F. WILLOUGHBY SMITH AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION: 7 NOVEMBER - 12 DECEMBER, 1917

A thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

F. Willoughby Smith and the Development of American Policy
Toward the Bolshevik Revolution:
7 November - 12 December, 1917. (May 1986)
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Felix Octavius Willoughby Smith served as the American consul at Batum, and later Tiflis, Russia, from April, 1914 to April, 1919. The United States' entry into the war in April of 1917 catapulted Consul Smith into a position of immense responsibility, for he was well-aware of the military, political, economic, and strategic importance of the Transcaucasus region of South Russia to the Allies. The Bolshevik Revolution of 7 November 1917 overthrew a regime in Russia that was friendly to the United States and threatened to drive a wedge between the Transcaucasus and the Allies to whom the region had pledged allegiance.

The son of the American consul at Odessa during the Lincoln and Grant administrations, Smith was born and raised in South Russia during the reign of Aleksandr II.

Perhaps because of his upbringing he was adamantly opposed to the Bolsheviks and everything for which they stood. His consular dispatches to the Department of State advocated taking a strong stance toward the Bolsheviks while, at the same time, financially supporting a group of Cossacks in South Russia who had pledged to remain in the war and to end Bolshevik rule in Petrograd.

The administration of President Woodrow Wilson ultimately acted upon Smith's recommendations to finance the Cossacks in South Russia. Many diplomatic historians have argued that this was the first of many anti-Bolshevik actions by American officials and that the Cold War between Russia and America began at this time. The first objective of this thesis is to ascertain the influence that F. Willoughby Smith exerted on the development of American policy toward the Bolshevik Revolution. The second objective is to determine the motivations behind Consul Smith's recommendations. The final objective is to evaluate the significance of the decision made by the Wilson administration on 12 December 1917 to finance the Cossacks in South Russia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The development of this thesis has rested primarily upon State Department records due to the distinct lack of information available on F. Willoughby Smith. Beyond the standard microfilmed State Department Decimal Files and the printed Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, a number of other vital unpublished materials essential for completion of the thesis were obtained from the national archives. Chief among these were the files including Applications and Recommendations for Appointment to the Foreign Service and F. Willoughby Smith's Personnel File, as cited in the bibliography. Special thanks is extended to Dr. Mary A. Giunta at the National Historical and Publications Records Commission in Washington, D.C., for taking the time and effort out of her busy schedule to accomodate my special needs.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Mrs. Mary Pat Brigham at the Vermont Historical Society in Montpelier, Vermont, for locating sources on the Smith family's geneology and history. Likewise, Sharon L. Lewis at the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery aided me in tracing the confusing trail that an obscure F. Willoughby Smith left after his death in 1920. I should also express my gratitude to Dr. J. Dane

Hartgrove at the Diplomatic Branch of the Civil Archives Division of the National Archives and Dr. George J. Kovtun at the European Division of the Library of Congress for answering many of the complicated questions I had about Consul Smith and the Cossacks in South Russia.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to those who provided assistance and guidance in the development of this thesis. My most heartfelt thanks is extended to Dr. Betty M. Unterberger, who served as my thesis advisor. I consider it a priviledge to have studied under a scholar of her stature, as she is now recognized around the world as being one of the foremost authorities on Russian-American relations. I would especially like to thank her for helping me to realize that human perceptions, whether accurate or misconceived, have so often changed the course of American diplomatic history. *The Bolshevik Revolution* was brought to life for me by Dr. Chester S. L. Dunning who, although a medieval Russian scholar, was in my mind at his best when he was eliciting discussion from his graduate students on the many fine points of the November Revolution. The thoughtfulness and compassion extended me by Dr. Dunning were instrumental in helping me to successfully complete this degree program. Dr. John D. Robertson has, on many occasions, discussed this thesis with me and offered useful suggestions from a

political scientist's point of view. I would like to thank him for aiding me in keeping things in perspective and, more importantly, for treating me as a colleague and as a fellow teacher.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my best friend, Ingrid Seaborn, and Fritz, my poodle, for putting up with me during the many, many months that it took to complete this thesis. Ingrid was there when things looked hopeless, and Fritz was by my side when the nights would never end. To them both I extend my love and gratitude.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family. They know better than anyone else the hardships that have resulted from working simultaneously as a teacher, graduate assistant, and full-time graduate student. I would particularly like to dedicate this thesis to my father, Walter Barnett Hammond, and my grandfather, Thomas Clifford Hammond. My father, in his own quiet and unassuming way, sweated blood with me over this thesis many more times than he would care to admit. To my grandfather I owe my thanks for teaching me that education is the key to success. T. C., this is for you.

Terry W. Hammond

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DECISION

The Bolshevik Revolution of 7 November, 1917, completely altered the structure and content of American diplomatic relations with Russia.[1] When Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin and his socialist followers overthrew the Provisional Government of Aleksander Kerenskii, which President Woodrow Wilson loyally supported, the political leadership of the United States was forced to reevaluate the nation's position toward the new Russian government.[2] Most important in this reevaluation was the effect that Lenin's ascension to power would have on the American and Allied war effort against the Central Powers. On 8 November , one day after assuming control of the Russian government, Lenin and the Congress of Soviets approved the

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[1]Although the Julian Calendar was used in Russia until February, 1918, this thesis will refer to dates according to the western Gregorian Calendar to assure greater continuity and understanding from the American perspective.

[2]See, for example, President Wilson's address to Congress of 2 April, 1917, in Arthur S. Link, David Hirst, et. al., eds., The Papers of Woodrow Wilson XLI (Princeton, N. J., 1983), p. 524 (hereafter referred to as PWW, volume number, and date).

Diplomatic History is the pattern for format and style.

"Decree on Peace."[3] Demanding that negotiations be opened by all belligerent countries and that a peace without annexations or indemnities be secured, the Bolsheviks made clear their desire to fulfill Lenin's promise to remove Russia from the conflict at the earliest date possible. This threat, which America and its associates realized would be difficult to negate, presented the American government with a peculiar dilemma. In the course of the next month, the Wilson administration attempted to grapple with the constantly changing situation in revolutionary Russia.

Finally, twenty-eight days after the initial Bolshevik coup in Petrograd, Wilson and his Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, formulated the administration's first major decision in principle regarding Lenin, the Bolsheviks, and their platform. In a memorandum dated 10 December, 1917, Lansing offered to Wilson the following observations. First, the Bolsheviks were determined to prevent Russia from further participating in the war. Second, order and military efficiency would become harder to restore the longer the Bolsheviks continued in power. Third, the elimination of Russia as a fighting force would prolong the war for two or three years with a correspon-

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[3]James Bunyan and H. H. Fisher, eds., The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials (Stanford, 1934), p. 124-125.

ding demand on the United States for men and money. Finally, with a break in Bolshevik domination the Russian armies could possibly be reorganized and once again become an important factor in the war.[4]

Lansing concluded that the only hope for a stable Russian government at that time was a military dictatorship backed by loyal disciplined troops, and that the only apparent nucleus for an organized movement strong enough to "supplant" the Bolsheviks and establish a stable government was the group of officers that had aligned with General Alexei Kaledin, the former commander of the Eighth Army of the Southwestern front and hetman of the Don Cossacks. The Cossacks of the Don River region, along with other regional groups of Russia's traditional land owning class, had pledged allegiance to the Allies and had vowed to oppose the new revolutionary government in Petrograd. Lansing feared that German and Bolshevik propaganda would discourage this group and thus lead to the ultimate disintegration of the Russian Empire. Thus, providing the movement gained sufficient strength, he proposed that the United States forward Kaledin moral and material aid, for

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[4]Robert Lansing, secretary of state, to President Woodrow Wilson, Washington, 10 December 1917, RG 59, File 861.00/807a, Decimal Files, Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1910-1929, Department of State, National Archives Microfilm M316 (hereafter all microfilmed State Department documents will be identified by file and document numbers and DSNAM.

nothing could be gained by inaction. Rather, a few words of encouragement could save Russia as a country, as well as hundreds of thousands of American men and billions of dollars.[5]

Two days later, on 12 December, Wilson gave his "entire approval" to Lansing's plan to extend financial aid to General Kaledin and the Don Cossacks in South Russia. Since it would compromise the United States' position with the Bolshevik government to support Kaledin openly, the administration decided that money should be loaned to the British and French, and that those governments should finance the Kaledin enterprise "in so far as it is necessary."[6] On 13 December Lansing instructed Oscar T. Crosby, the American Treasury Department delegate to the Inter-Allied Council on War Purchases and Finance, to confer with the proper British and French authorities in London and report as soon as possible on their willingness to adopt the outlined course of action. If the response was affirmative, he should also learn the extent of financial aid that would be required. Exhorting Crosby to act expeditiously, Lansing once again stressed that the United States' sympathies with the Kaledin movement had to

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Lansing to Oscar T. Crosby (Treasury Department delegate to the Inter-Allied War Conference), Washington, 12 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/804d, DSNAM.

be secretly pursued.[7]

Thus, slightly over one month after the Bolshevik coup, the Wilson administration formulated its first major decision regarding revolutionary Russia. This decision in principle, which consisted of financing elements in Russia that were known to be opposed not only to the Germans but also to the Bolsheviks, has been interpreted in various ways by diplomatic historians. The major issue is whether the decision was a war measure, designed to implement the reconstitution of the Eastern front against Germany and Austria-Hungary or the opening gun of an anti-Bolshevik counterrevolutionary effort to remove Lenin and his party from power in Russia. In this debate, historians have aligned themselves predominantly along one of two major axes. Each axis is dominated by a noted diplomatic historian, the first by George F. Kennan and the second by William Appleman Williams.

Kennan, while at times criticizing President Wilson's policy toward Russia, finds little wrong with the 12 December decision to provide financial support for General Kaledin. Kennan does fault the United States government for having committed itself to a fixed and narrow line of policy toward the Kerenskii government, thus leaving itself no alternatives in confronting the new

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[7]Ibid.

situation that arose on 7 November. As a result, the administration was left in considerable bewilderment by the Bolshevik coup and perceived the "Decree on Peace" as a bitterly unfriendly move. The United States and other Allied nations, filled with wartime emotion, could not help but be resentful toward Lenin and the Bolsheviks for complicating an already complex wartime situation. The specter of over two million German soldiers being transferred to the Western front and the probability that the German war machine would gain full access to the great physical resources of southern and western Russia deeply worried Wilson and his associates. Kennan believes that it was only natural that Allied statesmen and military leaders should have explored any and all options in an attempt to restore the Eastern front against their enemies. Thus, the United States and the Allies feared that Russia's defection would deal the Allied war effort a crushing blow. Such a blow could lead to ultimate defeat.[8]

Furthermore, the Allies were having a difficult time believing that they were under any obligation to respect the desire of the new government to remove Russia from the war. Kennan notes that the Bolshevik government

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[8]George F. Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920, vol. 1: Russia Leaves the War (Princeton, 1956), pp. 26, 75-76; George F. Kennan, "American Troops in Russia: The True Record," Atlantic 103 (January, 1959): 37.

in late 1917 was not representative of Russian public opinion, had not been elected to office, and failed to control all of the territory once occupied by the Russian Empire.[9] The mere possibility of a prolonged Bolshevik rule in Russia left the Allied governments hovering nervously "on the edge of events, wringing their hands, trying to moderate the dismal setback which Russia's departure from the war...spelled for them."[10]

Kennan views Wilson's decision of 12 December as one that was pressed upon the State Department by wartime necessity. The Wilson administration had actually held out for a month against its French and British associates, who advocated more extreme measures due to their closer ties to, and greater investments in Russia. As a result, the Allies were hopelessly divided on the actions to be taken in response to the Bolshevik platform, and each government was left to formulate its own approach to dealing with the new regime in Russia. Thus, though the United States government had a lesser investment in Russia than did England or France, the nucleus forming around General Kaledin in South Russia was perceived by the

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[9]George F. Kennan, "American Troops in Siberia: Aid for the Czechoslovaks?" in American Intervention in the Russian Civil War, Betty M. Unterberger, ed., (Lexington, Mass., 1969), p. 52.

[10]George F. Kennan, Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin (Boston, 1961), pp.42-43.

Wilson administration as being the best hope of protecting America's most substantial investment at the time -- that of the First World War.[11]

Wilson and Lansing formulated the decision to provide clandestine aid to the Don Cossacks on the basis of recommendations from consular and diplomatic officials and private citizens present in Russia in late November and early December of 1917. Kennan believes that the president gave his "entire approval" to the scheme because his most trusted advisors strongly recommended that he do so in an effort to salvage the Eastern front. However, the State Department soon realized that favorable reports from Russia had been grossly exaggerated and it decided not to proceed with aiding the Cossacks. Kennan suggests that no serious damage resulted from this incident because of the instinctive prudence and circumspection of the statesmen in Washington at the time and that, in light of history, the caution exhibited by the Wilson administration in this case is most commendable.[12]

A number of historians support Kennan's thesis that President Wilson, though more reluctant than his counterparts in England and France, approved aid to Kaledin

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[11]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, pp. 165, 170; Kennan, Russia and the West, p. 43.

[12]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, pp. 161, 170-171, 190.

because he hoped to reestablish the Eastern front and keep Russia in the war. Leonid I. Strakhovsky notes that British and French goals in early December, 1917, were much different from those of the United States. In fact, he interprets the British and French efforts to aid Kaledin as being politically and economically motivated.[13] Conversely, the policy of the American government and the wishes of the American people are viewed by Strakhovsky as being directed toward bringing Russia back into the war "by supporting, though hesitatingly and ineffectually, any person, group, or movement in Russia which appeared to them to be striving to retain that country as a fighting unit in the war...."[14] The Bolsheviks were opposed by the United States because they were withdrawing Russia from the war and this action would cost America, as Lansing noted, hundreds of thousands of men and billions of dollars.[15]

Strakhovsky interprets the policy of the United States in early December, 1917, as being one that was based on three premises: non-recognition, non-intervention, and non-dismemberment. Due to the pro-Allied atti-

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[13]Leonid I. Strakhovsky, "The Franco-British Plot to Dismember Russia," Current History 33 (March, 1931): 839.

[14]Leonid I. Strakhovsky, American Opinion About Russia, 1917-1920 (Toronto, 1961), p. 41.

[15]Ibid.

tudes demonstrated by the Cossack generals shortly after the Bolshevik Revolution and the pressure that ensuing events placed on the American government, President Wilson for a short time "reluctantly abandoned" the second premise of non-intervention. Strakhovsky suggests that, in consideration of these facts, the support offered by the United States government to the Cossacks was certainly warranted.[16]

The United States and the Allies, according to John F. N. Bradley, were most embarrassed by the Bolshevik coup. Though the Western powers considered the Bolsheviks to be pro-German and possibly even German agents, they realized that direct military intervention would be necessary if Russia was to be forced to meet her legal and moral obligations to the Allies. Even when the Bolsheviks began to make overtures to the Germans in order to secure a negotiated peace, few Allied leaders thought of direct military intervention in Russia. Bradley notes that the United States government, more than any of its associates, was the most reluctant to participate in any form of intervention in Russia.[17]

In examining the effect that the impending collapse of the Eastern front had on the Allies, Betty M. Unter-

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[16]Ibid., pp. 41, 45.

[17]John F. N. Bradley, Civil War in Russia: 1917-1920 (New York, 1975), pp. 51, 56.

berger remarks that Allied concern "approached panic" as military operations came to a complete halt in December, 1917. President Wilson, though reluctant at first, was convinced by persons who had recently been to Russia and his closest advisors to consider financing the Cossacks in South Russia. Wilson finally agreed to give whatever aid possible to those who demonstrated a willingness to continue the fight against Germany.[18]

Warning against considering the prominent figures in President Wilson's cabinet as interchangeable parts, Eugene P. Trani distinguishes between the attitudes of Wilson and Lansing toward the Bolsheviks. Trani suggests that Wilson was actually inclined to let the Russians work out their own futures, confident that democracy would eventually emerge in Russia. Wilson, who was under considerable mental and physical stress in late 1917, was susceptible to pressure from Lansing, who greatly feared Bolshevism. Lansing allied himself with the British, whose support for some form of intervention was "massive, continual, and in the long run decisive."[19] The British used diplomatic and military channels to pressure the

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[18]Betty M. Unterberger, "The United States, Austria-Hungary, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia: The Bolshevik Connection" (Unpublished manuscript, Texas A&M University, 1986), pp. 139, 147.

