pressure of extreme necessity" to renounce Russia's railway and customs tariff privileges in Manchuria, provided that any power wishing to profit by these special advantages "likewise participated in the enormous material expenditures" that Russia was under. At the time he wrote this opinion, Witte was again negotiating the issue of railway bonds, this time with George Perkins of the New York Life Insurance Company.  

Another clue to Russia's financial straits was disclosed when the tsar proposed a conference of the powers to halt the increasing development of armaments. It was generally understood that at least one, if not the prime, motive behind the Russian proposal was the inability of Finance Minister Witte to continue spending the necessary funds on railroads, while concurrently effecting needed modernization of military equipment. Many nations were suspicious of the Russian scheme, or were skeptical of such a utopian project, but no power wanted to spurn the conference and be branded as an obstacle to peace. As a consequence, the Hague Peace Conference was meeting May to July 1899, just when, coincidentally, Alfred E. Hippisley and William W. Rockhill began to fashion a strategem for keeping China open to all nations on an equal basis. To an extent Hippisley-Rockhill borrowed from the tactics of Muravev, who had freely used moral suasion to coerce the powers to the conference. In a similar manner they planned
to test the sincerity of the Imperial Government, which had posed as
the champion of peace. Did this Russian grand gesture toward world
amity extend to the Far East? 11

The writing of the open door notes and the process of negotiat­
ing their acceptance has been well documented elsewhere and need not
be repeated here in every detail. 12 Attention will be focused primarily,
rather, on those aspects which touched on the changing relations of
Russia and the United States and these were considerable. For just
as the American fears about the prospects in Northeast Asia centered
on the threat from Russia, so too, the notes were composed with the
object of halting the Russian advance chiefly in mind.

Rockhill assumed his post in Washington on May 22, 1899, four
days after the commencement of the peace conference at the Hague.
Hay once more had an experienced adviser on Far East matters. Rockhill
had served at the American legations in Peking and Seoul between 1884
and 1887, had made two trips of exploration to Mongolia and Tibet,
and then returned to the state department from 1893 to 1897. Through
these experiences he was well acquainted with the mounting concerns
among the American community in China about Russia's designs. He,
himself, was directly involved when the Russian government prevented
American entrepreneurs from building railroads into Manchuria. As
he familiarized himself with the current situation in China, discussed
matters with members of the American Asiatic Association, and read
the flood of articles treating the impending parition of China, Rock­
hill came to appreciate the fears of the American businessmen. Al­
though he, personally, was probably more concerned with maintaining
the independence and the integrity of China, for the sake of the
pressures being exerted on the administration, he had to give his first attention to America's economic interests.

Rockhill was assisted in his search for a way out of the administration's dilemma by the arrival of a long-time friend from his China days, Alfred E. Hippisley, a British subject, who had served in the Chinese customs service for more than 30 years. Hippisley and his American wife had come to Baltimore to visit her family. From there he frequently visited Rockhill in Washington, where they discussed means for ensuring the equality for all nations in China. Gradually from these talks there emerged a scheme for the United States, as the nation least interested in annexing Chinese territory, to take the lead in calling official attention of the other powers to the growing danger of partition and conflict. At the same time, the American concerns about securing treaty rights and privileges could be emphasized anew. Each of the powers would be requested to pledge not to interfere in the treaty ports or discriminate in the application of tariffs. Since so-called "spheres of influence" had already been generally recognized, it was reluctantly decided that preferential privileges dealing with railroads and mines must tacitly remain with each power in its own sphere. In mid-July Rockhill and his friend briefed Hay on their scheme. Thereafter, as Hippisley departed Baltimore, Rockhill furnished Hay with the gist of their correspondence on the subject. The proposal had many advantages. It did not call for an overt alliance. No Senate approval was required. It was not, at least on the surface, merely following England's lead. No segment of the electorate would be aroused to automatic opposition. The project did not contemplate the use of threat to use force, only
diplomatic persuasion. But the plan did represent a switch from watchful waiting to an active initiative.

Hay was still wary. As he wrote to Rockhill from his summer home: "I am fully awake to the great importance of what you say, and am more than ready to act. But the senseless prejudices in certain sections of the 'Senate and people' compel us to move with great caution." Unsaid, but perhaps of greater significance, Hay may not have been confident that President McKinley was equally ready to act. The planners had realized that for the open door notes to succeed, all the great powers addressed must join in the guarantees or else the plan would fall apart. In their assessment, only Russia and France, the most protectionist minded nations, might balk and that France would likely go along with whatever Russia did. The key threat then, Russia, was also the key to success for the proposal.

Adding to the sense of urgency, Hippisley warned that:

I think it would be suicidal for America to drift and do nothing for another year . . . . My latest advices from Peking say: "The activity of the Russians in Manchuria is simply wonderful . . . the Russification of Peking and North China will proceed as rapidly as has that of Manchuria."14

Nevertheless, matters might well have rested there, but for several fortuitous circumstances in mid-August. First, the Russian government made a move which seemed to promise that Russia might acquiesce in the general plan to guarantee the open door in China. In addition to its press campaign in the United States, Russia now took a more concrete measure to forestall the growing American hostility towards its action in Manchuria. On August 11, 1899, the tsar issued an ukaz proclaiming that Talienwan (or Dalnij, as the Russians renamed
it) is a free port, that is, the "right to import and export merchandise of every description free of customs duties" was established. Merchandise destined for Russia would pay the customary duties upon entering the empire. The ukaz failed to mention merchandise destined for China, but Muravev assured Tower that only Chinese regulation would pertain in these circumstances, without Russian interference. Tower was greatly gratified by the ukaz. To him, as far as Russia was concerned, the ukaz spelled an open door to China which "opens the way also to the future of American trade and the certain increase of American mercantile prosperity."15

