Peter the Great and the Russian Military Campaign Against Sweden in 1719

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The Russian military campaigns during the final years of the Great Northern War (1700-1721), fought primarily between Sweden and Russia, have not received the attention by Western historians that they clearly warrant. The pivotal Russian campaign of 1719 produced especially long lasting economic, political and military consequences for Sweden. During the course of the war, the balance of power in the Northern Baltic passed from Sweden to Russia. This development marked the evolution of Russia as a great power on the European continent.

The year 1718 had all but demonstrated the futility of the peace negotiations to end the Great Northern War between Russia and Sweden at the Åland Congress. While the death of Charles XII of Sweden in November signaled the final shift in the balance of power in favor of Russia in the northern Baltic theater and the necessity of the resumption of hostilities. This, in turn, left Sweden vulnerable to Russian raids which the Tsar would launch in order to create conditions that would force the country to agree to a peace treaty. At this juncture, King George I of England’s concern, not only over Russia’s military successes, but by the growth and quality of Peter the Great’s navy, turned to alarm and he began to implement an aggressive anti-Russian foreign policy. The course of English diplomatic activity beginning in 1719 would serve to finalize the breech in Anglo-Russian relations that began with the cancellation of the invasion of Scania in 1716. This would have dire consequences for Sweden. Just as Charles XII had missed opportunities for a negotiated settlement with Russia prior to 1718, so would his sister and successor, Queen Ulrika-Eleonora, in 1719. In February of 1719, Sweden stood on the abyss and saw its only hope resting in British diplomatic promises.
guaranteeing financial and military assistance in return for territorial concessions. The Russian military campaign against Sweden in 1719 marked an important step in Sweden’s inevitable defeat in the Great Northern War.

On January 19 (30), 1719, the Swedish plenipotentiary minister at the Åland Congress, Count Karl Gyllenborg, officially informed the members of the Russian delegation that the King of Sweden had been killed at Frederiksten in Norway. He then announced that the late King’s younger sister, thirty year old Ulrika-Eleonora, had ascended the throne as Queen of Sweden. This information was officially proclaimed in a ukase on February 4 (15), that was presented to the Russian plenipotentiary ministers, Privy Chancellor-Count Andrei Ivanovich Osterman, and Quartermaster General-Baron Jacob Bruce, by Count Gyllenborg.¹

News of the King of Sweden’s death had been delayed due to questions surrounding the succession to the Swedish throne. Since the King had never officially proclaimed an heir, tradition dictated that the throne should pass to the King’s oldest surviving sibling, or in event of their death, their descendants. This made Charles XII’s nephew, Charles-Frederick, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the next in line for the throne. However, the Duke had accompanied the King during the Norwegian campaign and was unable to assert his rights to the throne in a timely manner. In the Duke’s absence, a plan to pass the crown to Charles XII’s sister, Ulrika-Eleonora, in exchange for her support of a new constitution and condemnation of absolutism in her accession charter as having, “. . . damaged, diminished, mutilated and almost laid waste [to] the land,”² was put into effect. Ulrika-Eleonora was officially “elected” Queen in January 1719 under the provisions contained in the new constitution that she signed later in February of that same
year. The new Queen’s supporters were aided in their actions by the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp’s absence from Stockholm, his youth, political inexperience, and personal unpopularity as well as that of the entire Holstein party, and grief over his uncle’s death.

In January, Peter the Great was in St. Petersburg preparing to leave for Olonets to “take the waters,” when a dispatch arrived from the Russian ministers at the Åland Congress notifying him of the death of Charles XII. He responded emotionally to the news, reportedly weeping and ordering his court into a period of mourning for one week. Nevertheless, during the following month he proceeded to issue a series of ukases to arm the Russian fleet and have the army prepared to march to its designated assembly points by the end of April. Charles XII’s death would not be allowed to delay the preparations for the recommended upcoming Russian military campaign against Sweden.

The King of Sweden’s death put the status of the Åland Congress in doubt. On his return to the Åland Congress in February 1719, the Swedish plenipotentiary minister, Count Gyllenborg, presented a letter from the Queen of Sweden to his Russian counterpart, Quartermaster General Bruce. In the letter, the Queen officially announced the death of her brother and expressed her sincere desire for peace and friendship with the Tsar and the need to continue the Åland Congress. The contents of the Queen’s letter were received positively by the Russian ministers at the Congress, who responded that the Tsar, “. . . was favorably disposed towards this as well as other peace proposals, [providing] that on their part they [the Swedes] acted in a timely manner.”

On April 3 (14), 1719, while continuing with preparations for the coming military campaign, the Tsar dispatched Brigadier Peter Lefort from St. Petersburg with letters in response to those received from the Queen of Sweden in February. In his letter to the
Queen, Peter the Great formally offered his condolences over the death of her brother, Charles XII, and his congratulations upon her accession to the Swedish throne. The Tsar also expressed his desire to see an end to the war and the restoration of peace in the northern Baltic. In spite of these peaceful sentiments, the Tsar’s letter warned that if the Swedes were not disposed to negotiate in an immediate and serious manner, “. . . then the result will be an inhospitable conclusion: and His Tsarist Majesty is not willing to continue [the] negotiations for the long term.” 7 Lefort was also to inform the Queen that the Tsar was prepared to offer the same terms that had been presented to her late brother in 1718. 8 He was to stress that peace was much more in the Swedes’ interest than the Tsar’s; Russia needed peace, but the Tsar was also prepared to prosecute the war for as long as it was necessary to insure Russia’s conquest. The Swedes should also be cautious of any offers of mediation as these entreaties would be motivated out of the self-interest of other countries at Sweden’s expense. Lefort was instructed not to offer these terms if he had reason to suspect that the Swedes were negotiating successfully for peace with Great Britain, or any of the other belligerents involved in the war. British diplomatic efforts had already surfaced in the form of unsuccessful offers of mediation to the Russians through the British Extraordinary Ambassador in Stockholm, Lord John Carteret.

On June 2 (13), during a meeting with the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, Lefort was informed that the terms offered by the Tsar for peace were not acceptable to the Swedish government. The Prince then proceeded to inquire as to whether or not Lefort had any additional proposals from the Tsar. Lefort’s mission was made more difficult by a request from the Russian ministers at the Åland Congress to admit the Prussians to the
negotiations, which was not received well by the Swedish ministers there, nor in Stockholm, or in London.

Lefort’s mission to Stockholm had broken down over two issues. The admission of the Prussians to the Åland Congress and the Swedes’ refusal to cede any additional territories to Russia other than Narva, Ingria, and the southern part of the Karelian isthmus. The Swedish Queen’s insistence upon these conditions were a result of behind-the-scenes British diplomatic activities, which had already succeeded in persuading the Swedes to demand the return of Livonia and Estonia. British diplomats had convinced the Queen that it was possible to win through diplomacy what Charles XII had been unable to take back by force. The primary goal of the British diplomats was to take advantage of the new Queen’s inexperience by convincing her of the dangers posed by the Tsar in order to secure for Hanover the Swedish provinces of Bremen and Verden at the expense of both Sweden and Russia. This sentiment can be seen in instructions that were issued to Lord Carteret for his mission to Sweden in May 1719:

. . . and as We cannot think that the present queen will be more sanguine in her hopes, but must believe she would readily make such concessions as he [Charles XII] would have agreed to, you shall endeavour to convince her, as it is most true, that what might remain to Sweden after such concessions would be a burthen [sic] and an expense and no matter of advantage to that crown, and that the recovering of their losses towards Finland and Livonia is the only thing every true Swede should have at heart. This you may inculcate by representing that it is absolutely necessary for Sweden to have the friendship of the neighbouring powers of Denmark[,] Poland and Germany to strengthen her hands against the Czar, which friendship can probably be obtained upon no other terms than their being allowed to retain what they have taken from that crown; that the dominions that the Swedes have lost on the side of Finland and Livonia being a rich and fertile country and situated towards those of the Czar of Muscovy, a powerful and dangerous neighbour, are necessary both for their subsistence and safety, for should the Czar remain possess[ sic] of those acquisitions, whose ambitious views are manifest, the opportunity they give him of increasing his shipping and navigation and fitting out considerable fleets would not only enable him, whenssoever [sic] he should please, to land an army at the very doors of Stockholm, but would undoubtly at one time or other tempt him to extend his conquest even over the whole kingdom of Sweden, whereby he might become entire master of the Baltick [sic] Sea.
This patronizing form of British diplomacy was intentionally designed to first and foremost formally secure for George I’s territory of Hanover the occupied provinces of Bremen and Verden from Sweden, which would provide Hanover with valuable new territory and an access to the sea. While encouraging the Swedes to focus their efforts on recovering Finland and the Baltic territories would pose a threat to Russia and possibly benefit Hanover, it would also serve to ease the loss of Swedish territories to Hanover, and later to both Prussia and Denmark as well.