[19]Eugene P. Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene in Russia: A Reconsideration," Journal of Modern History 48 (September, 1976): 445.

president to support their position regarding Russia, even going so far as to attempt to convert those closest to Wilson to their point of view. Trani suggests that, had there been no Allied pressure to intervene in Russian affairs, President Wilson would surely not have taken the action that he did on 12 December.[20]

In the end, Lansing convinced the president to funnel aid to the British and French, who would then extend that aid to General Kaledin. Trani commends the President for rejecting other harsh measures advocated by Lansing.[21] Wilson's actual policy toward Russia was simply to "do nothing," and would have remained so had he not been exposed to intense pressure by Lansing and his British allies.[22]

In contrast to the interpretations of George F. Kennan and the other aforementioned historians, William Appleman Williams has severely criticized Wilson for his decision to finance what the president clearly understood to be anti-Bolshevik elements in South Russia. Wilson,

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[20]Ibid., pp. 442-445.

[21]Most notably, according to Trani, Wilson rejected Lansing's request to send Major Stanley Washburn, a noted journalist and war correspondent, on a forty day anti-Bolshevik speaking tour. The President also refused Lansing's recommendation that the Committee on Public Information wage an intensive anti-Bolshevik campaign inside Russia.

[22]Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene in Russia," pp. 449-450.

who had surrounded himself with administrators who believed that good societies only existed in western civilization, had no difficulty in developing an antagonistic attitude toward the Bolsheviks -- this feeling came naturally to him. According to Williams, the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States had its origins not in the years 1944-1945, but when Woodrow Wilson "squared off" with V. I. Lenin in late 1917.[23]

Williams contends that the president, by intervening in Russia's internal affairs, was attempting to maintain the nineteenth century status quo against Lenin's "devastating criticism" of western society.[24] Washington was bewildered, confused, and angered by the Bolshevik insurrection, and sought to ignore the existence of Lenin's government rather than accept the realities presented by Russia's second revolution. Wishing that the Bolsheviks would miraculously disappear and that their government would thus collapse, Wilson and Lansing consciously formulated and quickly implemented the policy that was put into effect on 12 December, 1917. The first cornerstone of this policy was that, as long as the Bolsheviks remained in power in Russia, the United States

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[23]William Appleman Williams, "American Intervention in Russia, 1917-1920," Studies on the Left (Fall, 1963): 33, 35; William Appleman Williams, "Wilson," New York Review of Books, 2 December, 1971, p. 3.

[24]Williams, "Wilson," p.3.

would refuse to establish moral intercourse with them and would, under no circumstances, recognize Lenin's government. The second and most important feature of this policy was that the Wilson administration would do all in its power to aid any serious and conservative leader or group whose aim was the destruction of the Soviet government.[25]

Wilson and Lansing conspired to aid General Kaledin because of their inherent antipathy for Bolshevism, according to Williams, but disguised their true motives behind the facade of strengthening the Eastern front against Germany. They did so contrary to advice received from persons on the scene who observed the increasing consolidation of Bolshevik power. Furthermore, the administration's decision to finance the Kaledin movement actually preceded that of their British allies by ten days, further demonstrating Wilson's desire to crush Lenin's party with anti-Bolshevik troops. Williams concludes that the anti-Bolshevik policy initially implemented by Wilson in December of 1917 was actually the beginning of America's policy of containment and that it adversely affected Russian-American relations up until and after World War II.[26]

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[25]William Appleman Williams, American-Russian Relations: 1781-1947 (New York, 1952), p. 105.

[26]Ibid., pp. 105-107, 117; Williams, "American Intervention in Russia," pp. 41-42.

Lloyd C. Gardner argues that President Wilson had several alternatives open in dealing with the Bolsheviks in late 1917. Being unable to bring himself to approach Lenin in a serious effort to establish formal diplomatic relations or to mount an "all out" military action designed to overthrow the Bolsheviks, Wilson was forced to adopt a policy of "watchful waiting." This policy consisted of combining non-recognition with other positive and negative stimuli against the insurgents in order to achieve a constitutional revolution. Inwardly, however, Wilson was opposed to Bolshevism from his "innermost being," and ultimately acted against them because they endangered democracy.[27]

President Wilson, according to Gardner, had convinced himself that, regardless of their intentions, the Bolsheviks were aiding the Germans in their war effort. Everything that Wilson was fighting for -- a military victory over Germany, a League of Nations, and America's self-image and world-respect -- was being threatened because of the overtures the Bolsheviks were making toward the Germans. Gardner believes that Lansing manipulated Wilson's anti-Bolshevik attitudes in an effort to secure aid for General Kaledin and his Cossacks for, by financing this movement, recognitions of the insurgents could be

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[27]Lloyd C. Gardner, Wilson and Revolutions: 1913-1921 (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 7-8.

avoided, the Eastern front could be maintained, and a buffer could be created between the Bolsheviks and the Balkans. Though he credits the Wilson administration with correctly judging that the Bolsheviks did not control all of the territory of Russia in December of 1917, Gardner concludes that this action amounted to interference in the internal affairs of another country, regardless of the reasons for which it was undertaken.[28]

Robert J. Maddox agrees with Williams' assertion that Wilson's actions in late 1917 demonstrate his intense hatred for Lenin and his Bolshevik party. Maddox contends that Wilson detested communism and, from the onset of the 7 November revolution, hoped for a successful counterrevolution in Russia. Wilson consciously formulated a policy that would outwardly attempt to convince the Russian people that the United States had not abandoned them in their hour of need, while at the same time administration officials discussed extending funds to General Kaledin in order to "nourish" the anti-Bolshevik movement in South Russia. The Russian Embassy in the United States, which was still manned by officials from the Provisional Government, was used by Wilson as a "dummy corporation" through which money was channelled to anti-communists in Russia.

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[28]Ibid., pp. 32, 45, 103; Lloyd C. Gardner, Safe For Democracy: The Anglo-American Response to Revolution, 1913-1923 (New York, 1984), pp. 156-157.

Thus, Wilson's announced policy of non-intervention in Russia's internal affairs was for tactical purposes only, and the ultimate failure of the Kaledin movement should not obscure the president's willingness to take sides in Russia's domestic strife. Maddox concludes that those who argue that Wilson did not seek to interfere in Russia's internal affairs are incorrect, for the President was deeply committed to the anti-Bolshevik cause in Russia.[29]

A final interpretation of the significance of the 12 December decision by the Wilson administration is offered by Alexander S. Pidhainy, Oleh S. Pidhainy, and Loventrice A. Scales. These authors assert that the American government did, in fact, act on this decision and eventually forwarded over one billion U. S. dollars to Russian non-Bolshevik troops. They maintain that, through the financial involvememt of the American government, Wilson intervened against the Bolshevik authorities immediatly after the 7 November coup. The financial involvement in Russia's private affairs, which the authors note that George Kennan has failed to address, undermines Kennan's basic premises and his interpretation of facts regarding this episode in Russian-American relations.[30]

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[29]Robert J. Maddox, "Woodrow Wilson, The Russian Embassy, and Siberian Intervention," Pacific Historical Review, 34 (November, 1967): 436-437, 441; Robert J. Maddox, The Unknown War With Russia: Wilson's Siberian Intervention (San Rafael, Calif., 1977), p. 35.

[30]Alexander S. Pidhainy, Oleh S. Pidhainy, and

Pidhainy, Pidhainy, and Scales present evidence that they believe implicates the Department of State and the Treasury Department in a conspiracy which allowed Boris Bakhmetev, the ambassador of the Provisional Government to the United States, to draw on funds that legally should have been transferred to the new government of Russia, the Bolsheviks. The availability of these funds convinced Lansing that the money needed to finance intervention against the Bolsheviks could be easily obtained and that the financial needs of a new anti-Bolshevik government could be met. Lansing recorded his thoughts on the subject in the 10 December memorandum to Wilson. The president's response was "short and to the point," and his "entire approval" of the financing of General Kaledin and his anti-Bolshevik forces signalled the beginning of America's intervention in Russia's domestic affairs.[31]

Each of the interpretations of Wilson's 12 December decision centers around the historian's perception of the President's intentions in implementing the decision and of the outcome he desired as a result of this action. It is clear that, beyond agreeing that a decision was made on this date, historians differ on the rationale for and the

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Loventrice A. Scales, "Silver and Billions: American Finances and the Bolshevik Revolution," New Review of East European Studies 14 (December, 1974): 1-2, 35-36.

[31]Ibid., pp. 21, 34-36.

effects of the Wilson administration's decision to finance the Kaledin movement in South Russia. Nevertheless, the decision was made and, though never implemented, it is still misunderstood to this day.

One point that cannot be disputed is that Wilson and Lansing were forced to consider a number of factors as they formulated this decision in principle toward the Bolsheviks in Petrograd and the Cossacks in South Russia. To be sure, all of the factors that entered into the making of this decision may never be known. However, it can be safely assumed that reports received from American consular agents stationed in Russia weighed heavily in Lansing's decision to propose the 12 December course of action to Wilson. New evidence suggests that their decision was strongly if not decisively influenced by the recommendations forwarded by Felix Willoughby Smith, the United States' consul at Batum, and later Tiflis, Georgia, in South Russia. An analysis of Consul Smith's background, the substance of his reports, and Lansing's interpretation of those reports reveals the true rationale behind Wilson's decision to finance the Cossacks in South Russia.

CHAPTER II

F. WILLOUGHBY SMITH: BACKGROUND AND FAMILY HISTORY

On 24 April, 1914, Felix Octavius Willoughby Smith assumed control of the American consulate at Batum, Russia, on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. Smith's arrival at Batum marked the return to Russia of a man who was intimately familiar with the culture and customs of the southern region of that country. The youngest of eight children, Willoughby was born on 25 June, 1872. His parents, Catherine Prout and Timothy Clark Smith, were residing in Odessa, Russia, at the time of his birth.[1]

Willoughby's mother was of Italian, English, and German ancestry. Her father was the family and court physician for Prince Michael Vorontsov, the Governor General of South Russia, and she was the Vorontsov's governess. Her family was living in Odessa when she met Timothy Clark Smith, a thirty-five year old doctor from Monkton, Vermont. Willoughby's parents married on 17 June, 1856, in Odessa, and moved to the United States one month later.[2]

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[1]Henry B. Hall, "Biographical Sketches, Chiefly of Rutland County, Vermont", (Montpelier, Vt., 1923), pp. 5-7.

[2]Ibid.

The story of how Timothy Clark Smith came to reside in Odessa is interesting. Descended from Henry Smith, an English proprietor who settled in Massachussetts in 1637, the Smith family was among the first Anglo settlers to inhabit Vermont. Timothy was born in Monkton, Vermont, on 14 June, 1821. He earned an A.B. degree from Middlebury College in Vermont in 1842. After working as a school teacher and businessman, he earned an M.D. degree from the University of New York in 1855. Having ambitions to "perfect himself in the surgical practice," Dr. Smith approached the British government about serving as a surgeon in the British army, which was then actively engaged in the in the Crimean War.[3] Rejected by the British, Smith applied for and received a formal appointment as a staff surgeon in the Russian Imperial Army. He set sail for St. Petersburg in 1855.[4]

Retaining his United States citizenship, Smith assumed the rank of colonel in the Imperial Army and was afforded a commensurate title in the civil service as well. He was eventually stationed at Odessa on the Black Sea, where the sick and wounded were often taken after service in the Crimea. His biographer notes that Smith

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[3]Ibid., p. 5.

[4]Ibid., pp. 1-5., Marjorie Little Napoli, The Smith Genealogy [St. Albans, Vt., 1974], p. 12-19; Aldis Everard Hibner, A Genealogy of Joseph Bartlett (Rutland, Vermont, 1934), pp. 1, 10-12, 16-17, 40-43, 92-93; Duane L. Robin-

"to outward appearances became a Russian military doctor."[5] Smith married Catherine Prout in 1856 and, following the end of the Crimean War the same year, returned to the United States. The Smiths lived in Vermont for the next five years. On 1 June, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Dr. Smith as the United States' consul at Odessa, where he served until October of 1875. Smith ended his consular career at Galatz, Romania, where he was consul from 1878 until 1883.[6] The highlight of Smith's service in Odessa occurred in 1867 when he secured an audience with Tsar Aleksandr II for a group of American visitors.[7] Smith was particularly pleased with this meeting and, as his consular reports indicate, had great confidence in the Tsar and his ability to govern Russia properly. In 1869 he reported that "contentment and tranquility reign everywhere [in Russia], patriotism and love of the imperial family are sentiments almost universal"

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son, General Catalogue of Middlebury College (Middlebury, Vermont, 1950), p. 117; Eugene Schuyler, charge' d' affairs in St. Petersburg, Russia, to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, St. Petersburg, 10 February 1875, Dispatches from U. S. Ministers to Russia, 1808-1906, M35, DSNAM.

[5]Hall, p. 5.

[6]Ibid., pp. 5-9.

[7]Ibid., p. 8; Timothy C. Smith, U.S. consul at Odessa, to Secretary of State William H. Seward, Odessa, 3 September 1867, Dispatches from U. S. Consuls in Odessa, 1834-1906, M459, DSNAM.

and that "the future development of the vast resources of the country inspire all classes with a belief in the stability of the government and continued progress of Russia."[8] Smith also believed that relations should be improved between Russia and the United States, and that his home country should maintain a high profile in South Russia. As a result, he convinced the Department of State to establish American consular agencies at Tagenrog, Rostov, Nicolaiev, and, ironically, at Tiflis, where his son would later serve as consul.[9]

Timothy Smith's stay in Odessa was marred by financial and personal hardship. He had a wife and eight children, and found it difficult to provide for their needs on a consul's salary. Though he repeatedly asked the State Department for either an increase in pay or a transfer to a higher paying consulate, his requests were never granted. To further complicate matters, Odessa's harsh climate often caused his wife and one of his daughters to be ill. At the height of frustration, Smith finally resorted to writing directly to President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873, requesting a position in southern Europe where his family could live comfortably and where his wife

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[8]T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 12 June 1867, 459, DSNAM.

[9]T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 4 July 1872, M459, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 3 January 1874, M459, DSNAM.

and child could recuperate. Timothy not only failed to receive a response from the president, but he was also reprimanded by the Department of State for insubordination. No such transfer was granted.[10]

The incident with President Grant is illustrative of Timothy Smith's impertinence and his tendency to overreact under stressful conditions. In 1874 he found himself in a controversial argument with the postmaster in Odessa over the status of a registered letter addressed to Timothy Smith and the American consulate. Smith referred to the postmaster, who happened to be a Russian noble, as a "stupid man" in the company of other employees and postal patrons. The postmaster, in turn, greatly discredited Smith with important members of the Russian government in St. Petersburg. Smith's repeated attempts to defend himself in what he termed this "little affair" were unsuccessful, and in December of 1874 Secretary of State Hamilton Fish requested his resignation. Though he considered such a move a "suicidal act" that would leave him not only without resources but also with a tarnished reputation, Smith submitted his resignation along with a

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[10]T. C. Smith to Seward, Odessa, 2 April 1867, M459, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 4 April 1870, M459, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 14 October 1871, M459, DSNAM; Schuyler to Fish, St. Petersburg, 10 February 1875, M35, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to President Ulysses S. Grant, Odessa, 9 August 1873, M459, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 18 October 1873, M459, DSNAM.

request for another consular appointment. His request was granted when he was appointed consul at Galatz, Romania, in 1878. Leaving his family in Odessa, Smith proceeded to Galatz where he served until his resignation in 1884. He then returned to Odessa for a short time before moving his family to Vermont.[11]

Felix Octavius Willoughby Smith was a young boy of six when his father left Odessa for Galatz in 1878. He was educated at the Richelieu School at Odessa and by private tutors. His course of study included English, French, German, Russian, Greek, Latin, mathematics, political economy, geography, history, and law. He had, according to an acquaintance, gained an "exeptional education" and was "perfectly educated in the arts."[12] Smith spoke Russian, Italian, and French fluently and could read

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[11]T. C. Smith to Second Assistant Secretary of State William Hunter, Odessa, 22 September 1874, M459, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, 1 October 1874, Odessa, M459, DSNAM; John L. Cadwalader, acting secretary of state to T. C. Smith, Washington, 13 October 1874, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801-1906, Russia, M77, DSNAM; Fish to Schuyler, Washington, 16 December 1874, M77, DSNAM; T. C. Smith to Fish, Odessa, 14 January 1875, M459, DSNAM; William M. Evants, secretary of state, to U.S. Consul General Eugene Schuyler (Bucharest), Washington, 13 January 1881, Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801-1906, Balkan States, M77, DSNAM.