From St. Petersburg Tower viewed the ukaz differently than other observers. It did not guarantee the open door. Proclaiming Dalnij a free port was a practical necessity for Russia to stimulate the import of the necessary materials to build rapidly the port facilities, the rail terminus and fortifications. The same procedure had been used to construct Vladivostok, which was now about to lose this special status. Furthermore, Americans in China genuinely believed that all the hinterland beyond the free port would soon be annexed outright by Russia, thus subjecting foreign imports to Russian customs duties. Finally, the ukaz included no provision which would preclude discriminatory rail rates for goods transshipped from Dalnij. The New York Times considered the Tsar's ukaz a slick piece of world politics.16 The framers of the open door notes, however, deliberately chose to put the broadest, most optimistic interpretation to the ukaz, hoping to gain Russia's concurrence with guarantees of far wider applicability.

Second, Rockhill also chose to interpret the Ukhtomskij-
Holstrem article as a conciliatory gesture toward the United States. Taking out of context and acknowledging that the authors' assertion that "the independence and integrity of China is a fundamental principle of Russia's policy in Asia" might not be absolutely correct, Rockhill, nevertheless, thought the article portended that the "friendly consideration of St. Petersburg" could be expected for the American plan. To Hippisley, also, the Tsar's ukaz and the Ukhtomskij article seemed to assure, in advance, the respectful consideration of the Russian Government for the open door project. The time to test the true nature of Russia's friendship seemed at hand. On August 24 Hay agreed, requesting that Rockhill draft the necessary instructions to the American ambassadors concerned.

The final and most important factor in undermining any resistance of President McKinley to the open door notes were the views of Dr. Jacob Gould Schurman, President of Cornell University. Schurman had been appointed to head a commission to investigate conditions in the Philippines and to advise the president personally on the Far East situation. He arrived back in San Francisco on August 14, 1899, and promptly gave his views on the Orient, based partly on his conversations with English and Japanese statesmen:

It seems to me that the great question there is not Formosa nor the Philippines, but China . . . . To hold China intact is the thing of overshadowing importance. It is feared, now that Russia has taken Manchuria, it will try to encroach gradually on some or all of the other eighteen provinces of China, and when it gets them it will do as that country has done hitherto--put a duty on all foreign goods . . . China . . . should maintain its independent position, but its doors should be kept open. It means much to England and Japan and not less to America. The president's own advisor had confirmed the nature and the direction
of the threat to American interests in the Far East. Rockhill and Hippisley were hopeful that Schurman's views would "exercise very great influence on the decisions of the Administration." Apparently they did. Schurman conferred with McKinley on September 2 and again on the 4th. The first open door notes were mailed two days later. 19

The three principles included in the open door notes, to which the United States was requesting the powers to adhere formally, were identically worded. However, a comparison of the explanatory material which was included in the notes was markedly different in the letter to Ambassador Tower. The previous oral assurances given by Russian officials, saying that American trade would not be adversely affected, were acknowledged. In addition, the note to Russia stressed the need for a "permanent form to the assurances" and an extension of their coverage beyond the territory already occupied. Such a declaration from the Imperial Government would relieve the business world of the United States "from the apprehensions which have exercised a disturbing influence during the last four years on its operations in China." Furthermore, the "declaration of such principles by His Imperial Majesty would . . . powerfully tend to remove dangerous sources of irritation and possible conflict between the various powers." Although generally ignoring the subject of China's territorial integrity, the note to Russia slipped in the gratuitous assumption that the "consolidation and integrity of that Empire . . . is believed . . . a fundamental principle of the policy of His Majesty in Asia." Moreover, Great Britain and Germany were requested to lend their "support in obtaining similar declarations from the various powers claiming 'spheres of influences' in China." Russian assistance was
not solicited in the same manner. Instead, it was simply stated that "the acceptance by His Imperial Majesty of these principles must therefore inevitably lead to their recognition by all the other powers." When the Russian obstacle was overcome, everything else would easily be achieved. By emphasizing the "liberal and conciliatory commercial policy" of the tsar, the United States hoped to turn this "policy" into a reality.

Upon close examination, it can be seen that the texts of the three principles were drafted with the presence of Russia in Manchuria specifically in mind. The American note was aimed directly at Russian current and anticipated economic practices. For the other powers, the principles represented only theoretical preventive measures designed to curb any possibility of future abuses. Each would gain by the guarantees in the remainder of China, while suffering no real loss in its own special sphere. But, as the Russian ministers soon realized, acceptance of the three principles, despite their general applicability, would undo some actual advantages which Russia already enjoyed and forestall others which they fully intended to acquire. Nor was there any compensatory advantage for Russia to gain elsewhere in China.

The first principle provided "that no power will in any way interfere with a treaty port or any vested interest within any leased territory or within any so-called 'sphere of interest' it may have in China." The United States was immediately concerned about treaty rights and privileges at Newchwang. Access to Manchuria depended heavily on the fate of Newchwang. Formal adherence to this principle would, it was hoped, stop Russian encroachments already reported at
that port and strengthen Chinese administration there. This same
tactic would be used four years later when the United States forced
China, in the face of Russian opposition, to open up three additional
treaty ports in Manchuria to American commerce.

