

The 1916 Cabinet of Tsar Nicholas II

The Russian Empire

Spanning around fourteen million square miles and nearly three centuries of rule, imperial Russia is one of the greatest empires to exist on Earth. With ancestral ties to the Kievan Rus the first Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, brutally conquered nearby lands and established a central government that would remain until today.¹

Prosperity graced the Empire with the addition of Ukraine and Vilnius under the leadership of Peter the Great. As women took a more public role in society and the Tsar forged a closer relationship with the Orthodox Church—



winning prestige for the Russian Empire among other Orthodox nations.²

As democratic revolutions swept across the Americas and France, Russian emperors were hesitant to give in to the enlightenment ideals spreading to the borders of the Empire. Following the Napoleonic Wars, the Empire's leadership continued to clamp down on their hold on power.³ Russian society held on to the powerful image of their Tsar as more territories were absorbed into the Empire; and, although regional bodies of government were preserved in some non-Russian cultural areas, the Tsar still ruled from a class elevated above the rest of his subjects.

Going into the 20th Century, Russian society was more of a feudal kingdom than an industrializing, modern nation-state. Its expansionism during the latter half of the 1800s, often at the expense of the Ottoman Empire, left Russia at odds politically with neighboring European powers. Even after 23 million serfs (or nearly one-third of the Empire's then-population) were granted civil rights in 1861, a majority of Russian citizens continued to live as subsistence farmers with few other economic opportunities with which to support themselves.⁴ The monarchy continued to grow more conservative with its state policies, slowly stripping away special privileges held by local cultural governments. For example, Tsar Alexander II stripped Finland of its special monetary provisions as well as its limited capacity for self-rule.⁵ Resentment against the Tsar spread across the land, and it was evident that the monarchy had failed to instill a sense of national belonging among the people they conquered. This resentment culminated in the formation of numerous revolutionary terrorist

¹ "Ivan the terrible: First tsar of Russia." *LibGuides*. <https://westportlibrary.libguides.com/IvanTheTerrible>.

² "The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR and the Successor States." *Oxford University Press*, 30-31

³ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴ "The 1861 Emancipation of the Serfs." Lumen Learning. <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-1861-emancipation-of-the-serfs/>.

⁵ "Russian revolution of 1905." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution-of-1905>.

groups, such as the People's Will group—which ultimately assassinated Tsar Alexander II in 1881.⁶ These radical and terror groups often advocated for the end of the government's authoritarianism, namely the end of the Tsardom.

The Russo-Japanese War

As a nation spanning two continents, Europe and Asia, the Russian Empire has national interests in Central and East Asia as well as Eastern Europe. With the opening of Japan to international trade in the 1850s, Japan embarked on rapid industrialization and territorial expansion in the Asia-Pacific region. It fought conflicts in China and Korea, both of which had weakened significantly during the 1800s. In the 1890s, after winning a war against China in which Japan sought to conquer parts of Manchuria (in Northwest China on the border with Russia); France, Germany, and Russia led a diplomatic condemnation of Japan that forced Japan to reduce its territorial demands. With this backdrop, Japan and Russia began to more actively compete for economic and territorial influence in Northeast Asia. Additionally, Russia's main Pacific port, Vladivostok, had to close during the winter months, harming Russia's economic interests in the Pacific. With these motivations, Russia occupied Manchuria in 1900 to increase its economic influence as well as gain access to ports that could stay open year-round.⁷

Fearing Russia's intrusion in Northeast Asia, Japan demanded that Russia recognize the Korean Peninsula as within Japan's sphere of influence for which Japan would recognize Russia's claim over Manchuria. Imperial Russia refused. In February 1904, Japan attacked the Russian fleet stationed at Port Arthur in Manchuria. Over the next several months, Japan successfully destroyed most of Russia's Pacific Fleet, while the two nations' armies dueled on land—fighting many costly engagements.⁸ Seeking to strike back at Japan, Tsar Nicholas II authorized Russia's Baltic Fleet to make the around the world journey to the Pacific in order to engage Japan's navy. This action proved costly as the Russian ships arrived in the Pacific near Japan in 1905 and were quickly eliminated.