[12]Messmore Kendall (attorney at law) to President Theodore Roosevelt, New York, 15 September 1908, RG 59, "Applications and Recommendations for Appointment to the Foreign Service, 1901-1924," (hereafter cited as Applications and Recommendations), Department of State, National Archives (hereafter cited as DSNA).

German and Spanish. He returned with his parents to the United States and attended the Columbian University School of Law (George Washington University), receiving a Degree of Law in 1893.[13]

Smith served in the military as a private for six months before obtaining a voluntary honorable discharge. He then joined the law firm of Kendall and Herzog in New York City, remaining there as a practicing attorney for fourteen years. During this time he distinguished himself as a member of the Bars of New York and Washington, D. C. receiving "excellent standing" and attaining a salary rate of $4000 per year. He retired from Kendall and Herzog in 1908, citing poor health as the primary reason. It was at this time that he made application to the Department of State for appointment as United States consul at the rank of class eight.[14]

Although it is not entirely clear why Willoughby Smith decided to seek employment with the Department of

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[13]Felix Willoughby Smith, Application for Appointment, 28 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; U.S. Representative Herbert Parsons to Roosevelt, New York, 7 October 1909, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; George Washington University, George Washington University Alumni Directory, 1874-1937 (Washington, D. C., 1938), p. 201.

[14]F. W. Smith, Application for Appointment, 28 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; Nathaniel A. Elsberg (attorney at law) to Roosevelt, New York, 16 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

State, one can assume that, despite the controversial incident in Odessa in 1874, he was influenced to some extent by his father's experiences as the United States' consul at Odessa and Galatz. Smith certainly had the credentials necessary to qualify for entry into the consular service. Not only did he have a command of several European languages, but he had also lived much of his life abroad and was quite familiar with Slavic culture. Furthermore, he received impressive recommendations from a number of personal friends and professional associates. Among the letters of support from friends were those from attorneys Messmore Kendall, Nathaniel A. Elsberg, Hamilton Fish, and Judge William N. Cohen, all of New York. Professional recommendations were offered by several members of the United States House of Representatives from New York, including William S. Bennet, J. Van Vechten Olcott, and Herbert Parsons. Senator Chauncey M. Depew of New York also supported his nomination. These letters of recommendation referred to Smith as a "true patriot" who was "eminently qualified" for a position in the Foreign Service.[15] Messmore Kendall, Smith's long-time friend and business associate, remarked that Smith had a "most digni-

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[15]William N. Cohen (attorney at law) to Roosevelt, New York, 16 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; Elsberg to Roosevelt, New York, 16 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

fied demeanor" and that he possessed an "extremely winning personality" which caused him to make friends easily.[16] Representative Parsons gave him a glowing report, stating that the Department of State should utilize Smith's services because of "the exceptional equipment of Mr. Smith, his training as a lawyer, his knowledge of various and difficult languages, [and] his acquaintance of European affairs...."[17]

The Department of State was impressed with Willoughby Smith's credentials. Wilbur J. Carr, chief clerk of the State Department, thought Smith to be an "unusually qualified" applicant.[18] On the other hand, Herbert C. Hengstler, director of the Consular Bureau, viewed Willoughby as a "gentleman" with a "pleasing personality," but observed that Smith did not impress him as being a man of "much force or energy."[19] Nevertheless, Hengstler believed Smith to be a "fairly good man" and believed that

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[16]Kendall to Roosevelt, New York, 15 September 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

[17]Parsons to Roosevelt, New York, 17 October 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

[18]Wilbur J. Carr (chief clerk, Department of State) to Assistant Secretary of State Robert Bacon, Washington, 30 December 1908, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

[19]H. C. Hengstler (director, Consular Bureau) to Carr, Washington, 24 February 1909, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

a consular position of some sort should be offered him.[20] Hengstler first hoped to find Smith a position as clerk and vice consul somewhere in Russia, but was unable to locate an available post. After consulting with President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary of State Robert Bacon, Hengstler offered Smith a position as vice and deputy consul and clerk at Catania, Italy. Hengstler believed, however, that he would refuse the offer because it included a salary of only $750 per year with no allowance for mileage or payment of expenses. Smith surprisingly accepted the offer and, on 17 March, 1909, began his consular duties at Catania."[21]

Over the next five years Smith served in subordinate positions as vice and deputy consul at Catania (March 1909-August 1910), vice and deputy consul at Warsaw, Poland (August 1910-December 1910), deputy consul general at Beirut, Syria (December 1910-March 1911), and as vice and deputy consul general at Beirut (March 1911-September 1913). He passed the consular examination in 1912 and, on September 18, 1913, was appointed consul at Aden, Arabia.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.; Hengstler, unaddressed and undated memorandum, Washington, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; Carr to F. W. Smith, Washington, 25 February 1909, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; F. W. Smith to Secretary of State Philander C. Knox, New York, 15 March 1909, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

He served in that capacity until his appointment as consul at Batum the following year.[22]

There is no indication that Smith failed in any way to perform his consular duties prior to his arrival at Batum. In fact, Consul General W. Stanley Hollis, Smith's superior at Beirut, commented that his "gentlemanly *manners* and address, ability to converse freely and fluently in a number of languages, and...knowledge of the laws" allowed him to function "remarkably well" in the consular service.[23] By the time he arrived at Batum Smith was, by all indications, a mature and well-seasoned consular officer.

Like his father, however, the younger Smith endured many hardships while performing his consular duties abroad. His wife, Mary Elizabeth, and only child, Mary Masterson, were constantly ill and in need of medical attention. His wife and daughter had been advised to leave Aden because of the harsh conditions created by the desert environment, and he himself was suffering from "a very painful trouble of the kidneys" which affected his

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[22]Hengstler to U.S. Consul General W. Stanley Hollis (Beirut), Washington, 25 March 1912, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA; United States Government, Register of the Department of State: December 23, 1918 (Washington, D. C., 1919), p. 163; Entries pertaining to the U.S. Consulates at Batum and Tiflis, Russia, "List of U. S., Consular Officers by Post, 1789-1939," RG 59, DSNA.

[23]Hollis to Knox, Beirut, 25 March 1912, RG 59, Applications and Recommendations, DSNA.

eyesight and general health.[24] Also like his father, the younger Smith had a most difficult time surviving on the salary allotted him. He left a string of debts from Catania to Beirut which haunted him regardless of the post at which he was stationed. In early 1914 Smith, apparently hoping to remedy some of these problems, requested a transfer from Aden to a post where his languages would be more useful and where his family's health could be recovered. Thus, in April of 1914 he was transferred to Batum in South Russia.[25]

But conditions did not improve for the Smiths at Batum and Tiflis, where the consulate was moved in the summer of 1915 for strategic purposes. Russia's involvement in the First World War was creating havoc with the South Russian economy and prices were accordingly on the increase. Smith wired the Department of State several times in 1915 specifically asking for an increase in salary and post allowance, stating flatly that it had become "impossible to maintain the required standard of

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[24]F. W. Smith to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, Aden, 6 January 1914, RG 59, 123SM52/10, DSNA.

[25]Ibid.; F. W. Smith to Bryan, Batum, 27 March 1915, RG 59, F. Willoughby Smith Personnel File, 123SM52/28 (hereafter cited by document number), DSNA; Paul Knabenshire, U.S. consul at Beirut, to Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, Beirut, 6 October 1921, RG 59, 123SM52/111, DSNA; George A. Strong (attorney at law) to Hughes, New York, 28 March 1923, RG 59, 123SM52/119, DSNA.

living on a consul's salary."[26] His wife was still very ill and, in September of 1916, left Russia to recuperate in England. Smith was also, according to a superior, "badly run down" and in need of "a rest and a change."[27] It is thus obvious that the senior United States representative in South Russia was not in the best state of mental, physical, or emotional health during the first turbulent years of the war.[28]

During the years 1915-1916 the Tiflis consulate increased in importance because of problems resulting from the war and increased American trade in South Russia. Smith's duties, which had been gradually escalating since the beginning of the war in 1914, were compounded when he was assigned responsibility for all German and Austrian subjects and interests in South Russia. Despite the "peculiarly difficult" strain that these added duties caused him, Smith continued to render "efficient and sympathetic service" to the parties for whom he had been assigned to care.[29] However, his frustrations mounted as

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[26]F. W. Smith to Bryan, Batum, 7 April 1915, RG 59, 123 SM52/27, DSNA.

[27]Nathaniel B. Stewart, U.S. consul general at large, District of the Middle East and Africa, to Lansing, Tiflis, 1 September 1916, RG 59, 123SM52/44, DSNA.

[28]F. W. Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 24 November 1915, RG 59, 123SM52/33, DSNA.

[29]F. W. Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 2 September 1915, RG 59, 861.111/263, DSNAM; Richard Hill (secretary,

he became increasingly concerned that Russia's poorly organized and executed efforts at waging war. Smith feared Russia's enemies would seize her enemies and possibly occupy all of South Russia, which he considered to be absolutely vital to the Allied war effort.[30]

Armenian Relief Committee) to Henry Morgenthau (chairman, Armenian Relief Committee), New York, 10 June 1916, RG 59, 123SM52/44, DSNA.

[30]F. W. Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 2 September 1915, RG 59, 861.00/257, DSNAM; James L. Barton (foreign secretary, Presbyterian American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) to Lansing, Boston, 20 October 1915, RG 59, 123SM52/31, DSNA; Stewart to Lansing, Tiflis, 1 September 1916, RG 59, 123SM52/44, DSNA.

CHAPTER III

THE TRANSCAUCASUS BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

Bounded to the east by the Caspian Sea, the west by the Black Sea, the north by the Caucasus Mountain range, and the south by Iran and Turkey, the Transcaucasus region of the Russian Empire was, indeed, of vital strategic importance to the Allies in a war against Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Turkey. Furthermore, its economic importance to Russia and the Allies was enormous. Consul Smith understood that, if Russia was to remain a factor in the war, the vast agricultural and industrial resources of the Transcaucasus would have to be protected from the advancing Germans and Turks. As the war entered its fourth year in 1917, Smith realized increasingly that Russia alone could not save the Transcaucasus. The Russian government would need extensive aid the Allies if they wanted to prevent the region from falling into enemy hands.[1]

The agricultural importance of the Transcaucasus to

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[1]Firuz Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917-1921 (Birmingham, Ala., 1951), p. 3; Richard Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1923 (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), p. 15; Larry G. Hodge, "American Diplomacy Towards Transcaucasia During the Russian Revolution: March 1917-March 1918," New Review of East European Studies 15 (June, 1978): 23.

Russia and the Allies in 1917 cannot be underestimated. Seventy-five percent of the population of the three principal political entities in the Transcaucasus -- Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan -- was engaged in pastoral occupations. As a result, Transcaucasia produced fifteen percent of the entire yield of wheat and barley for the Russian Empire. Relatively large crops of other cereals -- primarily maize, rye, and hay -- were harvested from the region as well. Additionally, the northern extension of the Caucasus, the Ciscaucasus, yielded one-third of the Empire's output of winter wheat. A lesser but nevertheless substantial acreage of rice and cotton was also grown in the throughout the area.[2]

The Caucasus Mountain range afforded the region a great amount of mineral wealth as well. In 1913, Caucasia exported more manganese than any other region of the Russian Empire. The same year, thirty-one percent of the total Russian output of copper was also extracted from the Caucasus Mountains. Rich seams of coal, iron, lead, zinc, and gold could also be found throughout northern and central Transcaucasia.[3]

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[2]John Buchan, ed., Nations of Today: The Baltic and Caucasian States (Boston, 1923), pp. 210, 246-248; John Lehman, Prometheus and the Bolsheviks (New York, 1938), pp. 56-57; Foreign Office of Great Britain, Peace Handbooks: The Russian Empire, vol. 9, no. 54: Caucasia (London, 1920), pp. 12-13.

[3]British Foreign Office, Peace Handbooks, p. 65;

The most important resource for the Transcaucasus and, in fact, all of Caucasia in 1917 was oil. In 1908 the Caucasian oil fields had produced twenty-two percent of the world's oil, most of which was exported to other countries. The war had not had much of an effect on Caucasian oil production, and the output of petroleum products increased yearly between 1910 and 1917. By early 1917 approximately 600 million poods (approximately fifty-two billion pounds) of oil were extracted from Caucasia, most of which came from the refining city of Baku on the Caspian Sea.[4] Less productive oil fields were located at Tcheleken, Fergana, Grozni, Djingi, Guria, and the Kuban and Terek districts of North Caucasia. The Caucasian refineries also specialized in the production of kerosene, solar oils, engine and cylinder oils, and oil residuals.[5]

The mineral and industrial wealth of Transcaucasia attracted a great deal of foreign investment to the region. Chief among the foreign investors were Great

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Karl Kautsky, Georgia: A Social-Democratic Peasant Republic, Trans. H. J. Stenning (London, 1921), pp. 12-13.

[4]The Russian pood equals 86.11 British pounds.

[5]British Foreign Office, Peace Handbooks, pp. 63-68, 82; D. Ghambashidze, The Caucasian Petroleum Industry and its Importance for Eastern Europe and Asia (London, 1918), pp. 6-9, 19.

Britain and Germany. The British, who specialized in marketing steel products, oil production, machinery, and motor trades, had once controlled seventeen percent of all of the European trade in Transcaucasia. However, the Germans, in addition to leading the market in textiles, oil production, and hardware manufacturing, were encroaching upon Britain's dwindling domain in the early twentieth century. Other important investors in the region were the French (automobiles and copper), the Dutch (oil and manganese), and the Austro-Hungarians (steel). The United States' primary investments in the area related to the copper mining industry and the manufacturing of agricultural machinery.[6]

The Central Powers were certainly aware of the advantages to be gained by winning control of the Transcaucasia from the Allies. Turkey's primary goal from the beginning of the war was to expand into the Caucasus, and the Turkish military strategy was directed toward that end. Germany also had objectives in the region. German occupation of the Ciscaucasus would provide the Central Powers with badly needed foodstuffs and relief from the Allies'successful blockade of Germany. A further push into the Transcaucasus would allow the Germans to exploit

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[6]British Foreign Office, Peace Handbooks, pp. 79-86; Ghambashidze, The Caucasian Petroleum Industry, pp. 29-31.

the immense mineral resources of the area.[7]

Consul Smith had long been concerned that the Transcaucasus would fall into German and Turkish hands. Since his arrival in the region he had been reporting that the population had a "grave intense dissatisfaction" with the Imperial government and that, unless the Tsar took immediate action to appease the population, open revolt could occur at any time.[8] Smith feared that the extreme unrest in the area would allow Germany and Turkey to exploit the situation to their own advantage. Smith reported that the Tsar's abdication in March was genuinely welcomed by the population of the region, which pledged full loyalty to the newly-formed Provisional Government in Petrograd.[9]

The population of the Caucasus was not, however, in complete agreement about the future course of development for their region. The many nationalities of the Caucasus,

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[7]David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1933-1937), vol. 4, p. 67; Gardner, Wilson and Revolutions, p. 21; Michael Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1917-1921, vol. 1: The Allies and the Russian Collapse: March 1917-March 1918 (Minneapolis, Minn., 1981), p. 148; Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union, pp. 133, 194.

[8]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 2 September 1915, RG 59, 861.00/257, DSNAM.