The second principle stated "that the Chinese treaty tariff
of the time being shall apply to all such ports as are within 'spheres
of interest' (unless they be 'free ports'), no matter what nationality
it may belong, and that duties so leviable shall be collected by the
Chinese Government." Again, this provision would not only bolster
the Chinese customs service, but would also, in particular, prevent
the reported practice of Russia ignoring the Chinese customs at
Newchwang. And whether the United States was entirely aware of
the provisions of the Li-Lobanov secret treaty of 1896 or not, Russia
already had secured Chinese tariff concessions for their goods trans-
ported over the Chinese Eastern Railroad, and perhaps expected further
favors. Acceptance of this principle would have tended to limit
these Russian advantages.

The third principle declared, in part, that "no higher rail-
road charges over lines built, controlled or operated within its
'sphere' on merchandise belonging to citizens or subjects of other
nationalities transported through such 'sphere' than shall be levied
on similar merchandise belonging to its own nationals transported
over equal distances." This was the most vital clause of the open
door notes for the American businessman. The other aspects--treaty
ports and customs--were really a reaffirmation of existing treaty
rights. As long as China remained relatively intact, the United
States had the means, along with all the other maritime nations, for
insisting that they be honored. Rail rates were an entirely different matter. The setting of transportation charges in its sphere was solely dependent on the Russian Government. If Russia chose to discriminate against American shippers along the Manchurian rail network, or further south, if Russian ambitions had their way, the United States had little recourse to Chinese authorities. Russia had achieved a monopoly and full control. Evidence that Russia intended to use its advantage was readily at hand. Russo-Chinese agreements already permitted rate-fixing in favor of Russian merchandise. Russia had flatly refused to agree with England to forego this rate-fixing. These factors had been repeatedly emphasized by the publicists of the Far Eastern question. Besides, setting rates which discriminated against a commercial rival was nothing new to American rail magnates. Rockhill and Hay were fully cognizant of the underlying demand they were making on Russia. This principle seemed innocent when addressed to all the powers, but it had applicability only to Russia. Russia was the one power that had a system of railroads nearly operational, completely under its jurisdiction and connected to its national rail network. Russia was being asked to give up this sizeable advantage which would have helped it to amortize its immense construction costs.

This last provision was not in Hippisley's draft of the open door notes. Rockhill added the clause on his own, solely to protect American commercial interests operating in the Russian Zone. Despite this hidden obstacle, Rockhill and Hay were surprisingly optimistic about the response they would receive from the Russian Government. Like the other powers, Russia had been put into a position where a direct refusal to a seemingly moderate request was thought to be
impossible. In fact, Hay was so confident of an affirmative answer from Russia, that he delayed addressing a similar note to France until late November, trusting that a Russian acceptance would help carry France into the fold. His optimism was unfounded. The Russian Government strenuously attempted to delay or avoid a direct reply. What Hay had accomplished, though, was the shifting of his Far East dilemma from his shoulders onto the back of Muravev. For more than a year, Count Cassini had been reminding Americans that the United States must step carefully in the Orient so as not to break-up the long friendship with Russia. Now the roles were reversed by the American initiative. Muravev must try to squirm out of his predicament without conceding any Russian advantage, but without causing a rift with the United States.

The open door negotiations with Russia lasted for nearly six months. Partly this was due to the slowness of the mail, approximately two weeks from Washington to St. Petersburg. More of the delay was caused by the absence of Muravev from the capital for several months and the unwillingness of his deputy, Count Lamsdorff, to make decisions in this sensitive policy area. Most of the delay, however, can be attributed to the deliberate procrastination on the part of Muravev who sought to avoid committing the Russian Government. He desperately hoped that one of the other powers would reject the American proposal first, which would obviate the need for Russia to take any position at all.

Chargé Peirce had delivered the open door proposal to Lamsdorff on September 20. When no response of any kind was forthcoming, the state department asked Tower about the delay and learned that Muravev
had been on vacation. No serious consideration of the open door began in the Russian foreign ministry until mid-November, but for the next six weeks the matter was reviewed, in the words of Tower, "with unusual attention and treated with a degree of consideration which it would not have met if it had come from almost any other conceivable source." The Russian cabinet, though, was strongly disinclined to make any specific announcement of Russian policy in China. The imperial ministers were intensely unwilling to bind themselves in writing for the future. Even the expression "open door" was distasteful to Muravev, as it reminded him of hostile English policies. All of Hay's diplomatic skill and persistence was required to force Russia into even a semblance of a definitive reply. Commencing in November, Hay gradually increased the pressure on Count Cassini for a reply.21

Strangely, when Cassini and Muravev first studied the open door note, they failed to comprehend fully the underlying purport of the American proposition. In an exchange of dispatches Cassini, apparently agreeing with the American stance, summarized the American aim on November 16 as the "preservation of the principle of the 'open door' and the inviolability of Chinese territory, which alone can guarantee the interests of the United States in that country." Two days later Muravev complained that the note was so unclear and confusing that it was difficult to understand the intentions of the American Government. Nevertheless, Muravev, too, had "no serious objections against the principles expounded in the note" as long as they applied only to the sphere of interest in Chinese territory and not to Russia's leased territory. In fact, Muravev saw some advantage in the American recognition of Russia's "privileged position" in
Manchuria. Had Muravev persisted in this view it would have suited Hay's purpose mightily. \(^{22}\)

Tower was not able to confer with Muravev personally on the subject of the open door until November 22. At that time, Tower surmised that Muravev must have kept abreast of the topic during his travels, which he had. Muravev was quite familiar with the American proposal, but hesitated to make a detailed reply until Cassini could make further inquiries of the state department which "shall remove the doubts at present entertained by the Imperial Government." Although Muravev voiced no specific objection to any of the three principles, Tower noted some hesitancy stemming from the commitment concerning rail rates. Upon his return, Muravev had probably received some inkling of Witte's thoughts on the subject. \(^{23}\)

On November 26, Cassini, unaware that the attitude of the foreign minister had started to shift, sent a telegram to Muravev proposing that he enter into conversations with the United States on a number of points, all of which would have been acceptable to the state department. One point specifically proposed that: "In our (Russian)sphere of influence we retain the exclusive right of constructing and exploiting railroads, of mines and other industrial enterprises. On these railroads there will be no discriminating tariffs." \(^{24}\)

Two days later, Muravev sent a letter to Witte enclosing Cassini's telegram regarding the desirability of coming to an agreement with the United States.