Both nations were facing mounting losses of men and lacked the financial resources to bring the conflict to a decisive end. Therefore, Japan and Russia entered negotiations—which were mediated by the United States. These negotiations resulted in the Treaty of Portsmouth which recognized Korea as within Japan's sphere of influence, forced Russia to leave Manchuria and its ports in China, and gave the south half of Sakhalin Island to Japan.⁹ Russia's military defeats at the hands of a non-European power shocked and humiliated Russia—particularly in the eyes of other European great powers who saw the poor performance of Russia's army and navy and became more confident in their abilities to beat Russia in a war.¹⁰ It directly reduced confidence and prestige in the Tsar and led to greater calls for reforms of the Empire's outdated governance structure. Additionally, the financial costs of the war and the loss of economic influence in China severely damaged the Russia economy.

⁶ “Czar Alexander II Assassinated in St. Petersburg.” *History.com*. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/czar-alexander-ii-assassinated>.

⁷ “Russo-Japanese War.” *History.com*. <https://www.history.com/topics/japan/russo-japanese-war>.

⁸ “The Russo-Japanese War and the Decline of the Russian Image.” *CUNY*. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1017&context=qb_pubs.

⁹ “The Treaty of Portsmouth and the Russo-Japanese War, 1904–1905.” *U.S. Department of State*. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/portsmouth-treaty>.

¹⁰ “The Russian Army's Fatal Flaws.” *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective*. <https://brill.com/view/title/8556>.

The First Russian Revolution

At the dawn of the 20th century, the Russian Empire experienced an economic crisis that reduced its industrial capacity and slowed its efforts to industrialize further. As a majority of citizens were rural farmers, capitalist industrialization only existed in small urban pockets throughout the empire, with the highest urbanization rates taking place in the North Caucasus region.¹¹ Industrialization had occurred at such a slow pace in Russia for many reasons, but one cause was that the Tsarist government reserved the right to revoke a corporation's charter and potentially seize its assets for any reason.¹² This made direct foreign investment in Russia a risky endeavor that caused many foreign industrial firms to avoid investing in the country and stifled the establishment of Russian-owned industrial firms that could innovate and compete with Western and Japanese firms. Instead of direct investment into Russia, many foreign financial and industrial firms and governments lent the Tsar's government money directly, which the Tsar used, in part, to industrialize the country.¹³ This top-down approach to industrialization helped create small industrial bases, but failed to launch the rapid industrialization that had taken hold in Germany and the United Kingdom.

A fall in government orders for railroad production led to ninety thousand metalworkers being unemployed in Ukraine alone, and as markets slowed down three thousand businesses closed within the first few years of 1900.¹⁴ This industrial crisis would last from 1901 to 1903, and the economic effects that citizens experienced would be multiplied by years of low grain prices.¹⁵ With the average Russian reliant on grain farming, citizens now had even less money to support themselves and their families. As a result, some Russians flooded into urban areas with the hopes of getting stable factory jobs, but factory production continued at a minimum. Millions of citizens were left with nothing, including no food. Political and economic unrest was inevitable, and massive work stoppages hit industrial centers across the empire. A nationwide general strike occurred in October 1905, further slowing the budding industrial economy. Coupled with the nation's shocking military struggles in the Russo-Japanese War and the financial burden the conflict placed on the Tsar's government, the Russian population was increasingly angry and the government was poorly equipped to constructively respond to their unhappiness. Following the general strike, workers established soviets, or councils, with the goal of acquiring more power within their workplaces and establishing limits on the Tsar's overreaching power. The violence culminated with the massacre of peaceful protesters outside the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg on January 22, 1905.¹⁶ "Bloody Sunday," as it would eventually be called, would come to symbolize the Tsar's tendency towards abusing his power. Marxist revolutionaries and intellectuals continued to distance themselves from the Romanov Dynasty, proclaiming that the Tsar is the source of the average citizens' oppression.



¹¹ "Urbanization in Russia and the USSR: 1897-1966." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/info/2561838>.