[9]Ibid.; Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 14 August 1916, RG 59, 861.00/264, DSNAM; See also Buchan, Nations of Today, p. 210; Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, p. 32; Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union, p. 101.

a veritable ethnographic museum, had varying desires and often conflicting goals for their region.[10] In Georgia, where there was a strong social democratic socialist population, the primary desire was to remain within Russia with a large degree of federated, yet autonomous national development. The Armenians also wanted an alliance with Russia, but primarily because they desired protection from the hostile Moslem Turks. Conversely, the Azerbaijanis were strongly pro-Moslem and sought to establish a conservative Moslem theocracy. Infighting between these nationalities continued to hinder the war effort against the Central Powers, even under the leadership of the Provisional Government.[11]

By mid-May of 1917 Consul Smith informed the Department of State that the political and military situation in the Transcaucasus had become "very serious." He informed Secretary Lansing that a great conflict was developing between the Christian and Moslem populations of the

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[10]Peter Kenez, Civil War in South Russia, 1918 (Los Angeles, 1971), p. 123.

[11]Kautsky, Georgia, p. 18; Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, pp. 14-17, 43; Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union, p. 101; George A. Brinkley, The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention, 1917-1921 (Notre Dame, 1966), p. 14; Foreign Office, Special Memorandum prepared by the Department of Military Information entitled "The Nationality Problem in the Caucasus," 9 October 1917, FO 371, 194969/3016/194969, Foreign Office Correspondence, 1917, Public Record Office, London (hereafter cited as PRO).

region. The Moslems were becoming increasingly sympathetic to the advancing Turks and, as a result, the Russian army on the Turkish front was becoming unruly and disorganized. Smith argued that, unless the troops were better provisioned with food, clothing, and ammunition, the army could scarcely last more than sixty days. Moreover, there was a real danger that the advancing Turks would capture the Baku oil fields.[12]

Conditions in the Transcaucasus continued to deteriorate in the summer and fall of 1917. Prices for such items as butter and vegetable oil had increased by over 150 percent in only a year, while prices on the average had risen by 350 percent since the beginning of the war. Even so, Transcaucasia was in relatively better shape than the rest of Russia, and the majority of the population continued to profess loyalty to the Provisional Government. On 11 September Smith reported that the Caucasian Army did not intend to support the attempted coup in Petrograd by Russian Commander-in-Chief Lavr G. Kornilov. Smith was aware, however, that the Provisional Government's inability to deal with basic economic, political, and military problems was making his position at Tiflis more and more untenable.[13]

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[12]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 16 May 1917, RG 59, 861.00/403, DSNAM.

[13]Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, pp.

Consul Smith's dispatches of late September and early October reveal his fear that the worst possible scenario was about to occur in South Russia. On 25 September he reported that, unless supplies arrived immediately, the troops along the entire Turkish front would fall back in disorder, pillaging as they went. Consequently, the resulting advance of the Turks would "prove disastrous to the Allied campaign in the east and the total destruction of Armenia."[14] Smith believed that the Transcaucasus was being neglected by Russia and the Allies. He boldly asserted, "It is an error to consider this front of little importance as the entire campaign in the east as I have frequently reported will depend upon the control of the Caucasians and it requires a comparatively small effort to liquidate the campaign here...."[15] Since the Provisional Government could not be relied upon to furnish the needs of the region, Smith suggested that the British assume financial and military control of the Caucasian front.[16] On 4 October Smith forwarded a dupli-

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46-53; Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 11 September 1917, RG 59, 861.00/504, DSNAM.

[14]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 25 September 1917, RG 59, 763.72/7031, Records of the Department of State Relating to World War I and its Termination, 1914-1929, M367, DSNAM.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 30 September 1917, RG 59, 763.72/7087, M367, DSNAM.

cate telegram to Lansing in which he attempted to convince David R. Francis, the American ambassador to Russia who was stationed in Petrograd, that the Caucasian front deserved more Red Cross relief and overall attention than it was receiving relative to other fronts. He argued vehemently that the capture of the Caucasus by the Central Powers and the resulting effect such a defeat would have on the general outcome of the war made the defense of the region even more important than that of Petrograd. Once again he asserted that relatively little effort would be required to meet the needs of the area and that the British could best act upon his outlined recommendations.[17]

On 5 October Smith once again forwarded to Washington a copy of a dispatch he had sent to Francis. In it he suggested that 100,000 Georgian and Armenian troops be withdrawn from other fronts and stationed in southern Transcaucasia in relief of Russian troops. Smith again reasoned that soldiers of native nationalities would fight harder in defense of their own people and homes. Smith added," It is a pity that these measures have not already been adopted, in view of the comparatively small effort and expense involved."[18]

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[17]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 4 October 1917, RG 59, 861.00/626, DSNAM.

[18]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 5 October 1917, RG 59, 861.00/796, DSNAM.

Smith was incensed to learn that Francis and the American military attache' in Petrograd, Brigadier General William V. Judson, had advised Lansing against acting upon his recommendations of 4 and 5 October. Francis and Judson explained to Lansing that the Russian government had not requested action on Smith's suggestions had been received from the Russian government and, more importantly, that "conditions on all Russia fronts [are] practically equally bad and other fronts are of greater importance."[19] On 19 October Smith responded to Francis. Noting that he understood that the embassy interpreted his recommendations to support and reorganize the Caucasian front as an action related to the internal affairs of Russia in which the embassy could take no action, Smith reiterated that he believed it to be in the Allies' best interest to counteract enemy propaganda and military progress. After reviewing the influence he had already achieved in the Caucasus, he reminded Francis, "I am fully aware of the seriousnesss of conditions here and have followed every movement with infinite care. My conclusions are based on knowledge so acquired...."[20]

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[19]David R. Francis, U.S. ambassador to Russia, to Lansing, Petrograd, 5 October 1917, RG 59, 861.51/220, DSNAM.

[20]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 19 October 1917, United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Russia, II:578 (hereafter cited as FRUS).

Noting that the Provisional Government had only aggravated tha population by discouraging local national spirit, Smith again argued that soldiers native to the region would fight the hardest to defend it. Furthermore, he felt that the Christian population of the Caucasus would be in grave danger if the Turks were allowed any further advance. For the first time he reported that a possible union was forming between the Armenians, Georgians, and Cossacks of the Terek, Kuban, and Don regions of the North Caucasus. Smith indicated his belief that such a union could save Russia when he wrote:

> When united, all these groups will be in a position to offer to Russia itself an organized force with which to form a union leading to a federative republic, the ideal which events show the great majority of the people are unconsciously striving to attain. The creation of such a republic by the several races composing it would give that love of country which at present is totally lacking, these same nations having individually and collectively created it.[21]

Smith concluded the dispatch by again requesting material aid for the region. If the small cost and minimum sacrifice necessary to save the region was not expended immediately, he suggested, it would cost a hundredfold to remedy the damage that would be done.[22]

After months of attempting to convince the United States government to act on his recommendations regarding

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

South Russia, Smith's dispatch of 19 October hit a responsive chord at the Department of State. Secretary Lansing forwarded Smith's dispatches of late September and early October, including that of 19 October, to the Treasury Department.[23] Assistant Treasury Secretary R. C. Leffingwell suggested that, because of the "intellegent interest" Smith had taken in the matter of financing troops in South Russia, he should be informed that the British and French governments were doing all that could be done to relieve the situation in his district.[24] Accordingly, on 31 October the State Department transmitted the suggested information to Smith and requested that he keep the Department informed of further developments in the region.[25]

Lansing was kept well aware of the attitude that the Cossacks had taken toward the Provisional Government and the Allied war effort on the Eastern front. The Cossacks had originally supported the March coup and the establishment of the Provisional Government. However, they became more and more disenchanted with Russia's failure on the military front. In June the Union of Cossack Regiments had pledged its loyalty to the war effort and to

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[23]Pidhainy, Pidhainy, and Scales, "Silver and Billions," 6.

[24]Memorandum from R. C. Leffingwell, assistant secretary of the Treasury, to Lansing, Washington, 30 October 1917, RG 59, 861.51/236, DSNAM.

[25]Lansing to Smith, Washington, 31 October 1917,

a victorious Russian offensive.[26] Many believed that further Cossack discontent with the ineffectiveness of the Provisional Government was indicated by General Kornilov's attempted coup in Petrograd in September. Maddin Summers, the United States' consul general at Moscow, went so far as to report to the State Department that the Kornilov movement had the "open and avowed support of the propertied and professional classes" in Russia.[27]

Although General Kornilov and his main supporters, Generals A. L. Denikin, A. S. Lukomskii, F. P. Romanovskii, and S. L. Markov, had been arrested and imprisoned at Bykhov, other Cossack leaders continued to agitate for a more active war effort. General Kaledin, who had enjoyed relative freedom from the Provisional Government at the Don capital of Novocherkassk, was quietly assembling a contingent of pro-Allied supporters for the war effort. Described as a "soldier of a fine type" and "a man of complete integrity, moderate, progressive, with a strong sense of responsibility for the well-being of all the peoples of his province," Kaledin attracted not only

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Washington, RG 59, 861.51/238c, DSNAM.

[26]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 25 June 1917, RG 59, 861.00/451, DSNAM; See also Buchan, Nations of Today, p. 211; David Footman, Civil War in Russia (New York, 1961), pp. 40-42.

[27]Maddin Summers, U.S. consul general at Moscow, to Lansing, Moscow, 13 September 1917, RG 59, 861.00/603, DSNAM.

conservative supporters from within Russia but also the attention of Allied leaders in the west.[28]

It was this grouping of conservative pro-Allied supporters around Kaledin at Novocherkassk that attracted Lansing's interest in late October and early November of 1917. On 3 November Consul Smith, in his last telegram before the Bolshevik coup four days later, requested and secured permission from the State Department to visit the northern provinces of Caucasia in order to conduct "semi-official" interviews with the Cossack leaders there. He hoped to encourage them to send supplies southward in support of the armies on the Caucasian front against Turkey. Smith's plans were drastically altered when, on 7 November, V. I. Lenin and the Bolsheviks assumed control of the Russian government in Petrograd.[29]

Although the revolution in Petrograd prevented Smith from leaving his post at Tiflis, he did not lose interest in the Cossacks. Rather, over the next several weeks he worked feverishly in an effort to secure American aid for General Kaledin and those who joined him in professing not only loyalty to the Allies but also an antipa-

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[28]DeWitt Clinton Poole, "The Reminiscences of DeWitt Clinton Poole" (New York: Columbia University Oral Memoirs Research Office, 1972), pp. 98-99; Footman, Civil War in Russia, p. 40-42.

[29]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 3 November 1917, RG 59, 123SM52/58, DSNA; Lansing to Smith, 9 November 1917, RG 59, 123SM52/58, DSNA

thy for the new Bolshevik government. Smith was not alone in recognizing that the Cossacks offered possibly the best hope of reconstructing the Eastern front that Lenin had vowed to disband. Other Allied governments, particularly Great Britain, were also monitoring Kaledin's actions in South Russia. It is not surprising that, given its traditional sphere of influence in the Caucasus, the British government quickly and unhesitatingly committed itself to supporting the Cossacks, without regard to the cost involved.[30]

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[30]FO to British Ambassador George W. Buchanan (Russia), 3 December 1917, FO 371, 229192/3018/224839, PRO.

CHAPTER IV

THE BRITISH TAKE THE LEAD

Great Britain was concerned about conditions in South Russia long before the Bolshevik coup. Paul W. Stevens, the British consul at Tiflis, had reported initially in March that conditions in the Caucasus were calm and that the nationalities of the region professed full loyalty to the Provisional Government and the Allies.[1] By early April, however, Stevens' reports had become more pessimistic. The civil authorities in the region were disturbed by the Provisional Government's failure to govern authoritatively, and the military commanders were lamenting the consequent loss of discipline among the Russian troops in the area. Stevens noted that, if conditions in the Caucasus were not improved, "serious trouble with lamentable consequences" would naturally result.[2] The British government had never believed in the Provisional Government's ability to wage war effectively against the Central Powers, and reports such as this con-

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[1]Paul W. Stevens, British consul at Tiflis, to FO, 19 March 1917, FO 371, 74225/2996/811, PRO; See also Stevens to FO, 23 March 1917, FO 371, 82362/2996/811, PRO; Stevens to FO, 2 April 1917, FO 371, 855484/2996/811, PRO; Stevens to FO, 5 April 1917, FO371, 85585/2996/811, PRO.

[2]Stevens to FO, 7 April 1917, FO 371, 97376/2996/811, PRO.

firmed the Foreign Office's suspicion that the new regime was a government in name only.[3]

By the summer of 1917 the British War Cabinet realized that its concerns regarding the inadequacies of the Provisional Government were well-founded.[4] Many British officials had secretly hoped that General Kornilov would succeed in his effort to establish a stronger and more reliable government in Petrograd. Kornilov's failure in early September led Prime Minister David Lloyd George to believe that Russia could no longer be a working factor in the success of the Allied war effort.[5] The War Cabinet realized that, if Russia were to be of any further use to the Allies, support for loyal forces would have to come from sources other than the Provisional Government. Thus, on 23 October, the Cabinet debated the Russian situation. A number of guarded but optimistic reports had been received in London regarding the strength and intentions of the Cossacks in South Russia, and the Cabinet members were well aware that a volunteer army raised by Cossack generals could provide an answer to the problem of keeping

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[3]Keith Neilson, Strategy and Supply: The Anglo-Russian Alliance, 1914-1917 (London, 1984), p. 296.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Richard H. Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1917-1921, vol. 1: Intervention and the War (Princeton, 1961), pp. 11-14; Arno J. Mayer, Political Origins of the New Diplomacy, 19171918 (New Haven, Conn., 1959), p. 254.

the Eastern front intact.[6] However, it was decided that it would be "quite impossible" for the British to support such a body actively unless so requested by the Russian government.[7]

Instead, the Cabinet decided to contact the American government and ask if, "in view of the great interest which the United States has always evinced in the Armenian nation," the Wilson administration would be interested in approaching the Russian government with a scheme designed to bolster the Caucasian front against Turkey.[8] On 25 October Foreign Secretary Arthur J. Balfour wired Sir Cecil Spring Rice, the British ambassador in Washington, D.C., to ascertain if the United States would be interested in sending either a British or American mission to South Russia in order to raise and train Armenian troops and, if the government were so inclined, whether it would be prepared to assist such a mission financially and/or by

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[6]Buchanan to FO, 10 April 1917, FO 371, 74684/2996/811, PRO; Buchanan to FO, 7 October 1917, 200677/2997/811, PRO; R. H. Bruce Lockhart, British consul general at Moscow, to FO, 3 September 1917, 181568/2999/3743, PRO.

[7]Michael Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1917-1920 vol. 1: The Allies and the Russian Collapse, March 1917-March 1918 (Minneapolis, 1981), pp. 101-105; Neilson, Strategy and Supply, p. 292.

[8]Arthur J. Balfour, British foreign secretary, to British Ambassador C. Spring Rice (United States), 25 October 1917, FO 371, 204952/3016/204952, PRO.

sending representatives.[9]

On 3 November, while awaiting a reply to its 25 October query, the British government received a most discouraging dispatch from Consul Stevens. Stevens reported that the state of the Caucasus had gone from bad to worse. The Bolsheviks, he reported, were gaining in power and were sabotaging the local government's ability to function. A serious situation was created by poor economic conditions, and excesses such as murders, robberies, and burglaries were occurring hourly. Stevens concluded that the outlook for the region was very black, and could become "very grave indeed" before the end of the autumn.[10] One week later Spring Rice informed the Foreign Office that the United States government had refused Balfour's request because it was not at war with Turkey and the United States believed that the idea did not seem practical at the time.[11] This response led Lancelot Oliphant, the second-ranking official in the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, to comment blandly, "This shows that we will have to act alone if anything is to be done."[12]

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[9]Ibid.

[10]Stevens to FO, 16 October 1917, FO 371, 210733/2997/811, PRO.

[11]Spring Rice to FO, 10 November 1917, FO 371, 215401/3016/204952, PRO.

[12]Minute by Lancelot Oliphant (advisor, Eastern

The Foreign Office was not caught by surprise when the Bolsheviks assumed power in Petrograd on 7 November, primarily because the British diplomatic and consular personnel had kept their government expertly informed on conditions in Russia.[13] Neither did the revolution alter the British government's desire to find an effective fighting force in Russia that would bolster the Eastern front and thereby continue to engage over two million enemy troops. The Foreign Office must have been pleased when, on 5 and 7 November respectively, Sir George W. Buchanan, the British ambassador to Russia, and General Alfred W. Knox, Britain's military attache' in Petrograd, reported that General Kaledin was forming a Cossack union in the Caucasus and was establishing a federated democratic government in the region. Buchanan, once described as a man whose "every instinct" was opposed to revolution, believed that the Bolsheviks would not be able to retain control of Petrograd for long, and that sooner or later they would provoke a counterrevolution.[14] Knox added that, if such were the case, the Cossacks believed that they could cripple North Russia by holding back the vital

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Department of the Foreign Office), undated (but probably 12 November 1917), ibid.

