

IMPERIAL RUSSIAN STATE COUNCIL, 1902

Participant Biographies

Imperial Family

Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich, Commander of the Imperial Guard and President of the Academy of Fine Arts

Vladimir Alexandrovich is the third son of the late Emperor Alexander II and the younger brother of Alexander III. Active with his wife in St. Petersburg society, Vladimir is well reputed as a hunter, gourmet, and patron of the arts and, as such, is popular within the Russian aristocracy. Beneath this veneer, though, is an immense desire for power. He was jealous of his older brother Alexander III throughout his reign and only reluctantly accepted the accession to the throne of his mild-mannered nephew, Nicholas II. As the senior uncle of the sitting Tsar, an ally of the Dowager Empress Marie, and the head of a large and influential family, Vladimir leads a powerful faction within the Romanov dynasty and as such wields tremendous influence over his nephew—as do his brothers. He is intensely Anglophobic, which has been manifested through his disdain for the Empress Alexandra who is a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. He is also a staunch conservative and monarchist, seeking to maintain a strong autocracy heading a powerful Russian Empire.

Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovich, Grand Admiral of the Russian Navy

Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovich is the fourth son of the late Emperor Alexander II and is the uncle of Nicholas II. In international *bon vivant* whose life has been summed up as one of “fast women and slow ships,” Alexis has traveled extensively throughout the world, making lavish charitable donations and meeting leaders ranging from the President Grant of the United States to the Emperor of Japan, who presented his portrait for the first time ever to Alexis. While pursuing the life of a decadent socialite and womanizer, Grand Duke Alexis is also Grand Admiral of the Imperial Russian Navy. While this is largely a ceremonial position given to a prominent member of the Imperial Family, Alexis is involved in naval and military planning. Though his control over the day-to-day affairs of the military is limited, his influence over the Tsar gives him a powerful say in strategic decision-making. Given his massive 250-pound girth and imposing stature, Grand Duke Alexis is a daunting presence who, like his brothers, has tremendous influence over his nephew, particularly behind closed doors where Alexis is free to drop the formal trappings of court that shield the Tsar from any form of intimidation. While not one for strong political opinions—preferring women and wine instead, which distinguishes him from his ambitious and resentful older brother Vladimir—Alexis is supremely confident in the

abilities of the Russian navy and the military in general. As a member of the Imperial Family, he is also a strong monarchist who wishes to maintain the dignity and power of Nicholas II and the Romanov family more broadly.

Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovich, Governor-General of Moscow

Grand Duke Serge Alexandrovich is the fifth son of the late Emperor Alexander II, is an uncle to Nicholas II, and is the brother-in-law of Empress Alexandra. Born into the Imperial Family in 1857 and fourth in line for the throne until the accession of his brother Alexander III, Grand Duke Serge pursued a career in the military. Distinguishing himself in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, Serge was promoted to colonel and in 1887 was made a major-general and commander of the elite Preobrazhensky Regiment. In 1891 he was made governor-general of Moscow, he was appointed to the State Council in 1894, and in 1896 he was promoted to Lieutenant-General and made commander of the Moscow military district. In this role, Grand Duke Serge has been fanatical in suppressing even the slightest dissent against the autocracy and has supported the Okhrana in developing networks of informants and police-run trade unions. The Grand Duke himself is an unabashed reactionary, so anti-liberal that he has even forbade his wife to read *Anna Karenina* for fear that it might cause “unhealthy curiosity and violent emotions.” As governor of Moscow, Grande Duke Serge is both a prominent military and political figure who also has strong familial ties to the both the Emperor and Empress. As such, his archconservative and ultra-autocratic beliefs will have substantial impact on the decisions of his nephew.

Military

Admiral Pyotr Ivanovich Tyrtoov, Minister of the Navy

Admiral Pyotr Ivanovich Tyrtoov is the most senior officer in the Imperial Navy and one of its most distinguished commanders. A career officer in the navy, Tyrtoov rose to the highest echelons of command due to his successes as a vice-admiral in the Far East. After defeating China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Japan laid claim to Korea, Taiwan, and the Liaogong Peninsula, which included the major harbor of Port Arthur. With diplomatic support from Germany and France, Russia intervened to prevent Japanese seizure of the Liaogong Peninsula. Admiral Tyrtoov commanded the mission and sailed a fleet to Chifu Harbor near Port Arthur. This show of force was enough to convince Japan to relinquish its claims, and in 1897 China leased Port Arthur to Russia after the Imperial Fleet exerted pressure on Port Arthur. These maneuvers headed by Admiral Tyrtoov led to a bolstering of both the Japanese and Russian naval presences in East Asia as well as an alliance between Britain and Japan meant to curb Russian expansion in East Asia. As things stand, Admiral Tyrtoov is leading the continued