Witte, who was very familiar with previous American attempts to gain railway concessions in Manchuria and Siberia, was not taken in by the covert proposal banning discriminatory rail rates. He
realized that this was an attempt at "neutralization" of the Manchurian railways and, in that sense, directly hostile to Russian goals. To agree to the American principles would, he thought, "deprive us of a privilege having significance for our economic interests in the Far East" without any compensation elsewhere in China. Therefore, he suggested to Muravev that any answer given to the United States omit any reference to rail charges. With regard to customs duties and port levies, he was less concerned. These were regulated by the Chinese Government outside the Russian leasehold, so the "Russian Government did not propose to seek any exceptional privileges for her subjects in this respect as compared with other foreigners."25

Faced with Witte's opposition to the rail rate principle, the foreign ministry changed its attitude completely toward the open door policy. Cassini was advised on December 1 that it was deemed advisable at the present time only to answer the state department in "general terms" not binding on Russia. This put Cassini in a difficult position in dealing with Hay and Rockhill who were pressing him for a definitive reply. By this time, Cassini had convinced himself that the American note had been distributed solely for domestic political purposes, that the President only wanted to demonstrate "his firm determination to protect the trade interests of the United States" in order "to prepare the way for his second election." With this idea in mind, Cassini informed Muravev on December 13 that he intended to "soft-soap" the United States with an assurance that "the commercial interests of Americans in China will be respected in our sphere of influence, as always." Muravev hastily agreed to this line of approach, but also asked him to sound out the positions of
the French and German ambassadors to Washington. 26

Cassini was unsuccessful in sidetracking the American proposal. He held at least three meetings with Rockhill, none of them decisive. When Cassini suggested that the United States was only following Great Britain's lead, Rockhill parried this charge with a challenge for Russia to be the first to espouse America's cause which "would have as favorable an effect on the final acceptance of the policy by all the powers as it would if England were the first to declare it." 27 Hay also refused to be cajoled by generalities. Not knowing Cassini's earlier position, Hay was convinced that Cassini had consistently opposed the open door policy. As Hay recalled several months later, Cassini resorted to protesting "rather vehemently at one time against the extent of what he called our 'demands'." Cassini reportedly asserted to Hay: "You don't know what you are asking; you are attempting something impossible; you have no idea of the extent of your propositions." 28 Hay knew that he did.

Believing that Cassini would have stood firmly against the American plan indefinitely, Hay gradually shifted the discussions to St. Petersburg and began to supply Tower with the diplomatic means with which to pressure Muravev. On December 9, Hay, perhaps stretching the truth, advised Tower by telegram that Germany would "raise no objection to the proposition of the United States" and that the "adherence of Great Britain to the proposition was assured." Armed with this information, Tower met Muravev two days later, requesting that the Imperial Government take the American note into "immediate and serious consideration" so that he might report a "friendly and favorable reply." Muravev hastened to assure Tower that Russia's
reply "would be friendly, in any event." At this meeting Muravev paid considerable attention to the question of "what had France done in the matter?" After the meeting, Tower was uncertain that the Russian Government would ever make a complete declaration satisfying American purposes. Yet, as was his style, Tower put the best possible light on the Russian recalcitrance, blaming the stalemate on Russian conservatism and habit of thought, "rather than as a proof of any intention upon the part of Russia to oppose the interests of the United States." 29

Anticipating that Russia might stall until France had declared itself, Hay changed his tactics and decided to tackle France first, hoping that French concurrence would assist materially in bringing the reluctant Russia into line. Negotiations with France proved remarkably amicable. By December 16, the French foreign minister, while not agreeing precisely to the American text, was ready to apply, in the territories which are leased to it (France), equal treatment to the citizens and subjects of all nations, especially in the matter of customs duties and navigation dues, as well as transportation tariffs on railways.

Furthermore, France favored "equal treatment in the broadest sense, throughout China." 30 The presumably arch-protectionist France was no longer a bulwark behind which Russia could hide. Hay was quick to pass this news on to Tower on December 19. Five days later, Tower again confronted Muravev, who acknowledged that he was acquainted with the French announcement. At this meeting, Muravev took the first tentative and highly qualified step toward acceptance. Russia, he declared, "intends to pursue the same policy as that announced by France, namely, the policy of equal treatment to all nations." But
as the conversation developed, it became clearer that Muravev only meant that the United States could expect the same privileges that were extended to any other, that is, non-Russian nation. Tower immediately sought acquiescence "that no privileges should be given to Russian merchants or manufacturers which were withheld from those of other countries." Tower pressed further on the Russian policy regarding rail rates, to which Muravev was forced to admit:

Well, we have built the railroads, and I think it quite probable that we shall give preference to our own people; though all foreign nations will be treated absolutely alike.