¹² "Russia is threatening a move that will haunt its economy for decades." *The Washington Post*. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/opinions-russia-is-threatening-a-move-that-will-haunt-its-economy-for-decades/ar-AAVu0ty?ocid=msedgntp>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR and the Successor States." Oxford University Press, 33-35.

¹⁵ Ibid.

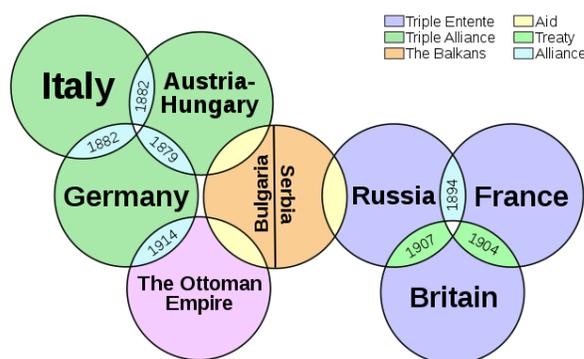
¹⁶ "Russian revolution of 1905." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Russian-Revolution-of-1905>.

In an attempt to appease the revolutionaries, the Tsar responded with his October Manifesto in 1905 (it went into effect in 1906). These decrees “established a limited constitutional regime,” creating an elected parliament with two houses as well as the State Council and Duma, an advisory body and legislative body respectively. Rights of assembly and speech were also granted to Russian citizens, although protests would continue to be repressed. This limited democratization was successful in quelling unrest in 1907, but nearly a decade later liberals and radicals alike are demanding further limits be put on the Tsar’s power.

The Start of World War I

Since the defeat of the Byzantine Empire in the 1450s, successive Russian governments considered themselves to be the successor of the Byzantine Empire. For centuries the Russian Empire, in one form or another, had sought to assert its economic and political might in the Balkans, with the ultimate goal of retaking Constantinople and gaining access to the Mediterranean. As the only Orthodox Christian great power, Russia had religious as well as cultural and political ties with many countries in the Balkans. The growth of Russian influence in the region came at the expense of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire, the region’s traditional great powers. From 1870-1890, Russia was aligned with Germany and Austria-Hungary as all three governments had autocratic governance structures. Russia left the alliance due to competition with the Austrian-Hungarians over the Balkans.

Meanwhile, France, who had lost the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, sought military alliances in order to isolate the new German Empire—culminating in the establishment of an alliance with Russia in 1894. Tensions continued to build and Great Britain signed tentative alliances with France and Russia in the early-1900s over fears of German military, industrial, and territorial expansion. The hope was that, together, France’s military, Great Britain’s navy and industrial capacity, and Russia’s sizeable population could contain Imperial Germany’s power. Russia’s industrial capacity was significantly lower than Germany and that of Great Britain and France, which led France to invest massively in Russia to develop its railway system, so it could move troops quicker in the event of war, and its industrial base, so it could produce weapons in the event of a conflict.¹⁷ Russia’s development was, however, held back by the country’s inability to modernize.¹⁸ Additionally, France and Russia, bordering opposite sides of Germany, would force Germany to fight a war on two different fronts, making it more difficult for the Germans to win a military conflict with both countries. Tensions reached a fever pitch as the



¹⁷ “History of Russian Railways: Part 1 – The Tsars.” *Railstaff U.K.* <https://www.railstaff.co.uk/2015/09/25/history-of-russian-railways-part-1-the-tsars/>.

¹⁸ “How World War I Fueled the Russian Revolution.” *History.com.* <https://www.history.com/news/world-war-i-russian-revolution>.

Austrian-Hungarians annexed more of the Balkan region, which angered the Russians and led them to forge an informal alliance with Serbia.

This web of alliances, history of antagonism, and nationalism primed the pump for conflict when the heir to the Austrian-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated by Serbian nationalists on June 28, 1914. The Austria-Hungary Empire then sent the Serbian government a list of demands, which Serbia decided not to accept when Tsar Nicholas told them that Russia would support Serbia in a conflict; a position that the Duma agreed with.¹⁹ However, Austria-Hungary had received the same assurances from the German Empire—so when Serbia refused its ultimatum, Austria-Hungary invaded, igniting the war.