These developments were unacceptable to Peter the Great, and he began to intensify his plans for amphibious military operations along the east coast of Sweden. With the Åland Congress stalled by the Swedish government’s diplomatic intransigence, the Tsar felt that he had no other recourse except a sustained military campaign to force Sweden to agree to a peace treaty. The intrusive and unsolicited diplomatic efforts of the British government only served to make the Tsar more determined to pursue his military options and force an end to the war.

Preparations for the Russian military campaigns of 1719 had been under way since January when the Russian ministers at the Åland Congress had strongly recommended such action due to the consequences related to the death of Charles XII. They believed that this was the most practical strategy for pressuring the Swedes into concluding a peace treaty with Russia. This action was seen as justified when it was learned that England, Poland, and Austria, had concluded a treaty in Vienna on January 5, 1719, ostensibly banning the passage of Russian troops through Poland and calling for an English fleet to be dispatched to the Baltic in the spring of 1719. This agreement, known as the Treaty of Vienna, was the result of British and Hanoverian concerns over Poland
and trade with the port of Danzig and that city’s status as, “the only independent outlet for naval stores produced outside of the Tsar’s dominions.” 13 The Treaty of Vienna was fatally undermined by an agreement between Peter the Great and King Frederick-William I of Prussia, who signed a treaty in mid-1719 which, “agreed to prevent Poland’s adhesion to the Treaty of Vienna and the establishment of Saxon absolutism.” 14 This agreement, in conjunction with the refusal of the Republic of Poland to recognize the Treaty of Vienna, the English Parliament’s unwillingness to ratify it, and King Augustus II of Poland’s decision that his alliance with Peter the Great took precedence over his obligations to the Treaty of Vienna, all helped to insure that treaty’s ultimate failure.

Peter the Great responded to these developments in February of 1719 by ordering the Russian sailing and rowing fleets to be prepared for a military campaign in the Baltic to begin in April. In the face of Great Britain’s anti-Russian diplomacy, Peter the Great decided to use military pressure to force a conclusion to the conflict. 15

Russia’s armed forces in 1719 were of considerable size and strength and constantly growing. The regular army was made up of the Preobrezhensky and Semyonovsky guards regiments, five grenadier regiments, thirty-five infantry regiments totaling 62,454 men—not including thirty-three dragoon regiments with 43,824 men based in Estonia, Livonia, and Finland, and sizable irregular forces.

The Russian navy was also impressive. 16 Twenty-one heavily armed ships of the line and 22 additional well armed vessels of varying sizes were stationed at Reval. 17 Based at St. Petersburg and Kronstadt were 19 more war ships armed according to their size. By the end of May, the Russian Baltic fleet consisted of twenty-three ships of the line, six frigates, six light reconnaissance vessels, with 10,711 crewmen and 1,672
The rowing fleets based at Åbo and St. Petersburg had 132 galleys and in excess of 100 smaller vessels and island row boats. The rowing and galley fleets were capable of transporting supplies and horses for more than 20,000 troops for military operations in Sweden. The size and power of the Russian fleets was constantly expanding due to the significant number of large vessels under construction year round at the Admiralty shipyards in St. Petersburg, as well as smaller vessels being built in shipyards at Russian naval bases in Livonia, Estonia, and Finland.

In a letter to General-Prince Golitsyn dated March 10 (21), 1719, General-Admiral Count Apraksin wrote that the Tsar had issued orders for military operations to begin “as soon as the ice cleared.” Golitsyn was also ordered to prepare the galley fleet and guards regiments at Helsinki and Åbo for transport to Lemland island in the Åland archipelago. In April Golitsyn received additional orders from Apraksin to recruit experienced pilots from amongst the Finnish peasants to navigate the skerries to the north and south of Stockholm and the mainland sea channels leading to the city itself.

During the planning for the Russian landings to take place near Stockholm, General-Admiral Count Apraksin received intelligence on the location of three Swedish ships from Captain-Commander Von Hofft, whose squadron had set sail earlier from Reval to seize contraband shipping and conduct reconnaissance. Utilizing this information Apraksin dispatched six ships from Reval under the command of Captain Naum Akimovich Seniavin on a raiding party. Seniavin was ordered to search for and intercept three Swedish naval vessels that had been reported by Von Hofft to be cruising between the islands of Gotska Sandön and Öesel (Saaremaa), waiting to escort ships loaded with grain to Stockholm.
The Swedish ships, the lead vessel and ship of the line “Wachmeister,” the brigantine, “Bergardus,” and the frigate “Karlskrona,” were spotted in the moonlight at mid-night on May 24 (June 4); sighting the Russians they set course for the Stockholm skärgård with the Seniavin’s ships in pursuit.\textsuperscript{22} From three o’clock in the morning until 5 a.m. the Russian gunners were ordered to direct their cannon fire at the flags flying from the masts of the Swedish ships. During this time, the Russian ships were positioned to block the view of the flag signals from the “Wachmeister” to the other Swedish ships. From 5 a.m. until 9 a.m. Seniavin’s ship, the fifty-two gun vessel “Devonshire,” engaged the “Karlskrona,” effectively disabling two of its top sails and mast. The “Karlskrona” was subsequently boarded and captured by the Russians. Seniavin then commanded his gunners to use case shot and aim their cannons at the lower decks of the remaining Swedish ships.

A four hour battle ensued in which the Russians use of case shot resulted in a fire on the Swedish brigantine “Bergardus,” that was forced to lower its flag and surrender. The ship of the line “Wachmeister,” then attempted to break off and flee; seeing this Seniavin dispatched Captains Chapezean and Delap in the 52-gun ship “Rafael,” and the 32-gun ship “Samson,” to intercept the Swedish vessel. After a twelve hour chase, the Russian ships managed to overtake the “Wachmeister,” disabling its main mast and forcing its captain to lower his flag and surrender. Three Swedish ships were captured, a fifty-two gun ship of the line, a thirty-two gun frigate, and a twelve-gun brigantine, with 387 sailors, including eleven officers and Captain-Commander Wrangel.\textsuperscript{23} This naval engagement, known as the Battle of Öesel, was the first victory on the open sea for the
Russian navy, and it served to reinforced the growing perception in Russia and Sweden that the British fleet would be unable to protect Sweden effectively on land or at sea.

On June 23 (July 4), the Russian fleet at Kronstadt sailed for Reval to join with the ships of the Russian navy stationed there. At the end of June, the Russian sailing and rowing fleets united near the Hangö peninsula in southern Finland and headed for the island of Lemland in the Åland archipelago. (Please see page 38 for a map of the Russian campaign of 1719.) The Russian sailing fleet consisted of twenty-one ships of the line armed with 1,236 cannon. The island of Lemland was being fortified with artillery emplacements and supplied with provisions and equipment to serve as a temporary base of operations for the combined Russian fleets and armed forces operating along the eastern Swedish coast and the Gulf of Bothnia. On July 10 (21), the combined Russian fleets embarked for the Ålands Hav and the east coast of Sweden.