expansion of the Imperial Navy and has strong confidence in the Pacific Fleet that he helped to create, especially given its recent successes against heavily fortified Chinese defenses in helping to put down the Boxer Rebellion. Experienced in Asian warfare, Admiral Tyrtov is supportive of imperial expansion and is confident in the ability of the Imperial Navy to fulfill the wishes of the Tsar in defending and expanding the Empire.

General Alexei Nikolayevich Kuropatkin, Minister of War

General Alexei Nikolayevich Kuropatkin is the pragmatic Minister of War and one of the most influential military officers in the Empire. He joined the army in 1864, studying at the Nicholas Staff College from 1872 to 1874. He held a diplomatic post in Kashgaria in 1875 and was involved in missions in Turkestan in 1876 before gaining prominence for his highly regarded performance as chief of staff to General Mikhail Skobelev in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. Following the war, he served in a variety of positions, including another post in Turkestan as head of the Turkestan Rifles Brigade. In 1898, Kuropatkin was appointed Minister of War, a position from which he has made an uneasy alliance with both Lambsdorff and Witte in pursuing a pragmatic strategic policy for the Empire. He has been opposed to antagonizing other powers in East Asia, including Japan, for fear of drawing Russia into an unnecessary and difficult war. As a player himself, though, in Russian expansion in Central Asia, General Kuropatkin has been more receptive to ventures to expand Russian Turkestan or to encroach on Ottoman territory. Though an expansionist, General Kuropatkin does not wish to see this imperialism extend to the point of causing war with another major European power, particularly with a rival empire that rules the seas. Should Russia become engaged in a military conflict, though, General Kuropatkin has supreme faith in the ability of Imperial Army to take on any enemy provided that transportation allows Russia to take advantage of its traditional advantage of superior manpower. As a strictly military officer, General Kuropatkin is less involved in political affairs but can be counted on to represent the conservative military power structure in providing strong support for the Tsar and the autocracy.

Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, Inspector-General of the Cavalry

Grand Duke Nicholas, known as Nicholasha within the Imperial family to distinguish him from his cousin, is the grandson of the late Emperor Nicholas I and is the first cousin once removed of Nicholas II. Grand Duke Nicholas, standing at an impressive six feet six inches, is one of the most widely respected military leaders in the Empire, having largely given up the life of luxury of a Grand Duke in order to dedicate himself to the Imperial Army. He was commissioned in 1872 after graduating from the military engineering school, and he distinguished himself in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 as a member of the staff of his father, who was commander-in-

chief. From there, he advanced through the ranks, becoming commander of the Guard Hussar regiment in 1884 and Inspector-General of the Cavalry in 1895. In his capacity as Inspector-General, Nicholas has reformed training, cavalry schools, and cavalry reserves. He has earned widespread respect throughout the army's officer corps as well as allegiance from the common soldiery. In his personal life, Nicholas is an avid hunter and is intensely devoted to the orthodox faith. He is a mild panslavist nationalist and is a conservative monarchist, though this is tempered by a sense of pragmatism lacking in other elements of the Imperial Family.

Political

Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lambsdorff, Foreign Minister

Count Vladimir Nikolayevich Lambsdorff is a career diplomat and the most senior diplomatic official in the Russian Empire. A nobleman from a Baltic German background, Lambsdorff was educated at the prestigious Alexander Lyceum in St. Petersburg before joining the Russian diplomatic corps, where his skills were quickly recognized by his superiors. As the protégé of Foreign Minister Nicholas de Giers in the 1880s, Lambsdorff was a vocal supporter of the Three Emperors' League between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, though this support waned after Bismarck's resignation. In 1897, he was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister, and in 1900 he was made Foreign Minister. A diplomat for his entire professional life, Count Lambsdorff is a committed pragmatist strongly allied with Serge Witte. As part of this pragmatic outlook, he seeks to maintain stability in both Europe and Asia, even if this is at the expense of the expansionist aims of Russian hawks. For instance, Lambsdorff does not wish to see the further collapse of the Ottoman Empire, even if such a collapse would benefit pan-Slavic nationalist causes. He is also skeptical of expansionism in Asia, particularly if it risks war with other major powers. Lambsdorff views Europe as the most important focus of Russian foreign policy, and he sees the Franco-Russian alliance as the cornerstone of St. Petersburg's international relations since it provides both funding and security. In contrast to his views on France, Lambsdorff is cool towards both Germany and Britain, who have their own global ambitions and seem to care little for Russia's interests. These pragmatic foreign policy views, though, frequently lead Lambsdorff and his allies to come into conflict with the powerful jingoistic and expansionist elements prominent throughout the imperial power structure.