[13]Buchanan to FO, 7 November 1917, FO 371, 213313/2999/3743, PRO; See also Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 104, 117.

[14]R. H. Bruce Lockhart, British Agent (New York,

grain, coal, and oil resources of the Caucasus.[15]

The military situation for the Allies did, indeed, look bleak in mid-November. The month had begun with the crumbling of the Italian lines at Caporetto. Then came the Bolshevik coup on 7 November. Only six days later, the French Ministry of Paul Painleve' fell from power. Such conditions naturally led to calls for extreme action from some members of the British diplomatic and military community. One military official who had recently toured Russia suggested on 12 November that it was inadvisable to continue a policy of non-intervention in Russia. The officer called for Japanese and American troops to be dispatched to Vladivostok and for the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, along with a number of other measures.[16] To these recommendations the Foreign Office gave a negative response. George R. Clerk, head of the War Department of the Foreign Office, commented that the only practical measures in the lot were those regarding the continued

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1933), p. 116.

[15]Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 104-105.

[16]Sir W. Conyngham Greene (British ambassador to Japan) to FO, 11 November 1917, FO 371, 215977/2999/3743, PRO; See also Michael J. Carley, "The Origins of French Intervention in the Russian Civil War, January - May, 1918: A Reappraisal," Journal of Modern History 48 (September 1976): 415.

shipment of previously ordered materials to Russia.[17] Thus, the Foreign Office dismissed the most outrageous of recommendations concerning Russia, choosing instead to concentrate on the best hope at the time: General Kaledin and the Cossacks.

Though it sympathized with the Kaledin movement before and during the first days of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Foreign Office remained largely ignorant of conditions in Petrograd and throughout Russia. All wireless communication from Archangel to Petrograd to Moscow had broken down, and no correspondence was received from Petrograd between 10 November and 18 November. Even so, the Department of Military Intelligence and the Foreign Office were taking the initiative in South Russia. On 16 November the Director of Military Intelligence, General Sir George M. W. Macdonogh, proposed to Sir Robert Cecil, the undersecretary of state for foreign affairs, that Consul Stevens should be instructed to cooperate with F. Willoughby Smith in offering to the Russian military authorities "practical advice" regarding the improvement of sea and rail transportation of supplies for the army in the Caucasus. Though the Foreign Office agreed that Stevens should work closely with the Russian officials on the scene, they called to Macdonogh's attention a report

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[17]Minute by George R. Clerk (head of the War Department of the Foreign Office), undated, ibid.

from Ambassador Buchanan which stated that the United States' consul in Tiflis was not "straight." Thus, based on the recommendation by Lancelot Oliphant that Smith was "far from satisfactory," Macdonogh omitted the reference to Smith in the subsequent dispatch.[18] From this point forward, little cooperation existed between British and American representatives in the strategic region of the Caucasus.

Back in London, the idea of supporting General Kaledin continued to be discussed within unofficial as well as official circles. On 19 November a small group of influential individuals including Sir William Wiseman, the British intelligence agent who sometimes served as the channel of communication between the War Cabinet and President Wilson, W. Somerset Maugham, the noted British novelist, and Jan Horodyski, an ardent Polish nationalist, decided that bold action should be taken in Russia. If the Allies were serious about saving the Eastern front, which it was assumed they were, then a means would have to

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[18]Memo from General Sir George M.W. Macdonogh (director of military intelligence) to Sir Robert Cecil (under secretary of state for foreign affairs), 16 November 1917, FO 371, 21990/3016/200185, PRO; Buchanan to FO, 17 November 1917, FO 371, 219990/3016/200185, PRO; Memo from Cecil to Macdonogh, 27 November 1917, FO 371, 21990/3016/200185, PRO; Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 117-118. In fairness to Consul Smith it should be noted that Buchanan, in the same dispatch, also complained about Ambassador Francis and about the anti-British attitude among all of the American missions in Russia.

be found to support General Kaledin's Cossacks. They asserted that, financed with Allied money, Kaledin should assume a dictatorship and command a coalition military force. The core army of Cossacks would be assisted by 100,000 men furnished by the Allies, as well as Polish and Czech troops (estimated at 80,000 each) already in Russia. By attracting loyal regiments from other parts of Russia it was assumed that Kaledin could build a total force of about 1,000,000 men. This proposal was considered by the War Cabinet on 21 and 22 November, despite the fact that very little was known about Kaledin or the strength of his support.[19]

There was a strong feeling among some members of the War Cabinet, Foreign Secretary Balfour included, that Kaledin should be given implicit recognition and that he should be instructed to work closely with Romania in rallying all forces still loyal to the Allies in South Russia. The Cabinet was, however, unable to come to a decision regarding Kaledin, so Balfour consulted Colonel Edward M. House, President Wilson's close friend and advisor, who was in London preparing for an upcoming Inter-Allied War Conference in Paris. Though Balfour pleaded

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[19]Wilton B. Fowler, British-American Relations, 1917-1918: The Role of Sir William Wiseman (Princeton, 1969), pp. 117-118; Betty M. Unterberger, "The United States, Austria-Hungary, and the Rise of Czechoslovakia: The Bolshevik Connection," p. 139.

that the Allies, with America's cooperation, should offer their support to Kaledin, House was reluctant to commit the American government to such an outlandish venture. House agreed that Romania should be the rallying point for forces in South Russia, but considered it unnecessary to support openly one faction in Russia and thus risk a further rupturing of relations with the Bolsheviks. Rather, House simply suggested that the Romanians should be encouraged to cooperate with any forces loyal to the Allies without specifically naming such forces. This policy was adopted by the War Cabinet on 22 November, and an agent was ordered to be sent from Jassy, Romania, to contact Kaledin and ascertain the general's real strength and intentions.[20]

Neither Ambassador Buchanan nor General Knox shared the cautious optimism exhibited by the War Cabinet on 22 November. Buchanan believed that, although a large percentage of the Russian people was disenchanted with the revolution, no change in conditions in Russia could be effected unless Kaledin succeeded in rallying the army around him, which seemed highly unlikely. Likewise, Knox saw the only opposition to the Bolsheviks as being Kaledin's party, and he believed that its time had passed.

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[20]Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1, pp. 42-43; Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 118-119; Fowler, British-American Relations, p. 118.

Nevertheless, the British Embassy continued to supply the Foreign Office with reports regarding Kaledin's progress in South Russia.[21]

On 24 November the Foreign Office, which had decided that the Bolshevik government could not be recognized under any circumstances because "to give any recognition at all to the Bolshevists would surely dishearten all who are in favour of a return to a more normal regime," received a dispatch from Buchanan that reported the ambassador's first contact with Kaledin's representatives.[22] On 23 November, the same day that the Bolshevik paper Izvestiia began to publish the Allied secret treaties, a N. V. Prince Shakovskii (formerly Russian Minister of Trade and Industry from 1915 until the February Revolution and a wealthy Russian banker) called on the Buchanan at the British Embassy. Shakovskii informed Buchanan that Kaledin and General Alekseev, the last chief of staff and former commander-in-chief of the Russian army, along with Kerenskii's former minister of war, Boris Savinkov, were at Novocherkassk and were soon to be joined

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[21]Sir George W. Buchanan, My Mission to Russia and Other Diplomatic Memories, vol. 2 (Boston, 1923), p. 219; General Alfred W.F. Knox, With the Russian Army, 1914-1917, vol. 2 (London, 1921), p. 720.

[22]Minute by Oliphant, 21 November 1917, on Buchanan to FO, 19 November 1917, FO 371, 221684/2999/3743, PRO; FO to Buchanan, 22 November 1917, FO 371, 221694/2999/3743, PRO.

by General Kornilov and former Duma president M. V. Rodzianko. A Republican Provisional Council was to be formed with Kaledin as dictator and Alekseev as commander-in-chief, and it was the new government's intention to cut off vital supplies to Petrograd and Moscow if the Bolsheviks refused to relinquish control of the north to the Cossacks. Furthermore, the Cossacks promised to reestablish the mobilization of troops along the Eastern front.[23]

The chief difficulty for the movement, according to Shakovskii, would be to get sufficient arms and money to finance the enterprise. The prince suggested a complicated scheme of opening a Cossack Bank whose capital would be guaranteed by the mineral wealth of South Russia. General Alexeev was interested in knowing if the "projected government" could count on the sympathy and support of the Allies and, if so, whether the latter would give financial assistance by purchasing shares in the Cossack Bank. Buchanan hesitantly responded that it was his government's policy to refrain from interfering with the internal affairs of Russia, and suggested that Shakovskii respond to his superiors by saying that the Allies "would welcome any strong and stable Government legally constituted that was prepared to keep Russia in the war."[24]

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[23]Buchanan to FO, 23 November 1917, FO 371, 224839/3018/224839, PRO.

[24]Ibid.

This telegram certainly attracted the attention of the Foreign Office. Lancelot Oliphant noted that, if practical, the scheme "might furnish an excellent solution" to the Russian problem.[25] Balfour added that, though the Cossack Bank idea seemed "a little fantastic," it could eventually "prove all important to find some means of financing Russian troops in South Russia."[26] It was thus on 25 November that the Foreign Office seriously began to consider financing the Kaledin movement. The next day Balfour sent an "urgent" telegram to Buchanan that clearly stated the position of the British government in one sentence: "In order to save the Roumanian Army it may be necessary to give financial assistance to the Cossacks with as little delay as possible."[27] Noting that the Cossack Bank idea did not seem feasible, Balfour asked Buchanan if there was any other scheme by which the "desired end" could be "rapidly and safely attained."[28]

The Foreign Office was hoping in late November that a way could be found to support a Cossack-Armenian-Georgian-Romanian combination of troops in South Russia.

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[25]Minute by Oliphant, 25 November 1917, ibid.

[26]Minute by Balfour, undated (but probably 25 November 1917), ibid.

[27]FO to Buchanan, 26 November 1917, 224839/3018/224839, PRO.

[28]Ibid.

Such a force could not only reform the Eastern front against Germany and Austria-Hungary but could also bolster the Allies' sagging defenses against the Turks in the Transcaucasus. A sobering report was received from Consul Stevens on 27 November asserting that the state of decay of the military in the Caucasus had become permanent. The Russian troops in the region were not receiving adequate supplies of clothing and foodstuffs and were abandoning the front more rapidly than ever. Stevens concluded that only by taking exceedingly prompt action could the "calamitous consequences" of a spontaneous withdrawal of Russian troops from the Caucasus be averted.[29] Oliphant, who considered Stevens "very level headed," believed the report to be quite accurate; and Sir Charles Hardinge of Penshurst, the British permanent under secretary of state, feared that it was already too late to save the Caucasian front.[30] Even so, the Foreign Office still refused to act upon the most extreme recommendations received. In response to the suggestion that Britain and the Allies should police Russia militarily, Oliphant noted that such an action was obviously impossible and would be like a

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[29]Buchanan to FO, 31 October 1917, FO 371, 225901/3012/86539, PRO.

[30]Minutes by Oliphant and British Permanent Under Secretary of State Charles Hardinge, 1 December 1917, ibid.

"gambler's last throw."[31]

The Foreign Office firmly believed that the only hope for a successful unification of the proposed Cossack-Armenian-Georgian-Romanian force depended completely upon a coalescing of pro-Allied elements around General Kaledin.[32] This notion led Sir Edward Carson, first lord of the admiralty, to inquire of the Petrograd Embassy on 26 November as to Kaledin's plans, his strength, and the extent of his control over the South Russian resources. "In the event of the situation offering reasonable hopes," Carson stated, "Allied assistance will be forthcoming and we shall be glad to know in what ways this could be profitably given."[33]

Such optimism was not, however, reflected in the rather somber reports that continued to reach London from Petrograd. A dispatch received from Ambassador Buchanan on 27 November indicated that Kaledin was still much too weak to serve any purpose for the Allies.[34] Neither Buchanan nor General Knox agreed with their government's

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[31]Minute by Oliphant, 26 November 1917, on Buchanan to FO, 24 November 1917, FO 371, 224855/2996/3743, PRO.

[32]FO to Buchanan, 27 November 1919, FO 371, 225633/2999/3743, PRO.

[33]FO to Buchanan, 26 November 1917, FO 371, 224839/3018/224839, PRO.

[34]Buchanan to FO, 25 November 1917, FO 371, 225633/2999/3743, PRO.

apparently overt efforts to ally with the Cossacks, and each proposed that a Captain Noel should be sent from Tiflis to Novocherkassk to properly judge the true strength of Kaledin's forces. Both men believed that the Russian nation, including the Cossacks, was out of the war for good and that there was little the Allies could do to resurrect the Eastern front. Buchanan felt that for the British to hold their "pound of flesh" and to insist on Russia fulfilling her wartime obligations would only embitter the Russian people against Britain.[35] Concerns among the British representatives in Petrograd were heightened when, on 28 November, Leon Trotskii, the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, disclosed that the Bolsheviks believed that Buchanan was "in constant touch with Kaledin" and perhaps should be arrested.[36] From this point forward the British Embassy in Petrograd was adamantly opposed to the stance that had been and would continue to be taken by London toward South Russia.

The Foreign Office received in late November a number of confusing reports about General Kaledin himself. Lord Hardinge heard from a reliable source that General

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[35]Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 2, pp. 225-226; Knox, With the Russian Army, 2, pp. 727-728; Buchanan to FO, 28 November 1917, FO 371, 227706/3013/224839, PRO.

[36]Buchanan, My Mission to Russia, 2, pp. 226-227; Knox, With the Russian Army, 2, p. 728; Ullmann, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1, p. 44.

Kaledin was not considered to be a "mass of energy," but rather a bureaucratic type. In contrast, Sir Robert Cecil had received a "very favourable account" of Kaledin, who was described as a man of "great energy and determination."[37] On 28 November the War Cabinet met to consider the most recent reports received from Petrograd and Jassy, Romania. The most important of the telegrams considered was one received that morning from Sir G. H. Barclay, the British ambassador to Romania. Barclay relayed a report from his military attache', General C. R. Ballard, which verified that a Major Fitzwilliams had been sent to Novocherkassk as instructed by the Foreign Office, but that no reports had as yet been received. Ballard suggested that the British Embassy in Jassy should be allowed to grant Kaledin financial support up to ten million pounds if the General was inclined to participate in supporting the Romanian war effort.[38]

Sir Robert Cecil, who was acting in Foreign Secretary Balfour's stead while the latter was at the Inter-Allied War Conference in Paris, encouraged the War Cabinet to arrive at a decision on the matter "at the earliest possible moment" on this question. Cecil was extremely

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[37]Minutes by Hardinge and Cecil, undated, on G. H. Barclay, British ambassador to Romania, to FO, 26 November 1917, 226499/3018/224839, PRO.

[38]Barclay to FO, 27 November 1917, FO 371, 226952/3018/224839, PRO.

skeptical of the usefulness of establishing any kind of relations with the Bolsheviks.[39] He asserted that "Kaledin was in command of the resources of South Russia" and that, if the Cossacks were united against Germany, the valuable resources of South Russia could be prevented from reaching enemy hands. The Bolsheviks had not demonstrated that they had anything like general support throughout Russia, and there was evidence that the peasants were in opposition to the new government. If Kaledin were "genuinely" inclined toward the Allies, Cecil urged, the Romanian authorities should be authorized to incur expenditure up to ten million pounds. As Cecil found the War Cabinet divided on this issue, he forwarded the relevant dispatches to Balfour in Paris.[40]

On 29 November the Inter-Allied War Conference began in Paris. Originally scheduled to begin weeks earlier, the conference was designed to be a forum at which the war aims of the Allies would be discussed and clarified. The British representatives, Prime Minister Lloyd George, Foreign Secretary Balfour, and War Cabinet member Lord Alfred Viscount Milner, were joined by Colonel House from the United States in representing the more liberal views regarding Allied strategy and war aims. On 30

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[39]Lockhart, British Agent, p. 198.

[40]Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 123-126.