In the end, Muravev begged off making any formal statement on the excuse that the questions raised largely rested within the jurisdiction of the finance minister.31

Hay continued to apply pressure. On December 27, he telegraphed Tower that the "President (was) greatly disappointed" and to "try energetically to have the Russian Government to accept our proposition." That same afternoon Tower called on the foreign minister once more and put forth the American case as forcefully as a friendly nation probably could. He mentioned the President's disappointment at the turn of affairs. He reviewed the stance of the other great powers. He reminded Muravev of the beneficial build-up of commercial intercourse between Russia and America. And then he added a warning:

that a refusal upon the part of Russia to adhere to these propositions would produce the most painful and unfortunate impression on the United States and I urged him to avoid by all means in his power a result so damaging to the present cordial feeling between the people of the two powers.

Muravev alternately showed irritation at being addressed in this fashion and solicitude to avoid any breach of good feeling between
Russia and America. 32

Muravev had been pushed into a corner from which he saw no escape. As he lamented to Witte on December 28, he found it impossible, after the affirmative answers by the other powers, "to go counter to a politico-economic principle generally accepted by the powers, and, by undermining the existing friendly relations between Russia and the U. S. A., create occasion for the organization of a coalition of powers in the Far East very dangerous for our interests." 33

Reluctantly, Muravev bowed, two days later, to the American insistence for a formal commitment. Hay had achieved a portion of his "demands." Regarding the Russian sphere, Muravev agreed only that:

As to the ports now opened or hereafter to be opened to foreign commerce by the Chinese Government, and which lie beyond the territory leased to Russia, the settlement of the question of customs duties belongs to China herself and the Imperial Government has no intention whatever of claiming any privilege for its own subjects to the exclusion of other foreigners. 34

This reply represented a positive gain for the American policy. If followed in good faith, it would strengthen the Chinese administration in Manchuria and would grant equal access to American merchants through the port of Newchwang. No mention of rail rates was included in the Russian response, which was disappointing, but probably anticipated. To make certain that Cassini understood this omission, Muravev, when forwarding a copy of the contents of the Russian reply to his ambassador, prefaced the copy with this phrase: "Not addressing the question of railway tariffs, I answered the American note in the following manner . . . ." 35

Hay tried to eke out a further concession on rail rates by
using Muravev's previous oral statement that Russia intended to pursue
the same policy as France. Tower, however, persuaded Hay not to use
this strategem, when Muravev objected strongly. Muravev did consent
to a public general statement being made by the state department
that "Russia has replied favorably to the American propositions" and
he agreed to the publication of Russia's formal answer. On March
20, 1900, putting the broadest and most favorable interpretation on
the various responses from the powers to the American proposal,
Hay announced that he considered "the assent given to it by Russia as
final and definitive." 36

But would it remain definitive? Not likely, according to
Henry Adams: "Hay has succeeded in embarrassing Russia very much;
but the agreement binds no one to anything, and perhaps that is the
reason why everybody assents." 37 Nor was Hay quite certain "what
line Russia is going to take in the matter," but he was satisfied with
the outcome. As he reported to Henry White:

He (Muravev) did say it, he did promise, and he did enter
in just that engagement. It is possible that he did so
thinking France would not come in, and that the other
powers would not. If now they choose to take a stand in
opposition to the entire civilized world, we shall then
make up our minds what to do about it. 38

The open door notes may not have been binding on any of the
powers, but John Hay fully realized that a lasting and significant
change had been wrought in the Russian-American relationship. The
impetus behind the sending of the American open door notes had been
the direct result of the perceived threat of the Russian advance into
Manchuria. The provisions written into the notes were specifically
designed to offset Russian advantages there, those actually in practice
and those believed to be nearing achievement. The timing of the notes
was deliberately gauged to a period when Russia momentarily seemed most ready to countenance an open door for all of China. And the notes were negotiated with a view toward exerting the maximum diplomatic pressure on Russia to accept them. Moreover, the imperial government was fully aware that the American plan had been consciously aimed at checking Russian aspirations in Asia. The United States' government had finally decided to join the trek of its pioneers across the North Pacific and play a more active and responsible role in the Far East. For the sake of the China market and for strategic position in the Pacific, the United States was prepared to add its weight to the balance of power in Northeast Asia and confront Russia, at least diplomatically, in Manchuria. No longer would a geographic gap separate Russian national interest from American. A century of cooperative effort between Russia and the United States in the Pacific had finally been breached. In the tug-of-war in Asia between England and Russia, the United States had decided to pull with England. The open door notes had cracked the traditional Russo-American friendship. Subsequent events only increased the fissure.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER X

1 Fowler to Moore, October 27 and November 18, 1898; Fowler to Hill, December 7, 1898, RG 59 N. A.; New York Times, April 6, 1899.

2 Ibid.

3 Journal of the American Asiatic Association, June 10, 1899; Goodnow to State Department, May 18, 1899.


5 Ibid.

6 New York Times, April 30 and May 2, 1899.


8 Conger to Hay, March 1, 1899, RG 59 N. A.; John Foster, Diplomatic Memoirs, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), 2:257, asserts that McKinley inquired of Hay regarding the partition of China: "May we not want a slice, if it is to be divided?"


Griswold, p. 67.

Ibid, p. 68.

Tower to Hay, August 23, 1899, RG 59 N. A.

New York Times, August 22, 1899.

Griswold, p. 488.


Griswold, p. 69; Campbell, p. 55.


Peirce to Hay, September 20, 1899; Tower to Hay, November 14, 1899 and January 2, 1900, all RG 59 N. A.


Romanov, p. 422; Tower to Hay, November 23, 1899, RG 59 N. A.

Kantorovich, p. 140.

Romanov, p. 175.

Kantorovich, p. 141.

Varg, p. 34.