The war has not gone well for Russia, who despite investments from the French over the previous decades, was largely unprepared for war. Logistically, Russia has struggled to move its artillery, ammunition, and supplies to the front with Germany and Austria-Hungary. For example, “at the start of the war, the Russians had 800,000 men in uniform who didn’t even have rifles to train with, and those who did often had to make do with obsolete weapons that were nearly 40 years old.”²⁰ Efforts to ship these goods to Russia proved difficult as German submarines sank merchant ships in the Baltic Sea and Russia’s other ports were closed during the winter months. Russia’s largest advantage is the large size of its military, but crushing defeats early in the conflict and repeated military disasters allowed for the killing or capture of large numbers of Russian soldiers. After the Ottoman Empire aligned with Germany in November 1914, Russia was forced to fight the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus Region.²¹ The entrance of the Ottoman Empire also closed shipping lanes to Russia that ran through the Mediterranean and Black seas. Yet the main focus for Russia was along the Eastern Front in Eastern Europe where Russia sent successive waves of men to attack Germany and Austria-Hungary. By the end of 1916, Russia was losing around 22,000 men a month, with over 80% of those coming from the rural, peasant class.²²

The continued incompetence of the Russian government, and mounting military losses and the economic upheavals caused by the conflict, quickly eroded support for the war among the Russian population, particularly among the rural peasant class and the urbanized working classes. In August of 1915, Tsar Nicholas II took command of the Russian army, a move which helped improve the army’s morale, but ultimately failed to reverse the country’s losses. Additionally, his leadership of the army took him away from the capital, which allowed unscrupulous elements to gain influence and also placed the blame for military failures on his shoulders.²³ Coupled with the occupation of Russian territory in Poland and Lithuania, the war could not be going worse for the Tsar, whose image and brand have been seriously undermined by the conflict.

¹⁹ “WORLD WAR I AND REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA, 1914-1918.” *Gale*. https://www.gale.com/binaries/content/assets/gale-us-en/primary-sources/archives-unbound/primary-sources_archives-unbound_world-war-i-and-revolution-in-russia_1914-1918.pdf.

²⁰ “How World War I Fueled the Russian Revolution.” *History.com*. <https://www.history.com/news/world-war-i-russian-revolution>.

²¹ “Ottoman Empire enters the First World War.” Government of New Zealand. <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/ottoman-empire/enters-the-war>.

²² “War Losses (Russian Empire).” *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/war_losses_russian_empire.

²³ “Reasons for the February Revolution, 1917.” *British Broadcasting Corporation*. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/ztyk87h/revision/3>.

The Current Crisis of Tsarism

Unlike Europe and America, industrialization in the 1890s and into the 1910s has created an extremely volatile and distinct working class that saw itself separate from not only the Tsar, but to the class of farmers throughout Russia as well. This new class's distrust of the Tsar is compounded by wider public distrust after losses to Japan in the Russo-Japanese War fought from 1904-1905.²⁴

Although a growing working class was beneficial in revitalizing the Russian economy in the 1910s, “by the first half of 1914 the number of striking workers was ten times what it had been for the whole year of 1911,” and a majority of these strikes had political demands tied to them.²⁵ A group of radical socialists, the Bolsheviks, were beginning to argue that bureaucratic changes like the October Manifesto were no longer enough to satisfy the demands of the new working class—and this language was resonating with workers on factory floors. Furthermore, a man named Grigori Rasputin has infiltrated the court of Tsar Nicolas as a “magical advisor.”²⁶ Although he is a favorite of the Tsar’s wife, concerns have been growing among the population and advisors alike that he is taking control of the empire at the cost of possible democratic revolution.



Your job is to serve as a special advisor to the Tsar during this crisis. Your first task is to deal with the issue of Rasputin and enforce internal peace, before turning your attention to quelling the revolutionaries calling for an end to the Tsar’s rule. Удачи.

²⁴ “Russo-Japanese War.” *History.com*. <https://www.history.com/topics/japan/russo-japanese-war>.

²⁵ “The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR and the Successor States.” Oxford University Press, 37.

²⁶ “Rasputin.” *Biography.com*. <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/rasputin>.