Near the Hangö peninsula in Finland on June 28 (July 9), Peter the Great and Apraksin began to finalize the objectives for the military campaign of 1719. Peter the Great sought to develop a strategy to take advantage of the “. . . shortages and confusion in all of Sweden, [since] due to this they are inclined towards peace, and there are still some old impediments, but with some [military] pressure and God’s help we may have a just peace.”24 They planned to land troops as close to Stockholm as resistance from the Swedes would permit. The galleys were also ordered to go directly into the maze of 24,000 islands and skerries that formed the intricate channels of the Stockholm archipelago to conduct reconnaissance missions and challenge any resistance that the Swedes offered.25 During their reconnaissance duties, the galleys were to search for a route to bring the attacking Russian troops as close to Stockholm as possible. If this
course of action proved to be too dangerous, the galleys were ordered to fan out and attack any targets of economic or military value in the surrounding area. In order to reassure all non-hostile traders and to protect the commerce of Russian and British merchants and to demonstrate that his quarrel was with George I, and not the English people, the Tsar issued a ukase for freedom of trade to Sweden for English, Dutch and French merchants, with restrictions on contraband, on June 27 (July 8). The contraband items were identified as gun-powder, lead, copper, iron, saltpeter, hemp, and all other materials essential for the army and fleet. All non-British, Dutch and French ships encountered with contraband cargoes were to have their contents seized, the vessels were then to be taken to Lemland island and burned. Any British, Dutch or French vessels encountered carrying similar cargoes were to be impounded at either Riga or St. Petersburg. This ukase was meant to reinforce a prior declaration that had been issued earlier during the month of February, while leaving the status of merchant vessels that had already been impounded at St. Petersburg undecided.

The plans for the Russian military campaign of 1719 were approved by the general military council held near the Hangö peninsula in southern Finland on June 28 (July 9). The campaign plan had four specific objectives: 1) To launch an invasion along the Swedish coast in order to compel the Swedish government to sue for peace; 2) To land troops to the north and south of Stockholm for the purpose of destroying military, industrial, civilian, and agricultural targets; 3) To bring the attacking troops as close to threatening Stockholm proper as possible; 4) To do this in spite of the imminent arrival of the British fleet in the Baltic.
Apraksin would command the troops operating to the south of Stockholm, while General-Major Peter Petrovich Lacy’s squadron conducted reconnaissance missions and carried out raids to the north of the capital. On July 12 (23), Lacy disembarked with a squadron of 21 galleys and 12 smaller vessels to the north of Stockholm. He was ordered to attack targets along the coast up to the port of Gävle, being careful to use the numerous coastal islands and skerries for protection. His troops were to seek out and completely destroy all significant buildings, small towns, and villages that he found without adequate defenses. Lacy’s troops were ordered to confiscate all supplies that were necessary for their own sustenance, destroying everything else that remained. All non-military personnel taken prisoner were to be interrogated and released. Individual soldiers who offered resistance were to be taken into custody and questioned as to the location of copper, metal, or any other factories within a mile of the coast, deprived of their weapons and released. All such installations were to be burned and destroyed completely, “in order that the enemy will realize that such destruction and losses will force them to consent to an advantageous peace.” With regard to any vessels found in nearby harbors, with or without cargoes, all were ordered to be seized, or if that proved impractical, burned. If he encountered no significant threats from the Swedes, he was ordered to continue his operations until mid-August, creating as many diversions as possible to confuse the enemy.

The targeting of Sweden’s iron producing towns and villages was a carefully thought out strategy conceived primarily by Peter the Great, Apraksin, Bruce and Osterman. At the beginning of the Great Northern War, Sweden was the chief producer and exporter of iron products in Europe, producing 35% of all the iron bars cast world-
The iron industry served as one of the pillars of Sweden’s economy and its status as a great European power. Iron exports helped to finance the military and served as a major source of revenue for the crown. The Netherlands and Great Britain depended heavily on the profitable Swedish iron trade for their merchant fleets and to equip their navies. Until the years 1719-1720, 82.5% of all English iron imports came from Sweden.

There were a variety of iron factories and mills throughout Sweden. They ranged from the large weapons and munitions foundries at Nyköping and Söderhamn; to the operations in towns and villages in and around Östhammar, Österby, Forsmark and Lövstrabru, to cite only a few examples. (Please see page 38 for a map of the Russian campaign of 1719.) Ownership of these factories and mills extended from the Swedish crown to individual nobles and small proprietors. Both the crown and nobility leased certain factories on their lands to individuals who often ended up buying the operations.

These iron factories and mills formed the most vital part of the Swedish economy. By targeting the towns and villages where these factories were based for destruction Peter the Great sought to cripple the one remaining crucial part of the battered Swedish economy. He thereby hoped to further weaken the country’s poor financial position and its abilities to provide arms for the military and supplies necessary to outfit the navy. In pursuing this course of action, the Tsar once again sought to compel the Swedish government to agree to a peace settlement. The Tsar had a motivation beyond forcing the Swedes to sue for peace as well. He strove to replace Sweden’s dominant position as the chief exporter of iron products with those from Russia’s burgeoning iron industry. Beginning in 1720, he sought to supplant Sweden as the major exporter of iron in Europe.
by flooding the market with subsidized exports from both state and privately owned factories in Russia. Iron which was sold for 66 kopecks in Russia was exported at a cost of 56 kopecks, undercutting the market value of Swedish iron products. The price was then gradually raised depending on the acquisition of clients.31

On July 11 (22), the General-Admiral of the Russian fleet, Count F. M. Apraksin, dropped anchor near the mainland sea channel to Stockholm. The following day, Apraksin sent General-Major Lacy with a detachment of twenty-one galleys and twelve smaller vessels, with between three and five thousand troops on a reconnaissance mission ten miles to the north of Stockholm. They determined that troops would invade the area around Stockholm via three routes with experienced pilots to guide the galleys through the complex network of skerries and islands east of the city.

On July 13 (24), the main Russian naval squadron of ninety-six galleys and sixty support vessels, carrying in excess of 20,000 troops, sailed towards the mainland sea channels approaching Stockholm. As on previous reconnaissance missions the Russians utilized the thousands skerries and surrounding islands to protect themselves from any potential threats posed by the Swedish fleet. Arriving in the area with the Russian fleet, Apraksin took up a position off Dalarö island near a Swedish fortress, roughly seven miles southeast of Stockholm.32

After securing the fleet, a detachment of Cossacks and five hundred troops in support vessels were dispatched on a reconnaissance mission to determine the best way to proceed to the Swedish capital. They discovered that significant sections of the outer main channel, bordered by steep cliffs leading to the city, was blockaded by numerous sunken ships, reinforced by armed vessels connected by a heavy chain that barred
passage through the channel. The disposition of these ships served to confirm earlier intelligence reports that the Swedish fleet would pose little danger to the Russian fleet; as the majority of its vessels still fit for service would remain in their harbors or be used to defend the three mainland sea channels leading to Stockholm from hostile incursions by Russian forces.\textsuperscript{33}

Apraksin’s troops had been given thousands of copies of a manifesto published in German and Swedish from the Tsar to be distributed to the local population. In the manifesto the Tsar offered to return Livonia, Finland, and the northern most part of the Karelian isthmus to Sweden. Russia, in turn, would retain Ingria, Estonia, and the cities of St. Petersburg, Kronstadt, Narva, Reval, and Viborg.\textsuperscript{34} The manuscript implicitly stated that if the Queen of Sweden refused these conditions, the Tsar would be left with no other alternative but to use all of his military strength to force her to accept them.\textsuperscript{35}