Tower to Hay, December 9 and 11, 1899, RG 59 N. A.
Delcasse to Porter, December 16, 1899, ADPP-3, 8:74.

Tower to Hay, December 20 and 26, 1899, RG 59 N. A.

Tower to Hay, December 28, 1899, RG 59 N. A.

Romanov, p. 422.

Tower to Hay, January 2, 1900, RG 59 N. A.

Kantorovich, p. 141.

Tower to Hay, February 9, 1900, RG 59 N. A.; Hay to Tower (and other ambassadors), March 20, 1900, ADPP-3, 8:94.

Ford, 2:281.

CONCLUSION

Having traced, in some detail, the history of the Russo-American relations in Northeast Asia throughout the nineteenth century, the question originally posed remains: What caused the estrangement between Russia and the United States at the end of the century? While taking a century-long viewpoint has helped clarify the nature and progress of the relationship, no single, overriding cause for the rivalry was isolated. Rather, a complex of factors contributed to it, some of which can be factually demonstrated and some of which are based to some extent on mere supposition.

One of the prominent factors which decreased the likelihood of continuing the traditional friendship was one which was also generally recognized at the time by the participants—the ever narrowing separation between the two nations. Whether measured in terms of physical geography, in time elapsed for transportation and communications, or in the growing psychological sense of being close neighbors across the North Pacific, the gap was steadily closing. And while propinquity of itself did not necessarily lead to rivalry, apartness had significantly served to avoid serious quarrels previously. Throughout the century the North Pacific fence, which had tended to make good neighbors, was repeatedly breached as the Americans refused to be confined to the North American continent.

But more than propinquity was involved when American and Russian...
interests collided in Manchuria. After all, a multitude of previous encounters, friendly and otherwise, had occurred from Sitka to the Kuriles and from Kamchatka to the mouth of the Amur. The situation that developed in Manchuria was markedly different. Previous episodes had not substantially weakened the relationship, primarily because the contacts had largely been the result of private initiatives on the part of individuals and businesses. The Russian and American confrontation in Manchuria more directly involved the two governments. The increasingly active support afforded by the United States' government to its merchants in China and Manchuria during the late 1890s presents a typical case history for what Emily S. Rosenberg has described as erecting the foundations of the "promotional state." 1 The Russian government was already heavily involved in promoting Russian enterprise in Manchuria and to counteract this "unfair" competition an American foreign policy was designed, for the first time, to reduce the threat of Russian barriers against American trade and capital in Northeast Asia. The first open door notes were an outgrowth of this newly assumed posture as a "promotional state." As a consequence of these Russian and American partnerships between the government and the private sector, the competition in Manchuria was increasingly elevated to the diplomatic level, thereby intensifying the rivalry. Moreover, both Russia and the United States had recently demonstrated an ability to use naval force to gain their purposes in the Pacific.

With the North Pacific serving less and less as a means to insulate the two nations from one another and with each government prepared to join in to support its citizens in any quarrel, a third factor prompted the strain in relations. Neither the Russian nor the
American leaders seemed surprised or particularly concerned that the long period of friendship was on the verge of ending. The meeting of the two expanding powers had long been predicted. That a crucial intersection of interests was actually occurring in Manchuria came as a foreordained event, a self-fulfilled series of prophecies. And since an eventual rift had long been expected over the course of much of the century, the gradual escalation of the rivalry assumed a pattern of inevitability. Hindered by this mindset, neither nation attempted to air their basic differences or to discuss thoroughly and candidly the serious issues that divided them in Manchuria.

This mental outlook was fostered by the growing realization that the traditional friendship had largely been reduced to rhetoric over the past three decades. Little in the way of concrete dividends, for either side, could be identified in the years following the failure of the Asian-American telegraph line. The few gestures of amity that took place during this period were more than offset by fresh irritations and suspicions of the other's actions. One of these irritations concerned the no longer muted American criticism of Russia's autocratic rule. While the reign of Nicholas II could hardly be considered more repressive than that of Nicholas I, the crescendo of denunciation of the Russian political and social systems was both a symptom of the decreasing value attached to a Russo-American friendship and at least a minor factor in causing embittered relations. Had the friendship retained a firmly recognized practical use, the criticism may have been less pronounced and been received with less of a sense of outrage.

The growing Anglo-American rapprochement toward the end of the century also has been cited as another factor contributing to the
alienation of Russia and the United States. And it was, although not necessarily in the manner normally accepted. Separating and identifying cause from effect during a period of active and multilateral diplomatic maneuverings easily leads to different interpretations. A review of the policy debates in the United States during the late 1890s suggests that the United States did not turn away from Russia simply because of its considerably strengthened ties with Great Britain. Russia did not become America's rival just because Russia happened to be Britain's. Rather, the worsening American attitude toward Russia was probably one of the main factors which strengthened the Anglo-American bond. However, had relations with Great Britain not been improving, if there had been no alternative to the Russian friendship, then the United States might have worked harder to reach an understanding with Russia.

A complex interaction of factors, then, formed the background for the abrupt change in Russo-American relations. By the end of the century the distance separating the two empires could no longer be depended upon to isolate conflicting interests. The two governments had increased the potential consequences of any dispute by assuming participatory roles. The ties of friendship, which had once been strong, had been allowed to deteriorate. Consequently, the major differences in their political systems now pulled them into different orbits. The United States became more reconciled with Great Britain, whose political system and Far East policies appeared far more compatible. Finally, the confrontation in Asia, as it approached, was accepted in an almost fatalistic manner, because it had been foretold.