Character Biographies

With the Committee starting on November 1, 1916, delegates will represent these figures in the Cabinet of Tsar Nicholas II. Owing to the chaotic politics of the Tsardom, many ministers served in their positions only briefly. Some of the ministers represented here were no longer in their position by November 1, 1916 (having left their position earlier in 1916); but we have chosen to have them in the committee as the length and breadth of their careers give delegates an easier time to find information on them and makes it easier for us to bring them to life through crisis updates.

For delegates struggling to find information on their assigned character, our recommendation is to read more into Russia's history during the reign of Tsar Nicholas II to better understand the era's politics. We want this committee to be difficult, but fun—if you develop an understanding of the time period you will do just fine in the committee!

- **Peter Kharitonov**
 - Peter serves in the Cabinet of Tsar Nicholas II as the State Controller. This means that he is in charge of the Tsardom's budget, managing its finances, ensuring that the Empire can fund its military endeavors and buy food for its people. Since the Great War began Russia has faced severe economic and budgetary challenges, struggling to raise enough revenue through taxes to fund the war debt. The Empire has grown increasingly reliant on debt to fund its government and military. Peter comes from a conservative industrial background and favors pro-growth policies that defend the Empire while limiting the burden on Russia's small industrial class. Peter is natural allies with Prime Minister Ivan Goremykin, a fellow political conservative, and Count Frederiks.

- **Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich**
 - The Grand Duke is a first cousin, once removed of Tsar Nicholas II. Known for being tall, the Grand Duke was raised in Imperial Russia's aristocratic traditions, before working his way up through the military. By 1905, the Grand Duke was a well-respected figure within the military and used this position to pressure Tsar Nicholas II into signing the October Manifesto and conceding to the 1906 Constitution, both of which tried to reform the Russian Empire along more democratic lines. Popular among the Russian Army, the Grand Duke served as Supreme Commander along the Eastern Front from the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 until August 1915; relieved of command due to the Russian army's repeated failures. He then became a civilian administrator along the Caucasus' front with Turkey, a position in which he was more successful. A Francophile and a strong supporter of Slavic nationalism, the Grand Duke enjoys close relations with the military and much of the aristocracy, using his status and popularity to influence public opinion and push the Tsar towards certain decisions. He also governs the Caucasus region, responsible for supplying the military effort there and the region's economy. He favors modernizing Russia.

- **Ivan Goremykin**
 - Prime Minister of the Tsardom, Ivan is a conservative politician who opposes many of the reformist parliamentarians and activists throughout Russia. Serving as Prime Minister in 1906, he became Prime Minister again in February of 1914 and served until February of 1916. As Head of the Council of Ministers, Goremykin should have been able to direct the Council towards decisive action, but because of his reliance on the authority of Tsar Nicholas II; and his refusal to modernize the country and develop its institutions, Goremykin was unable to unite the Council. Because of his own authoritarianism, he was not able to unite the divided Duma and became an unpopular figure in the Council among reformists and liberals and among the general population. At the end of the day, while no longer Prime Minister, Goremykin retains some influence in the government and remains an adviser to the Tsar. Goremykin is an ally of Peter Kharitonov and Count Vladimir Frederiks and believes in Tsar Nicholas II's God-given right to rule Russia as he sees fit.

- **Adjutant General Count Vladimir Frederiks**
 - A noble from Finland, Count Vladimir Frederiks serves as the Minister of the Court. In this role, Count Frederiks is responsible for administering Tsar Nicholas II's household, including the management of their property, finances, and their security. Count Frederiks is a staunch conservative, having been horrified by the formation of the Duma in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution. The Count firmly believes in the authoritarian policies of Tsar Nicholas II and seeks to protect him and his family from anarchists and other radical groups. Given his aristocratic upbringing and conservative politics, he is aligned with Ivan Goremykin, the Prime Minister, and Peter Kharitonov, the State Controller.