Ivan Nikolayevich Durnovo, Chairman of the Committee of Ministers

Ivan Nikolayevich Durnovo is one of Russia's elder statesmen and is Chairman of the Committee of Ministers, a position intended to coordinate the actions of the disparate ministries of the imperial bureaucracy. Well-educated and from a well-to-do background, he has dedicated his life to service to the Empire. He rose to the highest echelons of power as an official during

the reactionary rule of Alexander III, and in 1889 he succeeded the successful counter-reformer Dmitry Tolstoy as Minister of Interior. As minister, he continued the process of bolstering the autocracy by rolling back the liberal reforms of Alexander II and increasing the power of the gendarmerie and secret police. Durnovo remained in this position until the death of Alexander III, and in 1895 the new Tsar made him Chairman of the Committee of Ministers. While this prestigious position is largely ceremonial, it has been used in the past to organize specific ad-hoc endeavors that require cross-ministry cooperation. In addition, as a well-respected conservative with Nicholas's confidence, Durnovo's opinions will carry weight in the State Council's debate, and his position as the Tsar's overseer of the major ministries will give him the potential to be an influential deal broker. Durnovo is a classical conservative—a strong monarchist generally skeptical of liberal reforms who is also a pragmatist cautious of steering the Empire into risky and dangerous ventures.

Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonostsev, Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod

As a jurist, statesman, thinker, and close advisor to three Tsars, Konstantin Pobedonostsev is blessed with enormous influence in Russian politics. His position as the Ober-Procurator of the Holy Synod also gives him effective control of the Russian Orthodox Church and religious life throughout the Empire. His archconservative ambitions were clearly evident in his support for Tsar Alexander III's Manifesto, proclaiming the absolute power of the tsar and the royal family, and his uncompromising conservative attitudes have made him many enemies among liberal circles within Russia. His theories of Russification have been implemented throughout the Balkans, Crimea, and Scandinavia and have justified widespread persecution against Jews. As an arch-reactionary, Pobedonostsev believes that human nature is inherently evil, rejects democracy as a dangerous Western ideal that is not rooted in Russian history or culture, and opposes almost all liberal Western strains of thought, from jury systems to a free press to Darwinian evolution. Pobedonostsev, a close adviser to Alexander III, was one of the primary tutors of the Tsarevich Nicholas and helped instill in him an intense devotion to autocracy and an antipathy to importing any liberal Western institutions. In his reign, Nicholas has not been as conservative as his father, and hence Pobedonostsev's influence has somewhat diminished, but the Ober-Procurator still wields tremendous powers in his official capacity as head of the Church and still has the ear of his old student.

Nicolay Sergeevich Muraviev, Minister of Justice

Nicolay Sergeevich Muraviev is the head of the Ministry of Justice, which handles legal administration ranging from court oversight to prosecution of suspected criminals. A career civil servant, Muraviev started his career as a prosecutor and moved his way up the ranks, eventually

becoming Minister of Justice in 1894. His first major assignment as minister was to lead the Commission on the Revision of the Laws on Justice Administration, which was intended to undermine the judicial reforms of Alexander III, which had established independent judges with life appointments and trials by jury. These institutions opened the door for judges to challenge government policy and for juries to acquit revolutionaries, so Muraviev was charged with instituting counterreforms to bring the judiciary back under control. He faced opposition from liberal jurists on the Commission, though, as well as from reform-minded government officials including Serge Witte. Muraviev then demonstrated the pragmatism that has characterized his tenure as Minister of Justice by watering down the proposed counterreforms. Though conservative and loyal to the autocracy, Muraviev is a pragmatist willing to work with officials of all political leanings to reach broadly acceptable policies that help legitimate the government. His role in overseeing the judiciary and in prosecuting offenders puts him, along with Interior Ministry officials, at the forefront of safeguarding the stability of Russia and the autocracy.