On July 18 (29), Apraksin moved the fleet closer to the large outcropping of skerries and boulders that formed a protective coastal barrier around the island of Dalarö, dispatching galleys and flat-bottomed transports to land raiding detachments there made up of Cossacks and dragoons. These troops scouted Dalarö before sailing to the island of Utö, where they burned copper and metal factories, a village, several farms, and a small transport ship carrying a contraband cargo of iron from Lübeck destined for Stockholm. South of Utö near the island of Landsort on 19 (30), a Russian raiding party encountered two Dutch ships also carrying contraband cargoes of iron and copper from Södertälje, and wheat from Königsberg, both sailing for Stockholm. The Russians seized these ships and confiscated all of their cargoes.\textsuperscript{36}
Navigating his galleys through the continual broken coastline of small islands and skerries near Stockholm, General-Major Lacy set a course to the north of the capital for the iron producing regions; located among the numerous rivers used to power the mills and abundant forest that provided fuel for the foundries. On July 8 (19), he disembarked his troops near the island of Arholma, where his squadron commenced a series of highly effective raids on various industrial, agricultural, and civilian targets. By 20 (31), Lacy’s squadron operating on both land and sea to the south of Arholm, had reached the town of Kappelskar where they spotted enemy cavalry units. Lacy immediately landed 1,400 troops from the galleys, who began to pursue the Swedish forces that were retreating through the dense forest towards a local granary; the granary, located one-half mile into the forest, served as a landmark on the Russian maps. Recognizing that his infantry units could operate more effectively in this wooded terrain than the Swedish cavalry, Lacy sent his ground troops after the Swedes. When the Russians advanced toward the granary, the Swedes retreated leaving one metal factory and several warehouses and other structures unguarded. The Russians burned them. Advancing up the coast Lacy’s troops burned the harbor city of Östhammer and the fishing village of Öregrund, located on a peninsula opposite of the island of Gräsö. Landing on the island of Gräsö, Lacy’s troops seized more than 700 head of livestock and recorded that there were large numbers of deserters from the Swedish military on the island and in the surrounding area. Sailing from the island of Gräsö the Russians landed on the mainland again and burned five small mills at the factory towns of Edebo, Talubruk, and Forsmark.

On July 25 (August 5), Lacy put troops ashore on the coast near the model town of Lövstrabruck in the heart of the northern Swedish mining country. On the outskirts of
Lövstrabruk, near the village of Lestrabruk, the Russians encountered a mixed force of 300 regular Swedish troops and 500 armed peasants drawn up behind fortified positions and exchanged cannon fire with them. When the Russians advanced to attack, the Swedes fled into the forest, appearing to leave the road to Lövstぶりk open. But the Swedes unexpectedly received reinforcements, bringing their troop strength up to 1,600 men, that regrouped near some mills outside of the village to face the Russians. Recognizing the strength of their defensive position, which was protected by seven cannon, Lacy split his battalion into three parts for a three pronged flanking attack on the Swedish defenders. He sent two groups through the forest in different directions with two light cannon to attack the Swedes’ left and right wings, while the third group left facing the Swedes attacked them head on. The Swedes opened fire with their cannon on the Russian troops facing their position; however, the Russian troops charging out of the forest on both sides, firing their cannon on the Swede’s position, caught them by surprise. The Swedes were forced to retreat leaving all of their artillery on the field along with thirty dead soldiers. The Russians lost only 15 men in this battle. Following this engagement the Russians burned the mills at Lestrabruk and advanced into Lövstrabruk, finding a model town with a main street lined with small well-kept one story houses for the workers, “with a small pond in the town square surrounded by fine stone homes with gardens,” where the proprietors lived. The town and its metal factory and everything else were burned to the ground, including 300 homes, two churches, with 600 prisoners taken. The military prisoners were not released, as was the usual practice, since the Russians had reason to believe that they would march to reinforce the Swedish troops guarding Gävle, where Lacy’s squadron was heading.
On July 25 (August 5), Lacy’s squadron left Lövstrabruk and continued north to the town of Osterlövsta and the four villages surrounding it, which were razed by a detachment of 2,400 Russian troops. By August 1 (12), Lacy’s troops had reached the region surrounding the port of Gävle, the largest city in Sweden north of Stockholm, where they briefly engaged 400 regular Swedish troops before burning several villages, farms, and military targets, with in a mile and a half of Gävle. While advancing on Gävle in their galleys along the Gävlebuken coastal waters, the Russians were fired on by cannon from a small village. Landing troops near the village the Russians learned that Gävle was defended by 3,000 regular troops and more than 900 irregulars under the command of Generals Hamilton and Arnfeldt. Deciding that the city was too well defended to attack, Lacy turned his squadron back toward the south after burning more strategic targets in the area surrounding Gävle. By August 5 (16), the cities of Norrtälje, Östhammer, Öregrund, Harg, Skebobruk, Osterbruk, Lövstrabruk, Osterlövsta, Forsmark, Kerbobruk, Veslabruk, and Stromback, had all been sacked and burned. During these operations Lacy’s troops destroyed over 457 villages, 4,392 homes, 650 factories, 40 mills, and 4 cargo vessels. More than 79,994 iron bars that could not be loaded on to the galleys, sent back to Russia, or used for ballast on the Russian ships, and other spoils taken from the towns and factories, were thrown into the sea.

Prior to Lacy’s operations of July 25 (August 5), elements of Apraksin’s galley fleet operating south of Stockholm in the Gulf of Södertälje landed forces under the command of Brigadier Yurii Andreevich von Mengden near the harbor city of Nyköping, where two metal factories, several towns and villages were burned to the ground. Complying with orders from the Tsar the foundations of many of these buildings were
mined by engineers from von Mengden’s troops to insure that they were not easily rebuilt. During this raid, twelve squadrons of Swedish cavalry retreated from Nyköping abandoning the city and twenty-seven merchant ships to the Russians. After a brief siege Nyköping was captured along with three hundred metal workers, twenty-seven merchant ships and three hundred cast iron cannon from the large Näfvekvarn foundry. The raids south of Stockholm continued on July 30 (August 10), with the Russian galleys navigating their way up the broad channel formed by the Braviken waterway to the industrial port city of Norrköping, “...where the enemy suffered great destruction.”

Finding the city lightly defended Russian dragoons were landed on shore where they destroyed a royal castle and overran the town, burning all of its buildings, as well as many farms and peasant huts in the surrounding hills and wooded plateaus. Departing Norrköping the Russians boarded their galleys and advanced north toward Stockholm attacking and burning the fishing town of Trosa and the city of Södertälje, where they destroyed a number of copper and metal factories. During the raid on Södertälje, located seventeen miles south of Stockholm, 50 Cossacks were dispatched to carry out attacks on guard posts around the capital. They were followed by galleys sent by Apraksin that navigated into the adjoining skerries where the troops that landed on the mainland and nearby islands burned 15,000 buildings and one metal factory south of the capital.

By August 1 (12), Apraksin’s galleys had returned to where the Russian fleet was anchored near the island of Landsort, east of the city of Nyköping. Four days later under orders from the Tsar, Apraksin dispatched additional teams of engineers with mines to insure that the copper and metal factories that had been burned on Utö and Ornö islands, “...were thoroughly destroyed to their very foundations.” Additional orders were
also issued to this detachment to search for and burn any prominent noble estates that
might be located on any of the many islands in the area.

On August 6 (17), Apraksin received orders from Peter the Great to take up a
position near the island of Möjan in the skerries close to Stockholm and “ease” up on his
military activities. The Tsar’s order was a result of a request to Privy Chancellor-Count
Osterman from the Queen of Sweden for a truce during the continuing Åland peace talks.
Apraksin was also ordered to select a convenient location for a camp near Stockholm for
the purpose of conducting a landing if the negotiations faltered, “. . . in order to deprive
the enemy of any rest and by that to end this campaign, to increase the chances for
peace.” Apraksin received new orders from Peter the Great in a letter dated August 8
(19), that he was to resume his raids, “in a more severe manner,” due to the failure of the
recent peace initiatives. The Tsar had dismissed the Swedes’ most recent offer as yet
another futile delaying tactic and ordered military operations to resume.

