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“There Is a Growing Awareness that Japan Will Inevitably Be Defeated”: Reports of the War
Agent A. I. Pavlov to the Ministry of Finance during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05

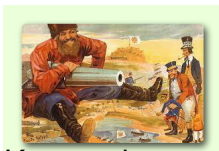
Abstract

The article analyses archival documents, reports of Alexander Ivanovich Pavlov, agent of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Empire at the beginning of Russo-Japanese War (1904–05), stored in fond 560 (General Chancellery of the Ministry of Finance) in the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA). A. I. Pavlov's reports are full of optimism, which was typical for Russian generals at the initial period of the war. He preferred “telegram style” to avoid emotions and to introduce vital information as fast as possible. The authors use archaeographic method of research to acquaint the scientific community with important historic documents; make assumptions on methods of retranslation and further transfer of information; describe formation of archival collections of the Russian agents' reports of the Russo-Japanese War period. Russian Ministry of Finance, which played an important role in strengthening of Russian influence in the Far East, developed a network of agents who supplied information from China, Korea, and Japan. Their reports allowed Russia to improve its politics in the region. There were struggles for domination in the region at the turn of the 20th century. Information from ministerial agents was of greatest importance in the period of Russo-Japanese War, which was to establish the political leader in the region. A.I. Pavlov happened to be a central link of the agents' network, having made right connections in his diplomatic career in Korea in 1898–1904. His net of agents, consisting of Japanese Foreign Department officials, diplomats, journalists, allowed him to inform the Ministry of Finance of situation in the Japanese army and navy, of the enemy's war budget expenses, of prevailing moods in the Japanese society. Accuracy of data, report on transfers of high-ranking Japanese military officials, description of intrigue in top military circles displayed A. I. Pavlov's excellent knowledge and, to some extent, compensated for inexperience of the emerging Russian military intelligence. Value of his data may be proved by the fact that his reports were analyzed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and passed on to the Emperor. His diplomatic methods helped to develop a moral climate in the region, which was quite favorable to Russia. The published documents demonstrate the “behind the scenes” of the war, highlight new pages of one of the most dramatic events in the Russian history.

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