Serge Yulyevich Witte, Minister of Finance

Serge Yulyevich Witte, the Minister of Finance and architect of Russia's recent economic boom, has been the most prominent Russian minister for a decade, earning both strong allies and committed enemies. He was born in the Caucasus to a russified Lutheran German father and a mother of Russian noble blood and attended Novorossiysk University before spending the early part of his life as a businessman involved primarily in the burgeoning Russian railway industry. He became Director of Railway Affairs in the Ministry of Finance in 1889, directing the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, and assumed control of all transportation matters in 1892. That same year he became Minister of Finance and took it upon himself to reform Russia to bring it up to par with the rest of Europe. To this end, he sought massive foreign investment and championed the industrialization of Russia, expanding the raw materials sector and continuing to build Russia's rail infrastructure. To secure foreign investment, he put Russia on the gold standard and encouraged reforms away from autocracy towards responsible government. In foreign policy, Witte has been both conservative and pragmatic, seeking to avoid conflict with other major powers. As Witte sees it, the greatest challenges to the Russian government lie not in imperialist expansion but with the need to economically develop and maintain stability at home. As part of this philosophy, Witte has urged political and economic liberalization, particularly to improve the lots of the peasants, in order to maintain the stability of the Tsar's government, even if this means doing away with absolute autocracy. Unfortunately for Witte, strong elements within the Russian government, including the Emperor himself, are staunch believers in the divine right of the autocracy and are committed to imperial expansion. Nonetheless, since Nicholas inherited Witte as his most prominent minister from his father, and

since Witte holds such prestige within Russian officialdom for his brilliant economic successes, his opinions will continue to carry great weight both in the State Council and with the Tsar.

Interior Ministry

Dmitry Sergeyevich Sipyagin, Minister of Interior

Dmitry Sergeyevich Sipyagin is Minister of Interior, putting him in charge of the most extensive ministry in the Empire. Born in Kiev into a noble family, he graduated from the judicial division of the University of St. Petersburg in 1876 and entered into the service of the Empire by joining the Interior Ministry. He was vice-governor of Kharkov from 1886 to 1888, governor of Courtland from 1888 to 1891, and governor of Moscow from 1891 to 1893. He became Deputy Minister of State Property in 1893, Deputy Minister of Interior in 1894, executive director on petitions of the Imperial Chancellery in 1895, and Minister of Interior in 1900. As Minister of Interior, Sipyagin is at the apex of virtually all domestic governance, most importantly the police forces and the suppression of dissent. An arch-reactionary and believer in autocracy, Sipyagin has used this authority to suppress student and labor dissent and to limit the power of the *zemtvos*, the local rural assemblies established by Alexander II in an attempt to introduce local self-governance. Sipyagin has also sought to further expand the already pervasive power of the Interior Ministry, causing him to run into conflict with other powerful ministers such as Sergei Witte. As a major archconservative leader and head of the most powerful imperial ministry, Sipyagin will play a crucial role in the deliberations of the State Council, but he may face trouble keeping the disparate factions within the sprawling Interior Ministry in line with his policies.

Fyodor Grigorovich Zacharov, Director of the Department of State Police (*Fictitious Character*)

Fyodor Grigorovich Zacharov is head of the Department of State Police, which includes the undercover police forces of the Ministry of Interior, including the secret police, the Okhrana. Zacharov was born in 1864 to a mid-level bureaucrat in the town of Gukovo, and as such received a decent education. Upon reaching maturity, he moved to St. Petersburg to seek education as a lawyer, hoping to become a prosecutor. Bored with his studies and running short of money, though, he enlisted in the army where he gave undistinguished service but befriended young officers who were the sons of prominent officials who managed to find Zacharov a position in the Ministry of Interior after he left the army. Zacharov served in a variety of roles in regional governorships, though he quickly became known for his ability in organizing police forces to suppress dissent. These skills eventually caught the notice of Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve, then Assistant Minister of Interior and Director of State Police, who appointed Zacharov to head a section of the Okhrana in Moscow in 1892. In Moscow,