While Osterman was holding discussions with the Swedes, Lord Carteret was
conducting negotiations between Hanover and Sweden which the Swedes hoped would
expedite the arrival of the English fleet. The English fleet had been anchored near
Copenhagen for three weeks allegedly waiting for the arrival of more ships and supplies
before it sailed for Sweden. The Swedes had put so much faith in the ability of the
English fleet to protect their country from further attacks by the Russians, that the
English diplomats had been intentionally delaying its arrival to pressure them into
agreeing to cede to Hanover the occupied Swedish provinces of Bremen and Verden, in
exchange for additional financial and military assistance. During this time British
diplomats, lead by Lord Charles Whitworth, were simultaneously conducting secret
negotiations with the Prussians designed to divide up and solidify the conquered Swedish territories that both countries occupied in northern Germany. Knowledge of these ongoing negotiations were deliberately kept secret from the Swedes. The less than forthright manner in which the British diplomats conducted these negotiations with the Prussians gave King Frederick-William I cause to be concerned. The Prussian King was aware of, but not fully informed of, the simultaneous peace negotiations between Hanover, Great Britain and Sweden. Continuing British objections to Prussian territorial demands in conjunction with their duplicitous diplomatic tactics was another continuing source of anxiety for Frederick-William I as well, causing him to have second thoughts about his negotiations with the British. These factors, together with his prior obligations to, and friendly relations with Peter the Great, put the Prussian King under a tremendous strain. These feelings are reflected in a letter that Frederick-William I wrote for posterity to his descendants on July 23 and had deposited in the royal archives prior to the signing of treaty between Great Britain and Prussia.

Would to God that I had not promised to conclude this treaty; it is an evil spirit which has moved me. Now we shall be ruined, which is what my false friends wish. May God take me from this evil world before I sign it, for here on earth there is nothing but falsehood and deceit. To have the Tsar at my hand is [in] my interest and if I send him money I can have as many troops as I wish. The Tsar will make just such a treaty with me. With the English everything is deceit, just as the most rascally way they deceived me in 1715. I will be Kleement [Merciful]. I will pray to God to stand by me, if I must play an odd part, but I play it unwillingly for it is not one for an honest man; I [will] sign the treaty, but I will not up hold it, and then when I cast off my mask, tell the whole world, what [these] false friends intended to do to me. To teach my successors to guard against accepting such friends, and not to follow my wicked, Godless maxims in this treaty, but to stick to friends that one once had, and to turn away from false friends. Therefore, I exhort my posterity to keep still a stronger army than I have; on this I shall live and die.  

Meanwhile Russian military operations against Sweden continued. On August 13 (24), Apraksin landed a detachment of 6,000 men that were attempting to advance towards Stockholm along the southern Södra Staket channel, when they encountered
Swedish troops backed up by a superior force of galleys and heavily armed vessels. The Russians were repulsed with a loss of 442 men. On the 18 (29), Apraksin sent a smaller reconnaissance force of 21 galleys and 21 support vessels, that landed on a small island near the fortress guarding the city of Vaxholm, located on the eastern channel leading to Stockholm 12 miles from the city, this time with more success. Four and a half miles from shore Russian military engineers and troops dispatched by Rear-Admiral Matvei Khrisoforovich Zmaevich, made up of three battalions encountered a large number of Swedish troops. Intense fighting broke out when the lightly armed Russian reconnaissance force encountered and attacked Swedish troops stationed in the area. The ensuing battle was brutal with the Russian troops taking heavy fire from the fortress of Vaxholm. The fighting lasted for over one and a half hours, and although the Swedish troops outnumbered the Russians by a ratio of two-to-one they abandoned the field to the Russians. The Russians lost 104 men killed and 328 wounded at Vaxholm; while the Swedes suffered, “far greater losses.” The battle took on even greater significance when it was discovered that these troops were part of the 17,000 man contingent protecting Stockholm, under the commanded of the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, who was also in overall command of the Swedish troops that had fought in this engagement. Following the Battle at Vaxholm on August 16 (27), Lacy’s squadron rejoined the main galley and sailing fleets and sailed for the temporary base of the Russian fleet on Lemland island in the Åland archipelago.

In mid-July 1719, Admiral John Norris’ English squadron, made up of two 80-gun, two 70-gun, three 60-gun, three 50-gun, one 40-gun, one 20-gun ships, and two light cruisers arrived in the Baltic. The Tsar regarded the presence of Admiral Norris and the
English Fleet as hostile and interpreted it as yet another sign of George I’s attempts to influence the outcome of the Great Northern War at Russia’s expense. Nevertheless, the English diplomats fully realized that the coming of the English fleet was the principle reason that had prevented the Swedes from concluding a separate peace agreement with the Tsar. They would continue to use the fleet as leverage in a less than subtle manner to achieve their diplomatic goals for the duration of the conflict, at Sweden’s expense.

On August 20 (31), the combined Russian fleets had received orders to disperse to their bases at Reval and Åbo. A squadron under the command of Rear-Admiral Peter Seivers was also sent to cruise near Gotland island in order to gather information on the arrival and disposition of the English fleet. By September 1 (12), the English and Swedish fleets had united off the southern coast of Sweden near the island of Häno, southwest of the Swedish naval base at Karlskrona, joining 23 English ships with 9 Swedish ships; however, this union was too late to affect the recently concluded Russian military operations along the Swedish coast. And in spite of his orders to seek out and if possible engage the Russian fleet, Norris elected to only support the activities of the Swedish fleet, which due to its under staffed and inferior condition was in no position to engage the Russians fleet, even if the opportunity presented itself.

Prior to Norris’ arrival, Peter the Great had sent a letter to the Admiral at Copenhagen, dated July 7 (18) in which he expressed his concern regarding the mission of the English fleet. The Tsar specifically asked the Admiral to send him a letter before the fleet approached Russian territory stating his expressed purpose in the Baltic Sea. Failure to do so would be interpreted as an act of hostility by the Tsar who wrote: “And we are compelled to declare to you, that if you do not reply to this letter, and do not
reassure us, and approach our fleet or territories without notice, that we will be forced to accept your silence as a sign of aggression and malice against our territories and fleet and [we will] take appropriate measures."

Norris replied to the Tsar in a letter sent from Copenhagen dated July 11, 1719, and acknowledged the Tsar’s concerns regarding the mission of the British fleet in the Baltic. However, he wrote that these issues had already been addressed in London during a meeting with the Tsar’s ambassador Feodor Pavlovich Veselovskii, before the fleet sailed from Great Britain. The Admiral sought in a rather ambiguous manner to reassure the Tsar that his mission was solely to protect the lives and commerce of British subjects and “in established agreements with their allies.” He closed his letter by stating that he also desired to promote good relations between the Tsar and his sovereign. Norris’ letter provided Peter the Great with little reassurance and did not reflect the orders he had been issued by Lord Carteret. The meeting that Norris referred to had also been confrontational in its nature. During this interview Veselovskii had informed Lord James Stanhope, the British Secretary of State, that if England concluded a defensive alliance with Sweden, even under the guise of protecting trade, it would be considered offensive in its nature an act of war against Russia. Stanhope’s attitude and the intense English diplomatic activity during the spring and summer of 1719 directed against Russia belied Norris’ protestations for peaceful relations with Peter the Great. As a consequence of this meeting and what he perceived as a growing dissatisfaction among English merchants with their government’s policies toward trade with Russia, Peter the Great once again issued a ukase reassuring his support of freedom of trade.
The perceived chances for a successful conclusion to the negotiations at the Åland Congress had caused great consternation in British diplomatic circles. With the arrival of the British fleet more than three months away, numerous schemes to sabotage the Åland Congress were proposed; the most incredible of these plans was submitted in March of 1719, by the British Resident in St. Petersburg, James Jefferyes to Under Secretary of State, George Tilson.

. . . I have thought of a project, which (if duely put in execution) will not fail of doing it effectually at least for some time: it is nothing but to send a frigate or two to the place of [the] congress, and bring the Swedish plenipotentiary away by force. The danes [sic] being in open war with Sweden and the swedish [sic] plenipotentiary having passports from the danes [sic], these in my opinion will be the people most proper to put this plan in execution. The swedish [sic] and moscovite [sic] plenipotentiaries have each one hundred grenadiers for their guards, the prussian [sic] has none (as far as I can hear), and let there be a hundred more, reckoning the five plenipotentiaries with their retinue, six hundred resolute men will be more than sufficient to execute the design. To carry it on more securely the vessel employed for this service may make use of moscovite [sic] colours. The Czar has 3 squadrons, but I shall only describe to you the colours of the blew [sic] squadron, which the inclosed [sic] will demonstrate to you. M-r Weber, His Majesty's resident [representing Hanover] here, has sent some time ago a very good plan of the whole island to M-r Bernstorff [the First Minister from Hanover], in which is described (as he tells me) all the land-in places in the island. Should His Majesty think fit to interrupt this negociation [sic] more effectually, the moscovite [sic] plenipotentiary may likewise be carried away and afterwards be set ashore either at Danzig, Koenigsberg [sic] or Riga, and some excuse may be invented to colour this enterprize, for, as to the attempt on the swedish [sic] plenipotentiary, I do not see there need any be made, especially if done by the danes.