November the subject of Russia was first discussed in Paris. Lloyd George presented the most recent recommendations by Buchanan and suggested that the Allies "should release Russia from the engagement entered into in the Pact of London not to make a separate peace." Furthermore, he continued, "they should tell the Russian people that, realizing the extent to which they are worn by war, and the effects of the disorganization resulting from a great revolution, they would leave them to decide for themselves" whether to continue the fight with the Allies or obtain peace on Germany's terms.[41] Colonel House favored this statement, but neither the French nor the Italians would allow Russia to forego her wartime promises and obligations. It was instead decided that each power would issue its own statement regarding the situation in Russia.[42]

On 1 December Lloyd George read to the Conference the 28 November dispatch from General Ballard in Romania and suggested that an Anglo-French mission should be sent to General Kaledin to guarantee him support of ten million pounds. After some discussion this proposal was

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[41]David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, vol. 5 (Boston, 1934), pp. 108-109.

[42]Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, vol. 3 (Boston, 1928), pp. 284-285.

approved.[43] Lloyd George then returned to London on 2 December, while Balfour remained in Paris. Balfour appears to have reconsidered this decision because, on 2 December, he wired to the Foreign Office that, since no information had been received from the British officers sent to Romania, no British military mission should yet be sent to Kaledin. The Foreign Secretary clearly feared that such an "ostentatious act" would be perceived as definite support of Kaledin and would therefore jeopardize Ambassador Buchanan's safety in Petrograd.[44]

On the morning of 3 December the War Cabinet met in London and once again considered the Russian situation. Knowing all too well that the Russians and the Germans had begun peace talks at Brest-Litovsk the day before, the War Cabinet discussed the need for making a "tremendous effort" to maintain South Russia on the Allied side. Disregarding the 28 November recommendation by Buchanan to allow Russia to make a separate peace, the War Cabinet approved in principle not only the financing of Kaledin

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[43]Ibid. See also George A. Brinkley, The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917-1920 (Notre Dame, 1966), p. 26; Lord Maurice P. A. H. Hankey, The Supreme Command, 1914-1918 (London, 1961), pp. 730-731; Sydney H. Zebel, Balfour: a Political Biography (London, 1973), p. 249; Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 128-130; Neilson, Strategy and Supply, p. 293.

[44]Lord Francis Bertie, British ambassador to France, to FO, 2 December, 1917, FO 371, 229382/3018/229382, PRO; Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, p. 133; Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1, p. 45.

"up to any figure necessary" but also decided to forward to the Russian Caucasus Army "any reasonable demands for money." That evening General Ballard and Ambassador Buchanan were informed of these decisions. This action, it must be noted, was made before any first-hand information had been received from the two British representatives who had been sent to South Russia and after Balfour had asked the War Cabinet to be cautious in their dealings with Kaledin and his Cossacks.[45]

Lord Robert Cecil, who was again attending the 3 December War Cabinet meeting in Balfour's absence, was apparently the guiding force behind this decision. The telegram that Cecil dispatched to Buchanan fully reveals the nature of British policy toward revolutionary Russia at this time:

> Most Secret
>
> The War Cabinet considered the Russian situation this morning & they are of opinion that all our efforts should be concentrated on trying to prevent Russia from making a separate peace with Germany. They believe that the only hope of doing this is to strengthen by every means in our power those elements who are genuinely friendly to the Entente of whom the chief are Kaledin, Alexeief [sic] & their group. They do not believe that the constitution of coalition between Bolsheviks, Social Revolutionaries & even Mensheviks would be any real improvement. Such a combination would be under Bolshevik influence & would besides consist of talkers and theorists. If on the other hand a

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[45]John F. N. Bradley, Allied Intervention in Russia (New York, 1968), p. 11; Brinkley, The Volunteer Army, p. 27; Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, I, pp. 46-47.

> southern block could be formed consisting of the Caucasus, the Cossacks, the Ukraine & the Roumanians it would probably be able to set up a reasonably stable Government & would in any case through its command of oil, coal & corn control the whole of Russia. You are therefore authorized to take whatever steps you regard as possible with a view to carrying out this policy, either directly or through such agents as you select. No regard should be had to expense & you should furnish to Cossacks or Ukrainians any funds necessary by any means you think desirable.[46]

Cecil believed that Buchanan's reports had shown "quite a wrong attitude of mind," and that this dispatch would lead him to take a "more decided action" in promising financial assistance to the Cossacks.[47] Cecil seemed oblivious of the ambassador's fear of being arrested by Trotskii, and appears to have been most concerned about contacting and financing pro-Allied forces in South Russia. However, one is given the impression that, if the Cossacks had become successful on more than a regional basis, Cecil would not have been greatly disturbed.[48]

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[46]FO to Buchanan, 3 December 1917, FO 371, 229192/3018/224839, PRO; FO to Barclay, 3 December 1917, FO 371, 226952/3018/224839, PRO.

[47]Buchanan to FO, 30 November 1917, FO 371, 229192/3018/224839, PRO; Minute by Cecil, undated (but probably 2 December 1917), on above telegram.

[48]In addition to holding Buchanan responsible for the intimations made by the British to the Cossacks, Trotskii had also threatened British subjects in Russia with imprisonment if two prominent Bolsheviks, Georgi V. Chicherin and P. Petrov, were not released from internment in London. The best account of this confrontation can be found in Kettle, Russia and the Allies, I, 123-124, 142-143. See also Buchanan to FO, 30 November 1917, FO 371, 229192/3018/224839, PRO.

Neither Buchanan nor Knox could believe the policy set forth by the Foreign Office in its 3 December telegram. Buchanan, who had kept his superiors well-informed of Trotskii's threats before this decision had been made, replied sharply on 5 December that it was useless to found "exaggerated expectations" on promises made by Don Cossack emissaries, whose constant visits were only succeeding in making the embassy's position more precarious.[49] The same day General Knox, who was very familiar with the Russian military and its leaders dispatched a rather curt telegram to the Foreign Office which suggested that London had an "entirely false idea" of Kaledin's strength. Knox continued, "Alexieff and Kaledin have nothing except two companies with promise of three more....These are all talkers and not men who will risk their lives....I am afraid position in Russia is not at all understood at home. No Russian, Cossack or otherwise, will fight unless compelled to by foreign force." He concluded that "we cannot advertise our connection with the movement as we should at once be arrested and properly so....To ask us to intrigue with the Cossacks while we are here in the power of the Rebel Government is merely to get our throats cut to no purpose."[50]

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[49]Buchanan to FO, 5 December 1917, FO 371, 232003/3018/224839, PRO.

[50]Buchanan to FO, 5 December 1917, FO371, 232002/

Despite these pleas from Petrograd the Foreign Office refused to retract its 3 December decision. However, Balfour continued to have doubts about the wisdom of this decision, and on 6 December sent a more conciliatory dispatch to Buchanan without the knowledge of the Foreign Office.[51] Attempting to make some sense of the British policy to date, Balfour explained that Britain's foremost concern was to "save the Roumanian [sic] army and people" by supporting the Cossack forces in South Russia. "We are well aware," Balfour continued,"that you have not the least belief that such parties are anywhere to be found. We admit that your judgement may well be correct. But while hope exists we do not think our efforts should be relaxed."[52]

No sooner had the 3 December decision been made and dispatched when the Foreign Office began to receive accurate first-hand reports that confirmed the embassy's long-held position. On 9 December a report was received from Knox relaying Captain Noel's first impressions of the

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3018/224839, PRO. See also David R. Woodward, "British Intervention in Russia During the First World War," Military Affairs 16 (December 1977): 171.

[51]Diary entry by House, 3 December 1917, PWW, 45, p. 189; See also John Silverlight, The Victor's Dilemma: Allied Intervention in the Russian Civil War (London, 1970), pp. 8-9.

[52]FO to Buchanan, 6 December 1917, FO 371, 235052/3023/235052, PRO.

Kaledin movement. Noel, upon arriving at Novocherkassk, realized at once that the Cossacks were weary of war. He suggested that the Allies should place little hope in the Kaledin forces. Knox added that it would take at least one month before the Cossacks could have any effect at all in Russia, and then they could only perhaps save valuable supplies from being confiscated by the Germans.[53]

Lloyd George and Balfour now began to doubt the wisdom of their government's policy of the last several weeks toward Russia. More importantly, they began to realize the long-term effects that such a policy could have on Anglo-Russian relations. As a result, they collaborated on a memorandum that was presented to the War Cabinet on 9 December. The gist of the memorandum was that the British government should "avoid, as long as possible, an open breech with this crazy system."[54] Aid to General Kaledin was discouraged because it would take Germany many months to attain and utilize the resources of Russia. It would thus be a mistake to alienate the Bolsheviks at this early date, for a break in relations with the new government would not only endanger British subjects in Russia, but would also drive Russia into the

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[53]Buchanan to FO, 6 December 1917, FO 371, 233319/3018/224839, PRO.

[54]Lloyd George, War Memoirs, 5, pp. 111-114.

hands of Germany.[55]

Certain members of the Foreign Office staff also began to question the ramifications of the government's policy in Russia.[56] On 13 December the Foreign Office received a telegram from Buchanan that reiterated the view that the policy of supporting Kaledin was not a sound one and that "we shall make a mistake if we do anything to provoke civil war as that would open the whole front to the Germans."[57] In the Foreign Office George R. Clerk now considered Buchanan's view of the situation "very sound."[58] Rex Leeper, a Political Intelligence Officer in the Foreign Office, pondered the dilemma in which the British government had placed themselves. He noted, "It is not easy to see how we are to support the Cossack & Ukrainian movements & at the same time not do anything to encourage civil war. The latter is already in progress."[59] Lord Hardinge, however, remained staunch in his

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[55]Ibid. See also Kenneth Young, Arthur James Balfour: The Happy Life of the Politician, Prime Minister, Statesman, and Philosopher, 1848-1930 (London, 1963), p. 402; Ullman, Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1, p. 32.

[56]David R. Jones, ed., "Documents on British Relations With Russia, 1917-1918," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 9 (Fall 1975): 363.

[57]Buchanan to FO, 11 December 1917, FO 371, 236400/3020/234061, PRO.

[58]Minute by Clerk 13 December 1917, ibid.

[59]Minute by Rex Leeper (political intelligence officer of the Foreign Office), undated, ibid.

support of his government's policy in Russia, and replied to Buchanan by stating, "The policy of His Majesty's Government is to support Ukraine and Cossack movements as representing the soundest elements of the nation by whom work of reorganization can alone be effected and especially with a view to saving the Roumanian Army...."[60]

Despite the doubts evinced by some of the major figures in the British government, the War Cabinet on 14 December finalized its policy toward the Cossacks. It decided that "any sum of money required for the purpose of maintaining alive in south-east Russia the resistance to the Central Powers, considered necessary by the War Office, in consultation with the Foreign Office, would be furnished; the money to be paid in instalments [sic] so long as the recipients continued the struggle."[61] Ironically, that very evening the Foreign Office received a dispatch from Major Fitzwilliams that gave his impressions of the group of Cossacks at Novocherkassk, where he had arrived on 7 December. It said simply, "Cossacks absolutely useless and disorganized."[62]

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[60]FO to Buchanan, 15 December 1917, FO 371, 236400/3020/234061, PRO.

[61]Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, p. 162.

[62]Barclay to FO, 9 December 1917, FO 371, 237542/3018/224839, PRO. For a complete account of the interview between Major Fitzwilliams and General Kaledin, see Kettle, Russia and the Allies, 1, pp. 153-155.

There is little evidence to suggest that the American government was aware of the actions taken by their British counterparts in late November and early December, 1917. As previously noted, Lancelot Oliphant had commented on 12 November that the lack of a positive American response to British intimations regarding the sending of aid to South Russian troops meant that the British would be forced to assume the responsibility for such projects on their own. The United States government continued to distance itself from the policies of the British in late November. On 27 November the Foreign Office received from Ambassador Spring Rice a dispatch which reported that the United States still refused to cooperate with the British on a unified Allied policy toward Russia. The Americans feared that such a commitment would damage the United States' reputation in Russia and thus push Russia closer to Germany.[63] Thus, the Americans continued to steer their own course.

Spring Rice informed the British government on 9 December that, after a long discussion with Secretary Lansing, he understood that the attitude of the American government towards the Russian political parties was "non-committal." The United States government did not intend to "either recognize or oppose any party until it had

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[63]Spring Rice to FO, 26 November 1917, FO 371, 226015/2999/3743, PRO.

obtained complete and unqualified endorsement of Russian people as a whole. This is the President's policy towards all revolutionary Governments and he is opposed to any appearance of interference in domestic affairs."[64]

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[64]Spring Rice to FO, 8 December 1917, FO 371, 233343/3000/3743, PRO.

CHAPTER V

THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION ACTS

On 12 December, 1917 President Wilson and Secretary of State Lansing arrived at essentially the same decision as the British government did two days later; namely to provide financial support to General Kaledin and his Cossacks. However, Wilson made his decision quite independently from the the British and, more importantly, for very different reasons. Although, like the British, his primary concern was winning the war, the president was much more hesitant than the British Foreign Office to commit to a policy in Russia that would appear to interfere, in any way, in Russia's internal domestic affairs. Wilson was, therefore, put in a most peculiar and complicated position when, on 7 November, the Bolsheviks assumed power in Petrograd and threatened to remove Russia from the war that the United States had entered only eight months earlier.

President Wilson's problem of responding to Lenin, the Bolsheviks, and their platform was particularly difficult because, unlike the British, he had been especially supportive of the February Revolution and its leaders' advocacy of the democratic ideals which he held so dear. Wilson had hoped that the "wonderful" and "heartening"

democratic revolution in Russia would be permanent.[1] He was especially pleased that the United States had been the first nation to extend diplomatic recognition to the Provisional Government.[2] He believed that the "true Russia," one that was "democratic at heart," had finally emerged.[3] The fall of the Russian autocracy had, in fact, made his decision of 2 April 1917 to declare war on Germany easier because, in Wilson's eyes, the "generous Russian people" had been added "in all their naive majesty and might to the forces that are fighting for freedom in the world, for justice, and for peace."[4] The United States continued to support the Provisional Government even though, as the months passed, it became increasingly apparent that the new government was losing ground to the more militant elements of Russian society. Thus, unlike the British, the American government surprised and greatly dismayed when Aleksandr Kerenskii fled Petrograd and the Provi-

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[1]John Lewis Gaddis, Russia, the Soviet Union, and the United States: An Interpretive History (New York, 1978), p. 58.

[2]Woodrow Wilson, Message to Congress, 2 April 1917, PWW, 41, p. 524; Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, 1917-1923 (Chapel Hill, 1946), p. 57.

[3]Woodrow Wilson, Message to Congress, 2 April 1917, PWW, 41, p. 524.

[4]Ibid. See also Ray Stannard Baker, ed., Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters, vol. 6 (New York, 1939), p. 501; Seymour, Intimate Papers of Colonel House, 3, p. 36.

sional Government was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.[5]

The first report of the Bolshevik uprising arrived at the Department of State on the morning of 10 November. Ambassador Francis reported that Kerenskii had escaped from Petrograd and that the Bolsheviks controlled the city. Francis suggested that Kerenskii could regain control of the capital, but it was uncertain if any troops were loyal enough to support him.[6] Consul Smith reported on 10 November that the population and army of the Caucasus were refusing to unite with the Maximalists (Bolsheviks). Smith feared they could not hold out longer than five days without financial aid, which it was in the Allies' "vital interest" to extend.[7] He suggested that he be authorized, if necessary, to draw ten million dollars by telegraph for that purpose. He requested instructions from Washington concerning the official attitude he should take if approached by the local government on the matter.[8] Here, then, was the first serious recommendation by an American official in Russia to aid non-Bolshevik forces financially.

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[5]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, pp. 25-26.

[6]Francis to Wilson, 7 November 1917, PWW, 44, p. 532.

[7]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 9 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/639, DSNAM.

[8]Ibid.