Zacharov worked closely with his superior, the prominent Okhrana Moscow chief Sergei Vasilyevich Zubatov. Zacharov helped him to organize efficient networks of informants and to secretly bring the nascent labor unions under the control of the State Police. Zacharov was rewarded for his efforts in 1899 when, largely on Zubatov's and Plehve's recommendations, he was named head of the Okhrana following Plehve's appointment as Minister Secretary of State for Finland. Plehve's replacement as Director of State Police, though, quickly lost the favor of the interior minister, and Zacharov was appointed to the post in early 1901. With a reputation for being cold, efficient, and ruthless when necessary, Zacharov has worked to expand the reach of the State Police, especially the Okhrana, by developing counterrevolutionary networks of informants and police-run religious labor groups. He has also encouraged the development of cells tied to the Okhrana in foreign countries, which he fears may be supporting revolutionary movements in order to weaken the power of the Russia. He has focused particularly on building a spy network in Paris, where anti-tsarist expatriates abound. A militant conservative, Zacharov aims to eliminate all threats to the autocracy using whatever means necessary.

Prince Pyotr Dmitrievich Sviatopolk-Mirskii, Assistant Minister of the Interior and Commander of the Imperial Corps of Gendarmes

Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii, the son of General Dmitry Ivanovitch Sviatopolk-Mirskii, was born into a noble family with a strong military tradition. Following his family's traditional military path, he graduated from the Page Corps with honors in 1874, was decorated in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, took command of the 31st infantry division in 1884, became staff commander of the 3rd grenadier division in 1887, was named Governor of Penza in 1895, and then was made Governor of Yekaterinoslav in 1897. In 1900, Dmitry Sipyagin appointed Sviatopolk-Mirskii Assistant Minister of Interior and Commander of the Imperial Corps of Gendarmes, making him one of the most influential officials in the interior ministry and head of the uniformed imperial police force. Despite holding such a senior position within the Ministry charged with repressing dissent in Russia, Prince Sviatopolk-Mirskii is one of the leading liberals in the Imperial government. Though dedicated to the Romanov Dynasty, he supports loosening restrictions on the liberties of Russian citizens, improving rule of law, eliminating religious persecution, increasing local self-governance, and officially delegating power from the Tsar to government bodies such as the State Council. These liberal beliefs make him less jingoistic and imperialist and more pragmatic than many of his compatriots.

Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von Plehve, Minister Secretary of State for Finland

A conservative who rose to power due to his success in destroying the People's Will terrorist organization and other anti-tsarist elements, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich's principal goal has

been to restore order and control over liberal elements in Russian society. Coming from a noble German family, he was raised in Warsaw and became a prosecutor in the Ministry of Justice in 1867 after graduating from Moscow University. He rose to fame after leading the investigation of the murder of Emperor Alexander II and successfully rounding up all the assassins. From there, he joined the Interior Ministry and became Director of the Department of Police, which included the Okhrana. He was immensely successful in leading counter-revolutionary efforts and originated efforts to build a network of labor unions secretly run by the police. His success was recognized by being named a member of the Senate in 1884, a deputy minister in 1885, and an Actual Privy Counselor in 1899, at which point he was made Minister Secretary of State for Finland. Plehve is an archconservative who has opposed all forms of liberalization, including Sergei Witte's economic reforms. He is also intensely nationalistic and supportive of imperialistic ventures, which he views as helpful in bolstering domestic support for the monarchy. As he has said, "Russia has been made by bayonets, not diplomacy."

Regional

General Mikhail Vasilievich Dyachenko, Governor-General of Turkestan (*Fictitious Character*)

General Mikhail Vasilievich Dyachenko is the military Governor-General of Turkestan and head of the Turkestan Military District, which gives him almost complete control over the Russian territory of Turkestan and the military forces stationed therein. Born into a modest background in 1854, Dyachenko joined the Imperial Army at the age of seventeen and through skill and determination became an officer after distinguished service in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. He was then transferred to Turkestan, where he served in the central office of Governor-General Konstantin Petrovich von Kauffman, a hero of Russian imperial expansion. Dyachenko then rose to the rank of major after valiant service in the campaigns of Generals Skobelev and Annenkov to expand Russian Turkestan in the early to mid 1880s. A believer in Russian expansion, Major Dyachenko led a series of Cossack exploratory missions and attained the rank of colonel in 1888. With his new position, he took a leading role in administering the expansion of the Trans-Caspian Railway which he saw as the key to further Russian imperial expansion. Due to his administrative capabilities and distinguished service, Dyachenko became the right-hand man of the governor-general and was one of the primary liaisons between Turkestan and St. Petersburg. He impressed the War Ministry so much that he was made a general in 1894, and in 1896, with the blessing of the Tsar, he was promoted again and named Governor-General. In the six years since, General Dyachenko has focused on expanding railways in Turkestan and on building stronger ties between the central administration in Turkestan and the local rulers. He has also subtly encouraged exploratory missions and an expansionist mindset in the soldiers

under his command. Though unwilling to openly exceed the authority given him by the Tsar by engaging in expansionary missions, Dyachenko is quick to reward subordinates who do so successfully. He believes strongly in the future of Russian Imperial expansion in Central Asia and trusts that, if given the chance, his Cossacks could successfully see to it that the Romanov standard flies above Calcutta.