You cannot imagine what a disappointment this enterprize [sic] will bring with it. If duely put in execution, it will break the measures of these people, and at the same time give an opportunity to His Majesty of making his peace with Sweden, for a place of congress more secure and other plenipotentiaries must be chosen before they can meet again, which will take up the greatest part of the summer; who knows besides (for I cannot tell upon what footing we are with the swedes [sic]) if these will not be enough content with such an accident, especially if they have a mind to make their peace, rather with us than the Czar? In short a good resolution, quick dispatch and secrecy cannot fail of making this project successful, which last you may be assured shall not be wanting on this side. This project I could not omit to communicate you to insinuate the same to lord Stanhope who will best judge whether all or any part of it will be practicable. 64

In March of 1719, English diplomats were already discussing a plan of King George I’s to form a military alliance in order deprive the Tsar of his conquest and force new borders upon Russia: “In short Your Excellency is acquainted with the King’s thoughts, which are short [sic], by an alliance to be contracted between, Sweden,
Denmark, Prussia, Poland, the Emperor and His Majesty, to the content of these Parties, to recover to Sweden what the Tsar has taken from her, and let him come into the Treaty nolens volens upon these terms. It is interesting to note that the idea of a coalition against the Tsar was being discussed by English diplomats before a single treaty had been signed by any of the belligerents and Sweden. This attitude continued into the month of April, with English diplomats showing their concern about the Tsar’s growing power, his extensive preparations for the campaign of 1719, and what his intentions were. “We here are divided in our opinions, whether it is to frighten Sweden into compliance with his terms, and in case they refuse them, to make a vigorous attack upon that unsettled government and reduce them by force, or whether it is intended against Germany, for we have an account, that his Czarish [sic] Majesty has promised the Duke of Mecklenburg to reinstate him.” These fears were fueled by reports received in April from Jefferyes in St. Petersburg, describing the preferential treatment of foreign shipbuilders in Russia, their productivity, and its possible consequences for British interest and commerce in the Baltic.

I now beg leave to entertain your lordship with another set of people, who because the Tsar greatly favours them, have got here the nickname of chips by those that envy them, but by others are called ship-builders; these in my humble opinion (if continued long in this service) will not fail of setting the Czar on such a footing as will enable him to bid fair for the mastery in the East-sea. One of them assured me lately that if the Czar lives three years longer, he will have at sea a fleet of forty ships of the line from seventy to ninety guns each, as good as any the world can afford, besides twenty frigates from thirty to forty cannon each, all built at this place; these people the Czar flatters as much as possible: their salaries are large and punctually paid, they eat in private with him, they sit at his table in the greatest assemblies, and he hardly goes anywhere or takes any diversion but some of them accompany him. By these caresses the Czar means to captivate their affections so as to engage them not to quit him; but whether it will be for the interest of Great Britain to be a spectator of so growing a power as this, especially at sea, and brought about by her own subjects, I humbly submit to your lordship’s consideration. Might I presume to give my opinion, it is high time that they be called out of service. Here are five master-builders besides worklings, all British [sic] subjects; three are masters reckoned as good carpenters as any we have in Great-Britain, and considering that all of them are good subjects, and well affected to His Majesty’s government, I doubt not if some small equivalent were offered them in England for what they lose here, but would take the resolution of returning
home, and a severe proclamation issued at the same time against all subjects not returning, would furnish them a good excuse for so doing, after all the favours bestowed on them here, they would otherwise be as much to seek for, as anything I know. I humbly hope your lordship will excurse this freedom, which I had not presumed to take, were I not persuaded that what I have said will be of advantage and for the interest of Great-Britain, and that some method ought to be thought on in time for hindering the Czar from settling his dominions over those seas.67

One month later Jefferyes submitted another report to Lord Stanhope addressing the growing concerns over the potential consequences resulting from the Tsar’s ship building program.

I humbly beg leave to put your lordship in mind once more of what I proposed in relation to the english [sic] ship-builders in this service. They have since my arrival here launched one ship of ninety guns, another of sixty will soon be ready, and there are yet ten on the stocks all of the line of battle, which for the most part may be ready in a year’s time; beside the Czar (who has his ship-yard) as well as the other builders and five english [sic], here is but one french [sic] ship-carpenter, for hollander [sic] here are none, the Czar not liking their way of building; so that, if these be called home and care taken for the future that none other succeed them, the building [of] ships will in a great measure be prevented; but if this or some other method be not taken to put a stop to it, it is probable we may repent it too late. The Tsar has lately said in full company that his fleet and that of Great-Britain are the two best in the world; if then at present he looks upon his fleet to be preferable to that of Holland or France, may it not be supposed that in some years time he will look upon it to be equal if not preferable to our’s likewise? In fine my lord the ships that are built here are as good as any in Europe, and the Czar takes all the methods he can imagine or think on to inure his subjects to the seas and to make them sailors.68

In July Jefferyes wrote to British Under Secretary of State James Craggs, on the subject of recalling the English ship builders and the growth of the Tsar’s fleet.

The necessity of recalling them from hence beyond any other artificers will appear if their excellencies consider what the Tsar’s fleet was a few years ago, what it is now, and what it is like to be in a few years to come. The Czar’s fleet consisted 6 years ago of such ships as were either bought in foreign countries or built at Archangel by hollander [sic] which amounted to 17 or 18 in number; but these being for several reasons disapproved, ship yards were made at St. Petersburg and they began to build His Czarish Majesty’s ships-of-war at that place.69

Jefferyes provided his superiors with information on the growth of the Tsar’s fleet during these years, writing that it now included “upward” of 28 ships of the line, all built over a period of six years at St. Petersburg. He noted that these were well built ships, and that the Tsar could build them cheaper than any other country in Europe, since Russia
possessed all of the materials required for their construction. Timber for these ships was brought in from Kazan “at so cheap a rate, that I have been told he can fit out a man-of-war (reckoning the other requisites proportionally) at 2 thirds less charges than one of the same bigness will cost in Great-Britain.” Canals and roads were also being built and improved to facilitate the importation of maritime construction supplies from the interior of Russia to St. Petersburg in order to accelerate the naval building campaign. All of these factors, Jefferyes explained, made it more urgent to recall all of the English ship builders in the Tsar’s service as soon as possible. Jefferyes was not alone in his observations concerning the Tsar’s ship building program, the dispatches of his French counterpart in St. Petersburg during 1720, Henri La Vie’s, also contained similar, although less inflammatory, reports. “The Tsar has used his stay in the capital to improve buildings and canals in the city, and also to accelerate the construction of [new] ships. Four ships of the line have already been launched this year, and two more will be launched this year; the Tsar manages to build these [ships] inexpensively, more so than other nations, and with this he has inexhaustible supplies and workers, who are available at will.”