Smith was accurate in reporting that the majority of the region's population opposed the Bolshevik coup. Indeed, throughout Transcaucasia the initial reaction to the transfer of power in Petrograd was one of shock, dismay, and hostility.[9] Although the Bolsheviks enjoyed some degree of support in the refining city of Baku, even the Baku Bolsheviks generally opposed the radical platform advocated by Lenin and his followers in Petrograd.[10] The Mensheviks and moderate Social Democrats in the Caucasus were also opposed to the 7 November coup. Noi Jordania, the leader of the Georgian Mensheviks, proclaimed on 11 November that "the connection with Russia has been broken and the Transcaucasus has been left alone. We have to stand on our own feet and either help ourselves or perish through anarchy."[11] Jordania then proposed the creation of an autonomous government to lead the Transcaucasus out of what he termed "this catastrophic situation."[12] Thus,

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[9]Hodge, "American Diplomacy Toward Transcaucasia," p. 26.

[10]Sarkis Atamian, The Armenian Community: The Historical Development of a Social and Ideological Conflict (New York, 1955), p. 245; Laventri P. Beria, On the History of the Bolshevik Organizations in Transcaucasia (New York, 1935), pp. 167-168; Richard G. Hovannisian, Armenia on the Road to Independence, 1918 (Los Angeles, 1969), pp. 86-90; Ronald Grigor Suny, The Baku Commune, 1917-1918 (Princeton, 1972), p. 143.

[11]Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, p. 55.

[12]Ibid.

a Social Democratic Commissariat was formed at Tiflis, its main goals being to maintain cooperation between the nationalities and to foster reunification with a non-Bolshevik government in Russia.[13]

Although Transcaucasia was moving toward independence, the Mensheviks did not desire to remain permanently separated from Russia. Neither Jordania nor any other prominent Menshevik leader sought such a division, though all parties and organizations in the Transcaucasus refused to recognize the Bolsheviks. To illlustrate this point, the Army Committee of the Commissariat, which represented the Caucasian troops at the front, passed a resolution declaring that the Bolshevik coup violated the sovereign will of the people. Only the cabinet of Kerenskii, according to the committee, had the right to rule in the name of the people; any other government was hostile to the cause of the revolution. Should all else fail, the commissariat hoped to maintain order until the Constituent Assembly was convened on an all-Russian basis.[14]

A week later, Smith informed the Department of State that Kerenskii had failed in his bid to regain control in Petrograd. Although the situation in his dis

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[13]Buchan, The Baltic and Caucasian States, p. 212.

[14]Kazemzadeh, The Struggle for Transcaucasia, p. 56.

trict was strained, he believed that "trouble" could be avoided if the Department would authorize his recommendations of 10 November.[15] However, the administration was not yet willing to act in Russia, and Lansing responded that on 31 October the Department had telegraphed him "at some length [as to] the only action which the Treasury Department has found it possible to take up to the present time."[16] Indeed, one week after the Bolshevik coup President Wilson, in a letter to a Florida congressman, indicated that he was exercising patience with the Russian crisis. He wrote:

> I have not lost faith in the Russian outcome by any means. Russia, like France in a past century, will have to go through deep waters but she will come out on firm land on the other side and her great people, for they are a great people, will in my opinion take their proper place in the world.[17]

Frustrated by the State Department's hesitancy to act on his recommendations, Smith reiterated his position in a telegram received in Washington on 19 November. In this dispatch Smith described the situation in the Transcaucasus in more explicit detail, apparently hoping that a more urgent tenor would persuade his government to act.

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[15]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 15 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/662, DSNAM.

[16]Lansing to Smith, Washington, 21 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/662, DSNAM.

[17]Wilson to Frank Clark, U. S. representative from Florida, 13 November 1917, PWW, 45, p. 39.

"If it is desired to keep this section of Russia and Russia front loyal to the Allies," Smith explained, the need for financing the local governments and armies "should be met at once by depositing ten million dollars in London or New York immediately...."[18] He reminded the State Department that a strong determination still existed among the leaders and a majority of the population not to submit to control by the Bolsheviks, to oppose the separate peace proposed by Lenin, and to continue the war in case of such a peace. Once again Smith reviewed the advantages of retaining the line from the Ural Mountains to the Volga and Don Basins. The grain, coal, and petroleum resources of the region would obviously do the Allies more good if controlled by elements sympathetic to the Allied cause besides denying them to the Germans.[19]

Smith was not the only American consular representative in Russia who recommended that a strong anti-Bolshevik stance to the Wilson administration. Maddin Summers, the American consul general in Moscow, reported in a dispatch that arrived in Washington on 20 November, that the Bolsheviks controlled Moscow and had were making harsh accusations about the Allies, including America.[20]

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[18]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 18 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/683, DSNAM.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Williams, "American Intervention in Russia," p. 26.

Summers, who has been described as "the most influential career man involved in the day to day events of the Russian Revolution," believed that the Bolshevik movement had to be "put down" immediately or a separate peace would be made with Germany.[21] Summers recommended that the United States should counteract Bolshevik and German propaganda "in every way possible." He continued, "For this purpose as well as to lend moral support to the better elements in Russia, which will regain the upper hand, every effort must be made to maintain every American agency in Russia."[22]

Three distinct views had developed among the American consular, diplomatic, military, and other personnel in Russia by the end of the second week following the Bolshevik uprising. The first perspective, which can be described as the "take the bull by the horns" approach, advocated encouraging and supporting those elements in Russia that pledged to honor Russia's wartime commitments to the Allies. Chief among this group were F. Willoughby Smith and Maddin Summers.[23] The second view held that Lenin and the Soviets were in control of Russia for good, and it would be best for the American government to work

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[21]Summers to Lansing, Moscow, 17 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/689, DSNAM.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, p. 170.

with the Bolsheviks. The main supporters of this view were Brigadier General William V. Judson, military attache' in Petrograd; Edgar Sisson, Petrograd representative of the Committee for Public Information; and William Boyce Thompson, head of the American Red Cross Mission to Russia and his assistant, Raymond Robins.[24] The third approach to handling the Russian problem was one which advocated absolute neutrality and categorically refused to discuss business with the Bolshevik revolutionaries. Ambassador Francis best presented this attitude when he vowed that he would "never talk to a damned Bolshevik."[25]

It was clear to Lansing by the end of the third week in November that the Kerenskii government had failed in its bid to unseat the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.[26] On 22 November he wired to Colonel House in Paris and requested his opinion about the Russian situation. The time had come to decide if shipments of American foodstuffs destined for Russia should be continued and whether commerce should be conducted as usual with the Bolshevik regime. Lansing also asked House to ascertain the views of his

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[24]Ibid.; Williams, American-Russian Relations, pp. 109-111. Raymond Robins became head of the Red Cross Mission in Russia upon William Boyce Thompson's departure on 17 November 1917.

[25]Gardner, Safe for Democracy, p. 151.

[26]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, p. 149.

British and French colleagues and to "cable fully" their responses "as soon as possible."[27] Three days later House responded that "in Great Britain the Russian situation is considered at the moment hopeless. There is no responsible government in sight. I would advise making no more advances at present or permitting any further contracts for purchases...."[28]

The State Department acted upon House's recommendation and, for the time being, halted economic intercourse with Russia.[29] Continuance of the American government's "wait and see" attitude toward Russia was also becoming more difficult as pessimistic reports continued to arrive from Petrograd and Moscow. On 24 November Ambassador Francis forwarded to the Department of State a formal proposal for an armistice from Foreign Commissar Trotskii. This document, which was sent to all Allied ambassadors in Petrograd, requested that the people and government of the United States join Russia in ending immediately the war's "incomparable butchery."[30] The same day Consul General

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[27]Lansing to U.S. Ambassador William G. Sharp (France), Washington, 22 November 1917, FRUS. 1918, Russia. 3, p. 28.

[28]E. M. House to Lansing, Paris, 24 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 3, p. 28.

[29]Bunyan and Fisher, The Bolshevik Revolution, pp. 249-250.

[30]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 22 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, p. 244. For the complete text of

Summers reported that conditions were gradually worsening in Moscow and that, due to German propaganda and "the decentralizing and disintegrating forces" at work in Russia, the Allies could no longer count on the Russians to render them further assistance.[31] Lansing, in his first correspondence with Francis since the Bolshevik coup two weeks earlier, informed him rather vaguely that the United States government was attempting to avoid a policy that "might look to Russia as a measure of compulsion."[32] Thus, Francis was still in the dark as to his government's official attitude toward the Bolshevik regime.[33] Clearly, the Wilson administration had not yet developed an official attitude toward the Bolshevik Revolution.

Consul Smith apparently interpreted the State Department's silence as tacit approval of the stance he had taken toward the anti-Bolshevik nationalities in South Russia. Accordingly, he continued to work to achieve a union of these nationalities. On 24 November a dispatch

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this message see C. R. Cumming and W. W. Pettit, eds., Russian-American Relations, March 1917-March 1920 (New York, 1920), p. 44.

[31]Summers to Lansing, Moscow, 22 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/714, DSNAM.

[32]Lansing to Francis, Washington, 24 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/716, DSNAM. See also Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, I, p. 159.

[33]David F. Francis, Russia From the American Embassy, April, 1917-November, 1918 (New York, 1921), p. 189.

arrived from Tiflis in which Smith reported that he would be attending a meeting the next day at which a formal government for the Transcaucasus would be organized. This government, he added, would unite with other groups loyal to the Allies and would pledge to repudiate a Bolshevik-German armistice or separate peace. If this government was to succeed, the financial support he previously requested would be essential. Smith reminded the Department that he was still "anxiously awaiting" instructions from Washington on these matters.[34]

Reporting on the meeting the next day, Smith explained that the newly-created government of the Transcaucasus was temporary in nature but permanent in purpose. "Full loyalty to Russia was expressed," noted Smith, "and the fact that this Government was created solely to keep out anarchy until time true representative Government of Russia may be established to which this government would revert was especially emphasized."[35] Similar movements were occurring among the Cossacks of the Terek and the Don regions and, forseeing a potential union of these forces, Smith strongly recommended that he be instructed to recog-

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[34]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 23 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/711, DSNAM.

[35]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 25 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/719, DSNAM.

nize "these de facto" governments.[36] He concluded: "Entire success of this federation and its power to stop growth of Maximalists principally must depend upon ability to meet obligations."[37]

This telegram arrived at the State Department at 12:53 p.m. on 26 November and apparently gained Lansing's immediate attention. At 4:00 p.m.Lansing responded to Smith as follows:

> Please advise how under circumstances you describe the financial support you propose will not tend to encourage sectionalism or disruption of Russia or civil war. Department cannot encourage tendencies in any of these directions.[38]

Smith had obviously impressed Lansing with the content of his dispatches of 25 and 26 November, especially in referring to the possible unification of the governments of Transcaucasia and the Terek and Don Cossacks.

The State Department had apparently been monitoring Smith's dispatches quite closely, for it had forwarded every dispatch received from Tiflis since the Bolshevik coup to the Department of the Treasury. On the afternoon of 26 November Assistant Treasury Secretary R. C. Leffingwell sent a memorandum to Frank L. Polk, counselor of the

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[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Lansing to Smith, Washington, 26 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, p. 582.

Department of State, that reviewed the contents of Smith's dispatches to date. Leffingwell explained that he gathered from these telegrams that "he [Smith] advises of an organization of a Government of [the] Caucasus to unite with the Southern [Cossack] Federation and repudiate armistice or a separate peace, and that it is essential to give them financial support of $10,000,000."[39] He continued:

> The suggestions of the Consul are no doubt worthy of serious and prompt consideration, but it does not appear that it is at all clear that there is anyone with whom the Treasury Department could deal in advancing money for the purposes suggested by the Consul, even if it were considered advisable to do so. Under the conditions, it occurs to me that it might be expedient for the Secretary of State to call the attention of the British and French representatives to the suggestions of the Consul with a view to possible action by those governments along the lines proposed by the Consul.[40]

Clearly the original suggestion to correspond with the British and French governments about financing pro-Allied elements in South Russia originated not in Great Britain or France, but in the Treasury Department of the United States. It is just as important to note that this suggestion by the Treasury Department was based solely on the recommendations of F. Willoughby Smith.

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[39] R. C. Leffingwell (assistant secretary of the Treasury) to Frank L. Polk (counselor of the Department of State), Washington, 26 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/1344, DSNAM.

[40] Ibid.

The next day, 27 November, Lansing sent a copy of Smith's 26 November dispatch to Francis in Petrograd and House in Paris. He noted that Smith indicated that the temporary separate government of Transcaucasia had "expressed full loyalty to Russia but definite opposition to Bolshevik Government at Petrograd."[41] Lansing informed them of Smith's request for ten million dollars credit for salaries and supplies for the Caucasian troops. Lansing also stated that the Department understood that the British Embassy in Russia was recommending an increase in British aid to the Caucasus. Lansing concluded: "The American Consul at Tiflis will not be given authority to recognize de facto Government until it is evident that such action will not tend to foster sectionalism or disruption of Russia or civil war."[42] Lansing issued another telegram to House on 28 November requesting a report "on the general attitude of your colleagues in the matter of the recognition of the de facto Government of the Transcaucasus."[43] This dispatch seems to indicate that Lansing indeed believed that the Transcaucasian government had attained de facto status and, perhaps more importantly,

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[41]Lansing to Francis, Washington, 27 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/719, DSNAM; Lansing to Sharp, Washington, 27 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/719, DSNAM.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Lansing to Sharp, Washington, 28 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/719, DSNAM.

that he arrived at this conclusion prior to receiving any recent correspondence from Petrograd or Paris regarding the matter. However, the question of whether the United States government should recognize and finance this government was, as yet, unanswered.

Although Lansing was beginning to operate "behind the scenes" in an effort to salvage the situation in Russia, President Wilson continued to abstain from offering any public recognition to any government in Russia. On 27 November a dispatch was received from Ambassador Francis that reported Foreign Commissar Trotskii's assertion that the United States had entered the war at the behest of Wall Street and the American munitions industry. After reading Francis' telegram to his Cabinet Wilson remarked that he would be unable to reply to these accusations because any such answer would imply recognition of the Bolshevik regime.[44] When Wilson learned that Francis had, like Ambassador Buchanan, been visited by Prince Shakovskii and had agreed that America and the Allies should act upon the anti-Bolshevik party's request for a restatement of war and peace aims, the president responded that "it would be most unwise to interfere in any way or

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[44]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 24 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, pp. 246-247; Diary entry Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, 27 November 1917, in E. David Cronon, ed., The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, 1913-1921 (Lincoln, Neb., 1963), pp. 242-243.

take any sort of initiative," and that Francis should be instructed to that effect.[45] Francis elicited the same response when he suggested that, once the Constituent Assembly elections were completed, he and his colleagues should meet with a committee appointed by the Assembly to discuss the state of the Russian nation.[46] Again the State Department wired that "it would be most unwise to interfere in any way or take any initiative as you suggest."[47] On 29 November Basil Miles, the head of the Russian desk at the Department of State, also noted that the Constituent Assembly elections would soon be completed and that it was scheduled to convene in late December in Petrograd. Apparently frustrated by Wilson's lack of action in Russia, Miles asked Lansing if the president would consider sending a note to the Assembly and, in effect, "the whole Russian people."[48] Miles continued:

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[45]Chit from Wilson to Lansing dated 28 November 1917 on Ira Nelson Morris, U.S. ambassador to Sweden, to Lansing, Stockholm, 21 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/703, DSNAM; See also Francis, Russia From the American Embassy, p. 185.

[46]Morris to Lansing, Stockholm, 25 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/721, DSNAM.

[47]Lansing to Francis, Washington, 30 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/721, DSNAM.

[48]Basil Miles (head of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, Department of State) to Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips, Washington, 28 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/753, DSNAM.

> My idea is that our aims in the war could be rehearsed, pro-German assertions of our selfish ambitions controverted, sympathy expressed with the Revolution and the principles of democracy, and finally a statement that we will continue to aid Russia so long as we can safeguard supplies from falling into German hands or in hands of those under German control. We need not play into Germany's hands by saying we won't help the Russians unless they'll fight.[49]

Wilson was not swayed by Miles' argument, however, and Lansing responded, "President thinks this would be unwise."[50] Wilson was most incensed when General Judson several days later met informally with Trotskii in an attempt to explain the United States government's attitude toward the Bolshevik regime.[51] It was, therefore, Wilson's feeling that the United States government should remain neutral and, for the time being, abstain from publicly recognizing any of the newly-formed governments in Russia.

At Tiflis, Smith continued to work feverishly in an effort to mold a regional union of states in the Caucasus that would "provide a valuable asset to the Allies and in the future of Russia."[52] On 29 November he reported to

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[49]Ibid.