With that general background, the second question still needs to be addressed: Why was Manchuria considered so vitally important to
both Russia and the United States? Russia's interests are fairly easy to discern. Russia had been expanding in Asia for centuries. Manchuria, directly on its borders, was a natural next target. The promise of the Amur region had never been completely fulfilled. It had not afforded Russia ready commercial access to China, nor an ice-free port on the North Pacific. The addition of Manchuria to its empire would achieve both of these objectives plus gain a wealth of natural resources. Russia had invested a huge stake by advancing its informal empire into Manchuria. Based on previous experience with American seaborne competition, the imperial government realized that its chances of recouping its investment depended heavily on barring American investors from Manchuria and placing American traders at disadvantage. Any suggestion of an open door policy creating conditions for fair competition in Manchuria was clearly an anathema to Russia's national interests.

Searching for the American motives for taking a firm stand against the Russian advance into Manchuria is decidedly more complicated. Why was the United States more concerned about Manchuria than the spheres further south where twenty or more times as many customers made up the vaunted "China market"? True, the United States had discovered, somewhat belatedly, that American commerce, unaccountably, was comparatively successful in Manchuria and North China, whereas elsewhere in China the American share in the market had been dwindling for fifty years, despite the prevailing open door policy. It could have been that Americans decided to cling to and protect this lesser Manchurian market because that was all that was available without facing the stiff competition from the British merchants in the South. The text of the
first open door notes supports this view, but the scope of the trade hardly warranted the trouble entailed. A similar case can be constructed that the United States was chiefly concerned that a Russian acquisition of Manchuria would swiftly be followed by outright partition of all of China by the foreign powers, thus forestalling American expectations, however unrealistic, for regaining a substantial share in the China market. This view is consistent with America's deep suspicions of Russian intentions in Northeast Asia, but does not gibe with the contents of the first open door notes, which did not call for any guarantee of China's geographic integrity.

Undoubtedly, the United States was concerned about protecting its export trade of cotton goods and kerosene to Manchuria. However small-scale, it was marginally important to cotton growers, cotton merchants and the Standard Oil Company. At the same time, the United States was equally concerned that China would follow the fate of Africa. Nevertheless, the complete change in the American stance toward Russia over the Manchurian issue cannot be completely explained on narrow commercial motives. Market concerns in Manchuria loomed important and certainly monopolized the latter-day rhetoric, but relying solely on these limited economic motives for answers leaves unresolved contradictions. In differing ways and, more often than not, only in vaguely articulated ways, Manchuria had assumed a larger importance in America's world view. Americans considered Manchuria as the bulwark preventing Russia from dominating China, threatening Japan and becoming the premier power in the North Pacific. Checking Russia's advance meant more than just protecting the several million dollars worth of sales of cotton goods and kerosene. It meant preserving the North Pacific as an avenue
for the expansion of the United States.

Throughout the nineteenth century Northeast Asia had been viewed as the strategic key to the Orient, America's own "Northwest Passage." Once Siberia and the Amur region were firmly consolidated under Russian control, Manchuria represented the last opportunity for securing a foothold on mainland Asia. American ambitions in Manchuria were but the culmination of past dreams for Northeast Asia as a new frontier, as a terminus for the trans-Pacific steamship-rail connections, and as an opening to China, India, all of Asiatic Russia and the back door to Europe.

In his book *Virgin Land*, Henry Nash Smith explained how the American West had become both a symbol and a myth. A part of this symbolism concerned the West as a "highway to the Pacific" and beyond. In many ways the American image of Northeast Asia had become a natural extension of these symbols and myths, although less clearly defined and attenuated by distance. Westward expansion was never envisioned as stopping at the Pacific shore. Thomas Jefferson had encouraged John Ledyard's Siberian venture long before he authorized the Lewis and Clark expedition. American poets gave voice to this vision of expansion across the Pacific. Two samples illustrate. As early as 1794 Timothy Dwight was embellishing this symbol of expansion:

Soon shall thy sons across the mainland roam;  
And claim, on far Pacific shores, their home;  
Their rule, religion, manners, arts, convey  
And spread their freedom to the Asian sea.

Walt Whitman also frequently chanted about America's Pacific destiny as mistress of a "new empire" where:
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere—
he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes;
With the steam-ship, the electric telegraph, the
newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,
With these, and the world-spreading factories,
he interlinks all geography, all lands.

Despite these visions, the practical aspects of American
expansion across the Pacific and onto the Asian mainland presented a
nearly insoluble problem. It was difficult enough for the early leaders
of the United States to conceive how republican institutions could be
maintained over a large trans-continental nation. It was even more
difficult to rationalize colonizing overseas. The debate over the
future of the Philippines demonstrated the kind of dilemma which the
Pacific expansionists faced throughout the century. This is why
even the most ardent expansionist found it nearly impossible to
articulate any satisfactory solution. When contemplating the prospective
regions of Asia, the Northeast, in many ways, offered the fewest
obstacles. The region seemed most like the "virgin land" of America's
West, waiting to be developed and civilized—a vast territory, sparsely
populated and scarcely governed. As earlier chapters have described,
various approaches were tentatively attempted. The whalers and hunters,
without any set plan at all, claimed squatter's rights to any vacant
beach. Aaron Palmer encouraged Americans to seek out those areas which
were still unclaimed and ungoverned. Commodore Perry took an insular
approach, establishing island "points of refuge" from which missionaries
could penetrate the mainland. William Collins and numbers of later
adherents hoped that the United States could develop the Amur basin
and other parts of Siberia under the aegis of Russian administration.
Hiram Sibley was confident that his telegraph company could administer
the native populations along wide strips of Siberia. American railroad
men, such as the promoters of the American-China Development Company, thought that rail franchises would form the pathways for expansion. While all these manifestations of the American expansionist drive were frustrated, Northeast Asia, and particularly Manchuria, remained a tantalizing symbol of what William Gilpin had termed America's "untransacted destiny."