- **Prince Nikolay Shcherbatov**
 - A member of the Russian aristocracy, Prince Nikolay had a lengthy career serving in the Russian Cavalry during the late-1800s. From this experience with horses, the Prince became an expert on caring for them. The owner of sizable landholdings, he served as a Minister for State Property from 1895 to 1897, before founding a right-wing political party in 1905. He developed a close relationship with Tsar Nicholas II through their shared love of horseracing; this relationship helped him become Minister of Interior in June of 1915, a post which he left in autumn of 1915 to become involved in governing Poltava, a province in modern-day Ukraine. Although not formally an advisor to the Tsar, Shcherbatov's personal relationship and connections to important trade routes and resources are important in maintaining domestic peace.

- **Sergey Rukhlov**
 - A political conservative, little is known about his upbringing or background. He was one of the founders of a Russian nationalist group and argued strongly for the maintenance of Russia's empire. From 1909 to 1915 he served as Minister of Communications which was responsible for maintaining the Empire's postal service and telegraph and telephone network. Because of the Empire's top-down approach to

economic development, the government built and maintained most of the country's phone lines, though private companies did own a number of crucial lines. Because of Russia's large geographic size, the ability to quickly send messages around the country is vital for effective governance—control of the telephone line network is vital for this. A political conservative, Sergey sought to balance his support for the authoritarian policies of the Tsar's government with a belief that the country should implement minor political and economic reforms to make the country stronger.

- **Sergey Sazonov**

- Sergey Sazonov has been serving as Russia's Foreign Minister since 1910. Entering the Russian Foreign Ministry in 1883, Sazonov served in the London Embassy and the diplomatic mission to the Vatican and is also the brother-in-law of former Prime Minister Pyotr Stolypin. As Foreign Minister, Sazonov has aimed to maintain close relations with Great Britain and France, while maintaining the status quo in the Balkans. Following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, Sazonov worked with his international allies to protect Serbia, while also seeking to advance Russia's territorial claims in the Ottoman Empire after they entered the conflict. He wants to see Russia annex Constantinople and restore it to the Orthodox Christian faith.

- **Alexander Krivoshein**

- Alexander Vasilyevich Krivoshein served as Russia's Minister of Agriculture from 1908 to 1915 under Pyotr Stolypin and was notably one of the few ministers respected by both the Emperor and government circles, as well as the educated public. He was known for implementing the Stolypin agrarian reforms by supporting large private capital in industry because private investment would free up more funds for agriculture, as well as individual peasant and noble land ownership. In 1915, Krivoshein was dismissed for opposing Tsar Nicholas II's decision to take command of the Russian Army, but he has been welcomed back as an advisor due to his experience in modernization.

- **Pytor Bark**

- Pytor Lvovich Bark is a Russian statesman who has had an extensive career in banking and finance. In 1911, Bark was appointed as Assistant Minister of Commerce and Industry, and in 1914 he was appointed as Minister of Finance, replacing Vladimir Kokovstov. As Minister, Bark has advocated for Russia to be more involved in international trade, as well as advocate for economic reforms that would limit market regulations. As Minister of Finance, Bark is the head advisor in regards to the economy, as well as is in charge of handling international financial relations as well as managing domestic economic growth as Russia hopes to continue to industrialize.

- **Nikolay Yanushkevich**
 - Nikolai Nikolaevich Yanushkevich is a Russian General who served as the Chief of Staff of the General Headquarters of the Imperial Russian Army from 1914 to 1915. For most of his career, Yanushkevich focused on administrative duties at the Ministry of War and had never held a field commission. Yanushkevich was dismissed from his position in September 1915 when Tsar Nicholas II took charge of the Russian Army. Yanushkevich has a close relationship with Grand Duke Nikolaevich and remains an influential player as it relates to military matters.

- **Alexey Polivanov**
 - Alexei Andreyevich Polivanov is a Russian military figure and infantry general and has previously served as the Minister of War. Following Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Polivanov was appointed Assistant Minister of War, however, was dismissed in 1912 after suggesting extensive political and military reforms. After his appointment as Minister of War, Polivanov transformed the Russian Army's training operations and attempted to improve its supply and communication systems. He was dismissed in March 1916 after serving for nine months, but has been invited back for his liberal perspective.