On July 16, Jefferyes received notice in a diplomatic dispatch that on June 16 both the Lord-Justices and Parliament had enacted the necessary measures to recall English ship builders and other artisans from Russia. However, he was no longer optimistic that this could be accomplished successfully: “... I humbly entreat their excellencies to consider the difficulty I am like to meet with the ship-builders. These are people who have taken their all [sic] with them into this country, who have no lands or tenements and consequently nothing to loose in Great Britain; they are come to this country with their
families to seek their fortunes and have in some respects found the same, for their salaries are considerable, two of them having 2,000 rubles each p. annum, and other three 800 each, besides presents upon occasion and other advantages.” The content of this report differed sharply with the one Jefferyes sent earlier in March explaining the unsatisfactory working conditions in Russia and the discontent among the foreign workers; “... here are a great many more who have been forced to enter into this service, and who would willing return to their own country, if it were possible; but as force and violence have obliged them to engage, so by the same means they are kept, no regard being had to any intercession and no other reason being given. . .” Jefferyes was not referring to the large numbers of Englishmen that the Tsar had taken into the various branches of his service since 1700, but to a small number of English master ship builders, perhaps no greater than six highly skilled individuals and their apprentices at the time of the Tsar’s death, who had been recruited into Peter the Great’s service over a number of years. They received preferential treatment and housing from the Tsar who often attended their weddings and stood as Godfather to their children. The majority of the English ship builders in Peter the Great’s service would choose to remain in Russia even after his death in January 1725. Many of these individuals would continue in Russian service into the reign of Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740), eventually dying and being buried in the country.

It is notable that in his dispatches to London concerning the English ship builders in Russia, Jefferyes neglected to mention the significant number of men from England, Ireland and Scotland, with Jacobite sympathies serving as officers in Peter the Great’s navy or training Russian workers in his ship yards. The foreign officers in the Tsar’s
navy were to instruct, enforce discipline and serve as an example to those serving in the Russian navy with the goal of eventually being replaced by Russians. Even if the English government had attempted to recall the officers serving in the Tsar’s navy, it was extremely unlikely that individuals with sympathies for the Stuart claimant to the British throne would have had any inclination to obey ministers of the Hanoverian-born King of Great Britain. Peter the Great had always sought to train Russians to supplant as many foreigners in his service as quickly as possible, stating that: “We need Europe for a few decades, and then we must turn our backs on it.”

The Tsar’s ship building program was no exception to this trend; there were many Russian craftsmen who had been trained in both Europe and Russia working in Peter the Great’s ship yards. Jefferyes also ignored the fact that the Tsar himself had personally participated in the design and laying of the keels for many of the ships built at the Admiralty ship yard in St. Petersburg.

Lord Carteret, the newly appointed British Extraordinary Ambassador to Sweden, received instructions in a dispatch from London dated May 6, 1719, to inform the Queen of Sweden that Great Britain did not wish to see the Tsar grow any stronger in the Baltic, and that if Sweden would enter into negotiations with Hanover to conclude a peace treaty she would receive assistance against the Tsar. And that if the Tsar refused to conclude peace with Sweden, England would, “... besides the assistance which shall be agreed upon to be given them by Us towards recovering the same by force of arms We will employ Our utmost credit and interest with the powers before mentioned and with Our other allies to procure supplys from them for enabling the Swedes to bring the Tsar to reason.” Carteret’s purpose in traveling to Stockholm had been hastened to prevent the Swedes from reaching a peace treaty with the Tsar, while his secondary concern was to
renew Great Britain’s former alliance with Sweden and restore English commerce in the Baltic to its pre-war levels. Carteret’s mission had been initially opposed by the Swedish Chancellor, Count Gustav Cronhielm, who favored peace with the Tsar, but his concerns were put aside by the Queen, who was not well disposed towards negotiating with the Russians while the Tsar’s troops were causing great destruction and burning buildings within sight of Stockholm. When this was mentioned to Osterman during his mission to Stockholm in late July, he replied that there were many places in Russia that were still struggling to recover from the great destruction that the Swedes had carried out during Charles XII’s failed invasion of the country in 1708-1709. The Queen, as well as many of her supporters, were unmoved by Osterman’s protest; she had great faith in the promised protection of the English fleet and favored negotiations with Great Britain over Russia.

On September 10 (21), British diplomatic courier, Captain Charles Berkeley, arrived at the Åland Congress with official correspondence to be forwarded to the Tsar from Admiral Norris and the English Extraordinary Ambassador, Lord Carteret, who had arrived in Stockholm earlier. Copies of the letters were made available to the Russian ministers at the Åland Congress; their contents explained that Lord Carteret was an extraordinary English envoy acting with the authority of the Swedish court, and had been granted powers as a plenipotentiary minister by the Queen of Sweden to mediate the dispute between Russia and Sweden. The letter failed to mention the on-going British diplomatic efforts to conclude peace between Prussia and Sweden, of which the Russians were well aware. It also did not reflect Lord Carteret’s aggressive instructions to
Admiral Norris if his letter received an impertinent response, or was not accepted by the Russians:

If the answer be to your satisfaction [.] the King will obtain his end in the manner he likes best of saving a brave people without any loss of his own subjects, but if either an insolent or a captious answer be sent, or none at all, you shall then join the Suedes [sic] and act together in the manner you shall judge most effectual to destroy [sic] the Czar’s fleet, than which a greater service cannot be done to your country. . . You know his majesty’s view, which is to save Sueden [sic], if possible, and destroy the Czar’s fleet.80

The Russians also had good reason to believe that Lord Carteret had promoted the failure of the chances for peace that had occurred during the first part of August when the Queen of Sweden had requested an armistice.81

The Russian ministers examined the letters from Carteret and Norris, and although their contents appeared to be important and did not seem to be threatening, they were refused due to their “insolent” nature, nor were they forwarded to St. Petersburg. Relations between Russia and Great Britain had fallen so low that on October 1 (12), 1719, the Tsar expelled the English Resident James Jefferyes and his Hanoverian counterpart, Friedrich Weber, from court at St. Petersburg.82 In a meeting prior to their departure with vice-chancellor Peter Pavlovich Shafirov, Jefferyes stated that the Åland Congress was a significant factor in the breach of relations between Great Britain and Russia. He explained that the Congress had only served to separate Russia from her allies in the Northern Coalition and forced them to seek separate accommodations with the Swedes. This sentiment was not received well by either Shafirov or Peter the Great and marked a new low in Anglo-Russian relations. Russian seizures of English ships transporting illegal cargoes of contraband to Sweden served to exacerbate relations even more. Rumors disseminated in 1718 of alleged Russian Swedish support for the Pretender and his followers for an invasion of Scotland and suspected cooperation with
Spain to the detriment of Great Britain, served to make matters worse. British diplomatic initiatives, encouraged by the Prince of Hesse-Cassel, directed at depriving the Tsar of the majority of his conquest and restricting his power and influence complicated this delicate state of affairs further.

The Russian military campaigns of 1719 were highly successful in their military, economic, agricultural, and political consequences. They effectively demonstrated that regardless of the threatened presence of a powerful pro-Swedish British fleet, Peter the Great could launch meticulously planned and remarkably effective military operations along the east coast of Sweden. The close proximity and severity of the Russian raids near Stockholm shook the confidence of the Swedish population and contributed to rare public demonstrations against the government. Captain Seniavin’s open sea naval victory served to further these growing doubts. The iron and copper producing capabilities of the country had been significantly reduced and this had serious consequences for Sweden’s economy and its military. The absolutist system of government as practiced under Charles XII and his father was being overturned and the Queen’s position was far from secure. In spite of these developments, the Swedes hardened their negotiating position, leaving the Tsar with little choice but to break off the Åland Congress on October 9 (20), 1719. The diplomatic role of Great Britain was crucial in shaping the Swedes’ attitude toward peace.

In the final ratified version of the treaty signed between Sweden and Hanover on November 11 (22), 1719, Great Britain once again agreed to increase its financial aid to Sweden and send the fleet back to the Baltic in 1720. British diplomats had convinced the Swedes that by ceding to Hanover the “burdensome” provinces of Bremen and
Verden they would stand a greater chance of regaining, with British aid, the “valuable” Russian occupied provinces of Livonia and Estonia, which “is the only thing every true Swede should have at heart.”87 Sweden’s position had become so desperate that even after Britain’s self-serving diplomatic duplicity with Prussia became apparent, with their post-dated treaty of September 15, 1719, the Swedes continued to look to England for diplomatic and military assistance. Only after Sweden had signed British negotiated formal peace treaties with Hanover and Prussia, were the Russians approached with any serious offers by the British government of mediation. But it was too late. The goal of British diplomacy had been to secure new territories for Hanover and isolate the Tsar. But Peter the Great was determined to maintain his conquest, and even more so after the emergence of George I’s efforts to form an armed coalition to take back Sweden’s provinces in the northern Baltic, as well as forcefully detaching Kiev and Smolensk from Russia and ceding them to Poland.