By the end of the century American chances for expansion into Asia seemed to hinge on the fate of Manchuria. While the Manchurian market, itself, held limited importance, the immediate issue of keeping that market open was opportunistically seized in order to confront Russia on a matter of high-sounding, idealistic principle, a demand which Russia would have difficulty in refusing. If the Russian advantage in Manchuria could be offset, the Russian advance into Manchuria could be checked and American access assured. From Manchuria it was thought that American influence, commerce and enterprise would gradually prevail over wider and wider circles of Asia. The aim of the United States was to exert its efforts to holding on to the Manchurian key to American expansion in Asia. This was a goal deemed worth pursuing even at the risk of losing the friendship of Russia. Brooks Adams had thought it worthwhile to compete for this "seat of empire" despite the prospects that a military struggle with Russia might ensue on the shores of the Yellow Sea. The McKinley administration, while never prepared to go to that extreme, was under serious domestic political pressure to protect America's interests in Manchuria, both actual and symbolic. The promulgation of the first open door notes was the result.

Since the promulgation of these first notes, the so-called
open door policy has taken on a celebrated life of its own. Frequently
cited as one of the bedrock foundations of American foreign policy, it
has been expanded and interpreted and applied to situations far removed
from Manchuria and China. Historians have differed greatly, first,
about what motivated the open door notes and, second, about whether
they successfully accomplished their purpose. Two viewpoints demonstrate
the degree of these differences, both with each other and the conclusions
of this study.

Concerning motivations, George Kennan has asserted that the
first open door notes represented principally the views of the Chinese
Imperial Maritime Customs Service and were "really aimed largely at
the British," who, it was feared, were ready to abandon their open
door policy in China. John Hay, according to Kennan, probably never
understood the practical significance of the policy that he has been
credited with authoring. William A. Williams, on the other hand,
believed that the open door policy grew out of national debate over the
proper tactics and strategy for American expansion. To him, the policy
emanated from a coalition of businessmen, intellectuals and politicians,
who opposed colonialism, but advocated instead a policy of an "open
door through which America's preponderant economic strength would enter
and dominate all underdeveloped areas of the world."5

The motivation behind the first open door notes was both broader
than the assessment of Kennan, and narrower than that of Williams.
John Hay and his associates were well aware of the significance of the
notes, although unable at the time to foresee all of the consequences
or the eventual sweep assigned by others to the policy. The notes
were drafted in response to the particular threat to American interests
in Manchuria posed by the Russian advance. The notes followed a national debate concerning what the United States should do to halt this advance. By selecting and re-emphasizing the old concept of an open door in Manchuria, Hay and his advisers were also probably seeking a formula to facilitate America's own expansion into the region without resorting to colonialism. Despite the "new diplomacy" or the beginnings of a "promotional state," however, nothing in the events leading up to the first open door notes or in the process of drafting them indicates that the state department or any coalition of interests intended to craft a national blueprint designed to foster future American economic expansion worldwide.

Kennan has judged the open door policy of the United States to have been a failure. The policy, in his view, has been mythologized undeservedly as a triumph of American diplomacy. In reality, the United States has been unwilling to bolster the policy with any exercise of force or to adhere to the policy within its own possessions. Williams has made a completely opposing estimate of the policy's accomplishments. To him, the open door policy was a "brilliant strategic stroke." By ending the debate between the imperialists and the anti-imperialists, American energies could be channeled into the formation of an informal empire. This imperial anti-colonialism, based on the premises of an open door policy, has "led to the gradual extension of American economic and political power throughout the world."

Both Kennan and Williams have looked at the enunciation of the first open door policy from the perspective that the notes were only the beginning of long process which is still ongoing. From that vantage point the actual motivations that stimulated the first expression of the open door policy and the original purposes behind the notes
are obscured by our current assessment of the open door policy as it has been enlarged and re-shaped. This study has taken a different tack. The promulgation of the first open door notes was viewed as the last step in a long process, the culminating event in a long and generally friendly relationship. The notes had relatively limited objectives and pertained only to a particular region during a specific time frame. In effect, the notes insisted that the United States be dealt a hand in the play for the Manchurian stakes and not be excluded from the table. Certain Russian prerogatives within its sphere were recognized, but limitations were set on the amount of discrimination of American interests which would be tolerated. Implicitly, the notes demonstrated an increased American readiness to assume a more active role in Asian affairs. They were a realistic appraisal, at long last, that American expansionist aims in Northeast Asia were not going to be achieved through any kind of partnership with Russia, only in the face of Russian competition. The notes were also a frank recognition of the true status of the Russo-American relationship. Ambassador Breckinridge had, a few years earlier, called on the United States to show "in some suitably marked way . . . conspicuous disapproba- tion of our relations with Russia." This, too, was accomplished. The superficialities, to which the traditional friendship had been reduced, were wiped clean. Russia and the United States could, had they so chosen, have entered the new century determined on a fresh start. Instead, the United States for the next several years applied diplomatic pressure to gain an open door in Manchuria and Russia as stubbornly resisted, until the objectives of both protagonists were thwarted by Japan. In the final analysis, the United States never has gained its
long sought foothold in Northeast Asia.
NOTES FOR CONCLUSION


3 Quoted in Smith, p. 20.

4 Walt Whitman, *Drum-Taps*, edited by F. DeWolfe Miller (Gainesville: Scholars Facsimiles and Reprints, 1959), pp. 53 and 64.


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