- **Prince Vladimir Orlov**
 - One of Tsar Nicholas II's closest advisors, Prince Orlov headed the Tsar's military cabinet. Orlov was renowned for his interest in innovative technology (with a particular interest in the military uses of the automobile, it is rumored that he was the person to introduce the Tsar to the car), having worked under a brilliant mechanical engineer. These roles leave Orlov particularly well-connected within the Russian military, a unique connection that may prove useful in finding resources to deal with the emerging terrorist threat. Orlov is also noted for his disdain for Rasputin, with a failed article in a newspaper resulting in his dismissal in 1915. However, Empress Feodorovna encouraged the Tsar to invite Orlov back as a special advisor on account of his innovative insight.

- **Alexandra Feodorovna**
 - The wife of Tsar Nicholas II, Empress Alexandra Feodorovna was a shy individual, yet was incredibly influential. She was particularly known for encouraging her husband to reject demands to surrender their autocratic powers. Empress Alexandra was particularly trusting of Rasputin, a fact which made her incredibly unpopular with the Russian public. Additionally, as a German-born princess, Alexandria's unpopularity was not helped by the military conflict between Russia and the German Empire—with newspapers and unions often accusing Alexandria of supporting Germany by spying on the Russian military. Nonetheless, her position as the Tsar's wife gave her immense powers and influence over the dealings of the imperial house.

- **Maria Fedorovna**
 - Mother of Tsar Nicholas II, the princess remained influential in the imperial house long after her time as Empress Consort ended. While she is most widely known for her time as the Empress Consort under the rule of Alexander III, the princess was also heavily involved with the work of the Red Cross in Russia. She openly despised Rasputin and the influence he had over Empress Alexandra and actively pushed the Tsar to remove any and all of Rasputin's influence over the imperial house. Additionally, Maria was originally a Danish Princess, which made her a staunch opponent of Germany due to Germany's conflict with Denmark in the 1860s—she desperately wants to see Germany defeated in World War I.

- **Vladimir Kokovtsov**
 - A well-respected minister and welcomed advisor, Count Vladimir Kokovtsov was highly influential in the government. Having served as the Minister of Finance, Kokovtsov was vital in keeping the Imperial government afloat and was thus raised to Chairman of the Council of Ministers while also serving as Prime Minister. Kokovtsov strongly disagreed with the amount of influence Rasputin had over the royal family, continuously pushing the Tsar to banish him to Siberia and even attempting to bribe Rasputin out of the government himself.

- **Alexander Trepov**
 - A conservative, staunch supporter of the Tsar, Alexander Trepov has served in government since 1889 and is the current Prime Minister. He previously served as a special advisor to the Tsar when he worked to draft a plan for the Duma as well as the October Manifesto. He was eventually appointed Prime Minister on November 10th, 1916. He also kept his position as minister of Transport, which he has held since January. Known to be ambitious and a skilled organizer, Trepov soon rose to be a powerful ally across all of the Russian government.

- **Alexei Khvostov**
 - After studying law, Alexei Khvostov became the vice governor of Minsk in 1904. Two years later, Khvostov became the Governor of Nizhny Novgorod before being elected to the State Duma in 1912. He also was elected president of the Russian Assembly, a right-wing party that strongly opposed constitutional reforms to weaken the Tsar's power. Alexei strongly believed in the Tsar's divine right to rule and uses his influence in the Duma to try and prevent efforts to reform the Empire's governance structure.

- **Alexander Spiridovich**
 - Alexander Spiridovich graduated from military academy in 1893 and was promoted to serve as a sub-Lieutenant of a garrison in Vilna. In 1899, he moved to work in Moscow before receiving another promotion in 1902. His work focused on counter-terrorism efforts, and Spiridovich was forced to take a break from service after being shot in 1905. When he returned in 1906, Spiridovitch was appointed to be the head of

the Tsar's personal guard, a position he would hold until the present day. Given the assassination of the Tsar's grandfather in the 1880s, Spiridovich is keen to prevent any attacks on the Tsar's life.