Throughout the years 1718-1719, British diplomats had sanctimoniously accused the Tsar of using the Åland Congress to negotiate a separate peace to the detriment of his allies, while they simultaneously proceeded to pursue an identical policy at Russia’s expense. As British diplomatic efforts became more determined, so did the Tsar, who reinforced his goals by expanding his army and navy to protect his conquest and insure Russia’s success. This was an element that King George I would be hard pressed to match.

The exhausted country of Sweden had missed an opportunity to conclude a peace treaty with Russia and with the Åland Congress terminated no direct peace negotiations were taking place between the two sides. In response to these developments, Peter the
Great began preparations for another military campaign to be conducted in the Gulf of Bothnia and along the northeast coast of Sweden in 1720. British diplomacy had succeeded in securing Bremen and Verden for Hanover and negotiating preliminary treaties with all of the belligerents except Denmark and Russia. Sweden would pay the price for its alliance with Great Britain once again during the Russian campaigns in 1720 and ultimately in August of 1721 when it was compelled to sign the Treaty of Nystad with Russia.
The Campaign of 1719
The Russian navy had been established by Peter the Great after the first unsuccessful Azov campaign in 1695, the Baltic fleet was founded in 1704 when construction of the Admiralty ship yards began in St. Petersburg.

Many of the support vessels included ships known as cogs, pinks and prams. A cog was a small highly maneuverable vessel based on Dutch designs; the term pink denotes a warship with three masts and triangular sails slung to the mast; a pram was a flat-bottomed vessel used for transport and as a platform to bombard coastal fortresses and clearing channels. Sources for the majority of ships statistics: Donald W. Mitchell, A History of Russian and Soviet Sea Power (New York, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), p. 31 and 33; and Edward J. Philips, The Founding of the Russian Navy: Peter the Great and the Azov fleet, 1688-1714 (Westport, CT.; Greenwood Press, 1995), pp. 232-233.


15 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великаго . . . , часть II, отдълъ I, с. 73.

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18 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота: Балтийский Флот, 1702-1725 (Санкт-Петербургъ, Россия; В Типографіи Морскаго Министерства, 1865), часть II, отдълъ I, сс. 365-367.

19 Although there were various sizes of galleys in the Russian navy, there were three principle types that were used in the Baltic campaigns. Larger galleys were upwards of 150 feet and capable of carrying as many as 260 oarsmen and soldiers. They were armed with cannons on the stern, mid-section, bow and had as many as three mast with triangular sails. The smaller galleys were 115 to 130 feet in length, had similar triangular sails and were armed accordingly and were capable of carrying 250 oarsmen and soldiers propelled by 26 to 36 pairs of oarsmen; and the Skampavel galleys which had up to two masts with lateen sails and were 59 feet in length, capable of carrying 150 oars men and soldiers. At first the galleys were powered by oarsmen made up primarily of convicts sentenced to this duty or conscripted labor. After the Russian victory at Poltava, Swedish prisoners of war were used to supplement the numbers of oarsmen, later as the size of the galley fleet grew it was necessary to supplement the ranks of oarsmen with soldiers. For more specifics on the size, armaments and number of oarsmen required for each galley. The lod’ia was a flat-bottomed rowing vessel of varying size with two or three masts that could carry up to 60 men. It was armed with either battering rams, catapults, or small cannons and was used for transporting men and supplies to shore as well as coastal, river and salvage missions.

20 There are no adequate sources available providing descriptions on the lives of the Russian sailors at sea or the soldiers during these campaigns in Sweden.

21 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть II, отдълъ I, сс. 347-348.
22 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великого . . . , часть II, отдель I, с. 78.
23 Там же, с. 79.
24 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть II, отдель I, с. 380.
25 The term skerries is of Scandinavian origin; it denotes reefs, partially submerged large rocks, and rocky isles that line the coast and inland waterways of Finland, the Åland Islands, and Sweden.
26 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великого . . . , часть II, отдель I, с. 87.
27 Там же, с. 76.
28 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть II, отдель I, с. 393.
30 Ibid.
33 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть I, отдель II, с. 381.
34 Сборник Императорского Русского Исторического Общества (Санкт-Петербург, Россия; В Типографии Н. С. Стасюлевича, 1884), том 40, сс. 41-42.
35 Там же, с. 42.
36 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великого: Екстракт изъ Журнала Генерала Адмирала Граfa Apraksina 1719 года . . . , часть II, отдель I, с. 106.
38 Походный Журнал 1719 Года (Санкт-Петербург, Россия; С. Н., 1855), с. 8, (Field Journal 1719.)
40 Там же, с. 113.
41 Походный Журнал 1719 Года, с. 89.
42 Note: All Russian soldiers had been given strict orders that: “No enemy churches are to be destroyed, or their images taken, under penalty of death.” Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть II, отдель I, с. 393. Obviously, conditions during a rapidly unfolding battle did not always permit these instructions to be strictly observed, as was the case in this instance.
43 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великого: Екстракт изъ Журнала Генерала Майора Лессёя 1719 года . . . , часть II, отдель I, с. 114.
44 Там же, с. 112.
45 Там же, с. 116.
46 Походный Журнал 1719 Года, сс. 91 и 92.
49 Там же, с. 106.
50 Там же, с. 107.
51 Там же, с. 108.
52 Там же, с. 100.
53 Собрание Собственноручныхъ Писемъ Государя Императора Петра Великаго къ Apraksинуъ (Москва, Россия; В Типографии М. М. Стасюлевича), часть II, с. 95, (The Collected Hand Written Government Letters of the Sovereign Emperor Peter the Great to Apraksin, part II.)
54 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великого . . . , часть II, отдель I, с. 102.
59 Tam же, c. 110. Note: No precise figures are provided for the exact number of Swedish losses, other than they “suffered two or three times as many killed and wounded.”
60 Собрание Собственноручныхъ Писемъ Государя Императора Петра Великаго Къ Апраксинымъ, часть II, c. 90. Note: Norris’ fleet would be joined later by 5 more ships armed with 360 cannon. See: Anderson, Naval Wars in the Baltic, p. 195.
61 Собрание Собственноручныхъ Писемъ Государя Императора Петра Великаго Къ Апраксинымъ, часть II, c. 99.
62 Материалы для Истории Русского Флота, часть IV, отдъль VIII, c. 169.
63 Собрание Собственноручныхъ Писемъ Государя Императора Петра Великаго Къ Апраксинымъ, часть II, c. 90.
64 Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества, томъ 61, cc. 506-508.
66 Ibid., pp. 147-148.
67 Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества, томъ 61, cc. 515-516, James Jefferyes to Lord Stanhope, April 3, o. s. 1719.
68 Tam же, cc. 536-537, Jefferyes to Lord Stanhope, May 15, o. s. 1719.
69 Tam же, c. 562, Jefferyes to Secretary of State James Craggs, July 12, o. s. 1719.
70 Tam же, c. 563.
71 Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества, томъ 40, c. 105, Henri La Vie to Abbé Dubois, August 30 (September 10), 1720.
72 Tam же, томъ 60, cc. 561-562, Jefferyes to Craggs, July 16, o. s. 1719.
73 Tam же, c. 512, Jefferyes to Lord Stanhope, March 27, o. s. 1710.
77 Ibid., p. 481.
79 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великаго . . ., часть II, отдъль I, c. 119.
81 Сборникъ Императорскаго Русскаго Историческаго Общества, томъ 40, c. 54.
82 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великаго . . ., часть II, отдъль I, c. 120.
83 Походный Журнал 1719 года, cc. 74-75.
84 Журнал или Поденная Записка Петра Великаго . . ., часть II, отдъль II, c. 608.
85 The Queen of Sweden had signed the treaty on August 18 and George I on September 14, but due to the on going secret negotiations between England and Prussia the official date of ratification was post dated.
86 Chance, George I and the Northern War, p. 323.