Colonel Miroslav Rachmanovich Kasahov, Attaché to the Persian Imperial Court
(Fictitious Character)

Colonel Miroslav Rachmanivich Kasahov is currently the most senior Russian official attached to Tehran and oversees Russian intelligence and diplomatic resources in Persia. He was born in 1859 near the Black Sea in the north Caucasus into a family formerly part of Caucasian royalty but since integrated into Russian nobility. Hoping to help their eldest son fully integrate into Russia's power structure, Kasahov's parents gave him a Slavic Russian name and provided him with an impressive education culminating in studies at the Alexander Lyceum to prepare him for a career as a diplomat. Instead, though, Kasahov sought to prove his loyalty to Russia and fulfill his youthful desire for adventure by being commissioned in the Imperial Army. After a series of uneventful postings in Turkestan, Transcaucasia, and garrisons in the western portions of the Empire, in 1886 Kasahov sought and received a position as a military attaché to the embassy in Constantinople due to his diplomatic education. There he distinguished himself as a gifted diplomatic advisor who combined his political and military backgrounds to be both a compelling negotiator and talented strategic planner. He earned a promotion to major in 1892 and was transferred to Tehran where he was made the chief military advisor to the ambassadorial mission to the Persian court. After a falling out with the diplomatic staff in Tehran in 1895, Kasahov left the military for the Foreign Ministry, where he held posts in St. Petersburg, Vienna, and London, where he developed a suspicion of England and joined the Anglophobic camp within the Foreign Ministry. With the reorganization of the Foreign Ministry under a new minister in 1900, Kasahov's Anglophobic colleagues convinced him to retake his military uniform at the rank of colonel and accept a position as both the chief military and diplomatic officer in Persia. Responsible simultaneously to the General Staff and Foreign Ministry, Kasahov has sought to build Russian influence in Persia through increased trade and the development of a network of pro-Russian agents and court officials. His overriding goal is to reduce British influence in Tehran and secure for Russia the unfettered ability to use Persia as a staging base for operations in Afghanistan or directly against India. As a military officer from a noble background with diplomatic training, Kasahov is both expansionist and conservative, hoping to extend the reaches of the Russian Empire through practical and pragmatic methods. Skeptical of Cossack ventures in Central Asia, he sees the use of conventional military forces through a subservient Persia as

the surest method for restraining British imperial aims.

Major Pavel Romanovich Karpenko, Turkestan Military District Deputy Chief of Staff for Afghan Operations (*Fictitious Character*)

Major Pavel Romanovich Karpenko was born in Moscow in 1871, the son of a junior administrative officer on the staff of the Moscow Military District. Following his father's lead, he joined the Imperial Army at the age of seventeen, though he sought a far more adventurous position than his father's and was obliged when assigned to Turkestan. There, he became a subaltern after distinguished service in missions to suppress a series of minor uprisings. Assigned to the central military staff, he quickly charmed his superiors with his ebullient personality, cutting wit, and a tolerance for vodka impressive even for a Russian soldier. Quickly becoming bored with his administrative position, though, Karpenko used his spare time to learn horsemanship, and after becoming proficient requested and received command of a small Cossack expeditionary mission in southwest Afghanistan. Over the next several years, he rose through the ranks and led a series of such missions, becoming fluent in all the major regional languages and befriending many of the local emirs with his natural charm. While a captain, he even led a Cossack guard on a secret diplomatic mission to Kabul. In 1889, his prominence as a premier expert on Afghanistan was recognized when he was promoted to major and made Deputy Chief of Staff for Afghan Operations. From this position, Karpenko has cultivated extensive ties with Afghan leaders in the border region with Turkestan and has even built up secret ties between Tashkent and the court in Kabul. He has also ordered exploratory missions to try to complete Russian cartography of the region. In addition, Major Karpenko has at times been recalled to St. Petersburg to assist the General Staff and political leaders in making policy in Central Asia, particularly policy involving Afghanistan. He has made many friends among the officialdom of St. Petersburg and has become one of the most sought after guest of St. Petersburg society due to his charming personality and exotic experiences. As such, his opinions on Afghanistan are taken with serious weight, and he is probably the Russian most knowledgeable about the contentious region. Like most soldiers in Turkestan, Karpenko is dedicated to the expansion of the Empire, and he sees Central Asia as the most promising prospect given recent successes in expanding the reach of Russian Turkestan. Afghan internal politics are a fractious mess, and, as Karpenko sees it, if a window of opportunity arose, it would not be difficult for Russia to replace Britain as the primary European influence in Afghanistan, which might just open a clear path to India.