- **Dmitry Shuvayev**

- An 1872 graduate of Alexander Military School, Dmitry Shuvayev eventually became a professor at the military school in Kiev in 1879. After serving as a Chief Field Quartermaster from December 1915 to March 1916, Shuvayev was appointed to serve as Minister of War on March 15, 1916. As the Minister of War, Shuvayev is in charge of managing all of Russia's military, collaborating with the Minister of Finance on procuring equipment, in addition to securing the Tsar's interests at home and abroad.

- **Pavel Milyukov**

- Influenced by Marx in college at the Moscow University, Pavel Milyukov received a degree for his work on the State Economics of Russia in the First Quarter of the 18th Century and the reforms of Peter the Great in 1885. In 1890 he began lecturing, before his liberal opinions eventually led to conflict with university administrators, leading to his dismissal following a "riot" in 1894. After lecturing in the United States in 1903 and attending conferences in Europe in 1904, Milyukov returned to Russia during the first Revolution. He founded the Constitutional Democratic Party and was elected to the Duma in 1907. In 1912 he was reelected. By 1914 Rasputin's influence in Russian politics, in conjunction with Russia's involvement in World War I, had scared Milyukov enough that he slowly began to shift to the right.

- **Alexander Guchkov**

- Alexander Guchkov originally had a career in academics, but soon realized he was more suited to have an active career, and eventually was elected to the Moscow Municipal Duma after serving sometime in the military. Guchkov became the head of the conservative-liberal Union in October 1906, and soon became the chairman of the duma's committee of Imperial defense. Connected to spreading letters between Tsarina Alexandra and Rasputin, Guchkov led the Duma to commission an investigation. Following the outbreak of World War I, Guchkov was in charge of the Red Cross before being elected chair of the Central War Industry Committee in July 1915. In August Guchkov helped create the Progressive Bloc in the Duma, where he would advocate for the Tsar's powers being limited or even replaced.

- **Alexander von Benckendorff**

- Count Alexander von Benckendorff was a long-time diplomat of the Russian Empire, having postings in Italy and Denmark. Currently, he is the Russian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, a post which he has held since 1903. He was instrumental in helping the Tsardom and the United Kingdom develop closer ties, culminating in the signature of Anglo-Russian Entente in 1907—a process that brought him close to Count Alexander Izvolsky. During World War I, Count Benckendorff has tried to

coordinate the war effort between the United Kingdom and Russian Empire, working to settle disputes arising from disagreements over the best strategy to defeat the Ottoman Empire. Due to his service as Ambassador to Denmark, Count Benckendorff is close to Maria Fedorovna, originally a Danish princess before her marriage to Tsar Nicholas II's father.

- **Alexander Izvolsky**

- Count Alexander Petrovich Izvolsky married into an influential Russian noble family and used these connections to jumpstart his career in foreign service. He represented the Russian Empire around the globe, including Japan, Denmark, the Balkans, and before the Vatican. His career culminated in his appointment as Foreign Minister in 1906. From this position, Count Izvolsky sought to repair Russia's relationships with its traditional enemies Japan and the United Kingdom in order to counter the threat posed by Germany. His efforts to befriend the United Kingdom resulted in the Anglo-Russian Entente and the experience made him a close ally of Alexander von Benckendorff. After being dismissed as Foreign Minister in 1910, he became Ambassador to France, a position in which he sought to coordinate France and Russia's war activities and maintain the country's alliance against Germany.

- **Mikhail Sablin**

- Admiral Mikhail Sablin is a leader within the Russian Navy. Originally serving in Russia's Black Sea fleet, he served in the Russo-Japanese War, surviving the conflict, but being taken prisoner. After the war's end, Sablin resumed service in the Black Sea fleet. With the start of World War I, Sablin fought several small engagements (including the Battle of Cape Sarych), in the Black Sea against the Central Powers, principally the Ottoman Empire, who controlled passage from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Their control of this crucial waterway has left the Russian Empire cutoff from its allies Great Britain and France, harming the Russian economy and preventing the delivery of supplies crucial to continuing the war effort. Despite his Ukrainian heritage, Admiral Sablin fights valiantly for the Russian Empire. While he isn't opposed to reforms that could help the country win the war, he is deeply opposed to leftist and Marxist ideologies present in the country and the Imperial Navy.