Major Rodion Leonidovich Mizirov, Turkestan Military District Deputy Chief of Staff for Eastern Operations (*Fictitious Character*)

Major Rodion Leonidovich Mizirov is in charge of the Turkestan Military District's operations in the Pamirs and Tibet and is the foremost Russian expert on this region southeast of Russian Turkestan. In 1868, Rodion Leonidovich was born to a schoolteacher in the town of Tyumen in Western Siberia. At first, Mizirov tried to find work as a government official in Tyumen, but he quickly grew bored and at the age of twenty-two sought to escape his provincial town by enlisting in the Imperial Army. Experienced with horses, he was assigned to the cavalry in Turkestan, and his first major assignment was to be part of the mission to claim the Pamirs for Russia in 1891. Though this proved to be a *fait accompli* that avoided British opposition, local Chinese and Afghan forces sought to evict the Russians. Mizirov spent the next several years in the Pamirs, and became an officer after being a successful leader in clashes with the Chinese and Afghans. He quickly became fluent in the local languages and customs and earned the respect of his men with his quiet but commanding presence and his valiance in combat. Mizirov led a series of mapping missions in the Pamirs before he was given a mission to head further southeast to explore the Tibetan plateau, though he was unable to get very far. In 1900, Mizirov, by now a major, was recalled to Tashkent to become Deputy Chief of Staff for Eastern Operations, giving him oversight of missions in the Pamirs, northwest China, and Tibet. Making occasional trips—though reluctantly—to St. Petersburg to advise on policy in his region of expertise, Mizirov has been an ardent supporter of imperial expansion. He sees local forces as laughable in their ability to oppose Russian power and doubts the resolve of the British to actually halt Russian expansion, especially given their inability to restrain Russian imperial aims in the Pamirs. Major Mizirov has also been quick to endorse the many plans, some of them outlandish, that have come before the Tsar to expand Russian influence and trade into Tibet. As Mizirov sees it, expanded Russian control in the Pamirs and Tibet will provide an open door to the riches of India.

Major Serge Ivanovich Orensky, Liaison to the Imperial Army in Manchuria (*Fictitious Character*)

Major Serge Ivanovich Orensky is a well-respected young officer on the central staff of the Russian army in Manchuria. Born in 1870 into a well-to-do family with a strong military tradition from the Volga River town of Simbirsk, Orensky was commissioned as a subaltern in the Imperial Army immediately after finishing his schooling. After earning recognition from his superiors for his organizational capabilities during postings in the Moscow garrison and the Caucasus, Orensky was promoted to captain in 1896 and assigned to the army in Manchuria as a political officer in the central staff. Having gained the confidence of his superiors, Orensky was promoted to major in 1900 and became the chief liaison between the commanding general of the Manchurian army and St. Petersburg. Major Orensky, who has made a name for himself as an avid participant in St. Petersburg society, is a frequent advisor to the General Staff and Foreign

Ministry in planning strategy in East Asia. He has made repeated appearances before the State Council as it considers such matters and has had a number of audiences with the Tsar as part of a corps of military advisors. A career officer in the Imperial Army, Orensky sees Russian manpower as the only solid basis for military strength and imperial expansion and has disdain for the brazen adventurism of the Cossacks in Central Asia. As such, Orensky sees East Asia rather than India as the most promising front for Russian imperial expansion since Russia already has a strong military position in the region with the ability to muster far greater manpower than any of its potential competitors. In addition, Orensky's experiences in Asia have persuaded him that the Imperial Army has nothing to fear from non-European armies, be they Chinese, Japanese, or any other brand of Oriental.