[50]Emendation by Lansing dated 30 November 1917, ibid.

[51]Jean Jules Jusserand (French ambassador to the United States) to French Foreign Minister Stephen Jean Marie Pinchon, Washington, 5 December 1917, PWW, 45, pp. 219-220; See also Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, pp. 119-122.

[52]Smith to Francis, Tiflis, 29 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/1085, DSNAM.

Ambassador Francis that his "efforts to bring about a Georgian and Armenian understanding have been successful and owing to this the Maximalist movement here could be checked."[53] Informing Francis of the same events that he had reported to the State Department on 24 November, Smith stated, "I am trying to bring about a working agreement or union" between the Transcaucasus and the Cossacks of the North Caucasus.[54] The same day a dispatch arrived from Smith at the Department of State in which he reported, "Owing to my initiative full understanding existing between Georgia and Armenia; and if financial support extended at once spreading disorder and anarchy can be checked."[55] Smith added that a large number of officers, including General Mikhail Alekseev, former commander-in-chief of the Russian Army under Tsar Nikolai II, were proceeding southward to join with Kaledin. For the first time Smith also offered his opinion that a civil war between North and South Russia was inevitable.[56]

The fateful month of November ended with the United States holding to essentially the same cautious policy of

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[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 28 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/738, DSNAM.

[56]Ibid.

"watchful waiting" in its dealings with the Bolsheviks and other groups in revolutionary Russia. It was certainly Wilson's intention to continue this approach to the Russian problem until conditions in Russia stabilized and it became evident that either the Bolsheviks or some other faction had gained the confidence of a majority of the Russian people. On 30 November Ambassador Francis forwarded another document from Foreign Commissar Trotskii which clearly indicated that the Bolsheviks were acting on their threat to remove Russia from the war. It stated simply, "Military operations on the Russian front have been brought to a standstill. The preliminary negotiations [with Germany] will begin on 2 December."[57] Trotskii also requested the Allied governments to reply whether they desired to participate in the negotiations. After consulting with the president, Lansing informed Francis that he should not reply to Trotskii and that "this Government awaits further developments. The president has made no statement."[58]

The situation in Russia was also discussed in a Cabinet meeting on 30 November. At this meeting Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane suggested that the Bol-

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[57]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 29 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, p. 253.

[58]Lansing to Francis, Washington, 1 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, p. 254; See also Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, p. 153.

shevik government might be able to maintain itself and that it should not be lightly dismissed. He added that others believed the Bolsheviks would fail. The substance of Consul Smith's reports had apparently reached the president by this time, for Wilson responded that the Cossacks and others in South Russia would not follow the Bolsheviks, but had declared for a continuance of the war and had asked for help and recognition. Wilson, however, still believed that it was too chaotic in Russia to take any action.[59]

Thus, by the end of November a number of distinct trends had developed as the United States government attempted to grapple with the fluid and situation in Russia. First, it is clear that Consul F. Willoughby Smith inundated the Department of State with a great number of dispatches and recommendations during the first few weeks after the October Revolution. Second, it is evident that Smith was actively pursuing, in the absence of specific instructions from Lansing, a course of action in South Russia that was designed to unite pro-Allied, anti-Bolshevik elements under a single regional government. Third, the United States government, by all indications, was baffled by the events of mid and late November

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[59]Diary entry by Daniels, 30 November 1917, in Cronon, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 244.

in Russia and was certainly exercising caution in its effort to avoid giving any degree of public recognition to any faction in Russia. Fourth, the Department of State was certainly intrigued by Consul Smith's reports and recommendations, so much so that Lansing not only consulted the Treasury Department and Petrograd Embassy about them but also forwarded them to Paris in an effort to learn the opinions of Colonel House and the Allied governments about Smith's proposed plan of action. Fifth, it was clear to the Wilson administration that the Bolsheviks were intent upon withdrawing Russia from the war, regardless of the cost to the United States and the Allies. Finally, it was evident to the American government that only one alternative to the Bolsheviks and their platform existed in Russia, and that was the developing union of the Transcaucasus and the Cossacks of the North Caucasus that Consul Smith had been working so very hard to achieve. The attitude that the United States would take toward this union was still to be determined.

On 2 December two very important telegrams were received from Colonel House in Paris. In the first he reported that "long and frequent" discussions regarding Russia had occurred among the various Allied delegates to the Inter-Allied War Conference in Paris.[60] Referring to

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[60]House to Wilson, 2 December 1917, PWW, 45, pp. 184-185.

his failed effort to convince the French and Italians to commit to a clear and unimpeded declaration of Allied war aims, House said that it was finally decided that each government would individually relay this information to its ambassador in Petrograd. Though each government agreed that the substance of this correspondence would be that the Allies were willing to reconsider their war aims in conjunction with Russia as soon as she had a stable government with whom they could act, it was clear that the delegates to the War Conference were having trouble reconciling the differences between each government's approach to Russia and the war effort.[61] House also finally responded to Lansing's 27 November request for a reaction to Consul Smith's recommendations for action in the Caucasus. He reported that, after meeting with the prime ministers of England, France, and Italy, the general inclination of each leader was to give encouragement to the Transcaucasian movement. House, who was a skilled political observer whose opinion the Wilson administration greatly respected, demonstrated the complexity of the situation when he tried to explain his feelings on the matter:

> Personally I consider it dangerous for the reason that it is encouraging internal disturbances without our having any definite program in mind or any force with which to back up a program. On the

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[61] Ibid.

other hand if they are not given money they may go to pieces.[62]

House added that the three Allied countries had decided to send a French and British military mission from Romania to Tiflis. The mission was then to proceed to the headquarters of General Kaledin at Novocherkassk to ascertain his goals and intentions.[63]

Short of informing that the British and French governments were also interested in the Cossack movement in South Russia, House's response did very little to clarify the Russian problem for Lansing. Sometime between 2 and 4 December Lansing, who had just learned that the Bolsheviks had called for a formal armistice, privately recorded his thoughts on the Russian situation in a long memorandum which one historian has termed "the first detailed expose' of responsible American reaction to the Bolshevik Revolution."[64] Lansing's memorandum marks the beginning of the line of thought that, one week later, found its outward expression in the 12 December decision by Lansing and Wilson to support financially the Cossacks

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[62]House to Lansing, Paris, 2 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, p. 583.

[63]Ibid. See also Alexander L. George and Juliette George, Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study (New York, 1956), p. 191; Rachel West, The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War (Athens, Ga., 1978), p. 52.

[64]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, p. 155.

in South Russia. Lansing began by referring to the many conflicting reports that he had received regarding the situation in Russia:

> There are a number of people who are telling us about Russia and advising us as to what the outcome will be and what we ought to do. I have seen several and a number have written me their views. The conclusions and opinions are almost as many as the advisers, and their advice as to our policy is about as harmonious. I have yet to find one, who, pinned down to the application of his theory, is able to furnish a plan that is practical except one who frankly asserts that the best thing to do is to let things alone as far as it is possible to do so.[65]

After stating that he was entirely in accord with the policy of "do nothing" in Russia, Lansing offered his opinion of the Bolsheviks, whom he regarded as anarchists rather than socialists. He perceived them as being "avowedly opposed to every government on earth; they openly propose to excite revolutions in all countries against existing governments; they are as hostile to democracy as they are to autocracy...." Lenin, Trotskii, and their "crew of radicals" were, in Lansing's eyes, "wanting in international virtue." He continued, "The one thing they are striving to bring about is 'Social Revolution,' which will...make the ignorant and incapable mass of humanity dominant in the earth. They indeed plan to destroy civi-

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[65]Robert Lansing, The War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (Westport, Conn., 1970), 339-341.

lization by mob violence."[66]

Lansing believed at this time that only the Cossacks in South Russia could offer an alternative to the Bolsheviks, but there were still unanswered questions regarding their ability to act on their expressed platform to continue the war and oppose the Bolsheviks. He remarked:

> The only possible remedy would be for a strong commanding personality to arise who would be able to gather a disciplined military force sufficiently strong to restore order and maintain a government. As yet no leader has shown enough strength to organize the Cossacks into an effective army. They may succeed, but no one knows how much the Cossacks returning from the front are inoculated with Bolshevism. Many are very hopeful, but I cannot say that I am overconfident. However, they are at present the only hope that has appeared. I am opposed to giving these leaders any open support, as their enterprise seems to me too uncertain and the whole situation too chaotic to put faith in any one group or faction.[67]

As to the stance that the American government should take toward the Bolsheviks in Petrograd, Lansing held that:

> The correct policy for a government which believes in political institutions as they now exist and based on nationality and private property is to leave these dangerous idealists alone and have no direct dealings with them. To recognize them would give them an exalted idea of their own power, make them more insolent and impossible, and win their contempt, not their friendship....[68]

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid., 340, 342.

Lansing did, however, believe that the time had come for the president to make a public declaration of the United States government's policy toward Russia. Accordingly, on 4 December he drafted a statement employing a "moderate tone" that was designed to be publicized to the people of Russia. In essence, this statement explained that the United States government had found it impossible to recognize Lenin, Trotskii, and their associates as the de facto government of Russia because there was "inadequate evidence" that they were "the real agents of the sovereignty of the Russian people."[69] The statement criticized the Bolsheviks' efforts to remove Russia from the war, and noted that the American government had "watched with disappointment and amazement the rise of class despotism in Petrograd and the open efforts of the leaders of the Bolsheviki to withdraw from the conflict even at the expense of national honor and the future safety of democracy in Russia."[70] The declaration concluded that "it cannot be that the Bolshevik leaders represent the Russian people or express their true will" and expressed the belief that "there will arise a strong and stable government founded on the principles of democracy and the equa-

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[69]Draft of public statement Lansing, 4 December 1917, PWW, 45, p. 205-207.

[70]Ibid.

lity of man...."[71] Lansing recorded in his War Memoirs that, although he approved of Lansing's position in principle, President Wilson he did not believe that it was opportune to make such a statement at that time.[72]

Instead of accepting Lansing's statement, which he probably did not consider to be terribly "moderate," Wilson chose to offer a more conciliatory message to the Russian people in his 4 December State of the Union address. In this address Wilson's remarks regarding Russia concentrated not on the excesses of the Bolsheviks but on the responsibility that the Allies shouldered for pursuing selfish goals at the expense of the Russian nation. The contrast between Lansing's statement and Wilson's comments on Russia is clear upon reading the portion of the president's address that pertains to Russia:

> ...I can not help thinking that if they [the Allied war aims] had been made plain at the very outset the sympathy and enthusiasm of the Russian people might have been once for all enlisted on the side of the Allies, suspicion and distrust swept away, and a real and lasting union of purpose effected. Had they believed these things at the very moment of their revolution and had they been confirmed in that belief since, the sad reverses which have recently marked the progress of their affairs towards an ordered and stable government of free men might have been avoided.[73]

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[71] Ibid.

[72] Lansing, War Memoirs, p. 345.

[73] State of the Union Address by Wilson, 4 December 1917, PWW, 45, p. 199.

More detailed information began to arrive from Russia toward the end of the first week of December. On 5 December two reports arrived from Ambassador Francis that gave conflicting reports as to General Kaledin's strength. Francis indicated that 200,000 troops had reportedly joined Kaledin, and that General Kornilov had escaped from prison and was moving southward with four hundred Cossacks.[74] He understood that Generals Kaledin and Alekseev were trying to organize their army, but thought it "extremely doubtful" that they could succeed.[75]

Lansing, who had recently received optimistic reports on General Kaledin and the situation in South Russia from Paris and Stockholm, had no doubt been anxiously awaiting Consul Smith's response to his 26 November request for a more detailed explanation of how the consul's recommendation of financial aid for the Transcaucasian government could be acted upon without tending to "encourage sectionalism or disruption of Russia or civil war."[76] Smith's reply arrived at on 7 December.

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[74]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 2 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, p. 280.

[75]Francis to Lansing, Petrograd, 3 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 1, pp. 284-285.

[76]Lansing to Smith, Washington, 26 November 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, p. 582; Sharp to Lansing, Paris, 26 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/728, DSNAM; Morris to Lansing, Stockholm, 28 November 1917, RG 59, 861.00/726, DSNAM.

In his 7 December reply to Lansing, Smith again reviewed the strategic importance of the region to the Allies as well as Germany and Turkey. The Allies, he believed, should channel their support toward those elements in Russia which supported the Allied cause, among whom were the Cossacks and Caucasian troops. The newly-formed states in the region, for lack of currency, would shortly have to submit to the Maximalists if immediate assistance was not provided them. The Cossacks, who were withdrawing from the front in order to defend their home region, were losing confidence in their strength because they had not yet been offered support by the Allies. Only the "most energetic and stringent measures" would prevent German domination of Russia and the utilization of Russia's resources against the Allies.[77] By aiding the pro-Allied elements in the region the Allies would be supporting both a Russian union and democracy against the absolute dependence of Russia on Germany. In concluding his argument, Smith stated, "Am not certain of success if policy submitted is adopted but it appears to offer less risk than any other alternative and would certainly afford greatest embarrassment to the enemy chiefs."[78]

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[77]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 4 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, p. 584-585.

[78]Ibid.

A second important communication from Smith arrived later on 7 December and reported that the Turks had proposed that peace negotiations be opened with the Caucasian Army. The troops in the Caucasus could offer no more resistance if Allied financial assistance did not arrive immediately. *In essence*, the Turkish front would collapse if his recommendations were not implemented quickly.[79]

Smith's argument was coincidentally corroborated by Consul General Summers in a dispatch that arrived in Washington on 9 December. Summers recounted a meeting with General A. A. Brusilov, the former commander-in-chief of the Russian Army under the Provisional Government, in which Brusilov reported that Generals Alekseev and Kaledin had formed a well-equipped army of 50,000 cavalry and a trusted infantry force. The British Embassy, according to Brusilov, had already pledged the Cossacks financial support, and he requested that the United States support them morally and financially as well. General Brusilov reminded Summers that, unless this important movement was successful, Russia would become prey to anarchy and civil war. Summers requested for a clarification on Department's attitude toward the Bolsheviks who, in Summers' words, had "violently seized power from the government which has been recognized as that of the Russian

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[79]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 5 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, p. 586.

people."[80]

Arriving in rapid sequence, these dispatches were the catalysts that spurred an even greater flurry of activity within the State Department than had Smith's telegram of 26 November. On 10 December Lansing drafted a memorandum to Wilson that incorporated the central tenets of the wires that had just arrived from Smith and Summers. Characterizing the information thus far received as "meager and to an extent confusing," Lansing had nevertheless arrived at the following conclusions.[81] First, that the Bolsheviks were determined to prevent Russia from taking further part in the war. Second, the longer the Bolsheviks continued in power the more conditions would deteriorate and the harder it would become to restore order and military efficiency. Third, that elimination of Russia as a fighting force would prolong the war for two or three years and would place a corresponding demand on the United States for men and money. Fourth, should Bolshevik domination be broken the Russian armies could be reorganized and in the field again relatively quickly. Fifth, the best hope for a stable Russian government rested on a military dictatorship backed by loyal disciplined troops.

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[80]Summers to Lansing, Moscow, 6 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, pp. 587-588.

[81]Lansing to Wilson, Washington, 10 December 1917. RG 59, 861.00/807a, DSNAM.

Sixth, and most important, the only apparent nucleus for an organized movement "sufficiently strong to supplant the Bolsheviki and establish a government would seem to be a group of general officers with General Kaledin."[82]

These conclusions, Lansing noted, presented the problem as to what steps should be taken to encourage the Kaledin party. Lansing feared that anti-American propaganda being conducted by the Bolsheviks would discourage the Kaledin forces and that the break-up of the Cossacks would "throw the country into the hands of the Bolsheviks and the Germans could freely continue their propaganda which is leading to chaos and the actual disintegration of the Russian Empire." A message could possibly be sent to Kaledin via Tiflis informing him of the "true state" of affairs concerning American non-recognition of the Bolsheviks and "our readiness to give recognition to a government which exhibits strength enough to restore order and a purpose to carry out in good faith Russia's international engagements."[83]

If the president thought it advisable the message should be sent to Tiflis without delay, as Kaledin and his followers desperately needed encouragement. The general should be told that he would be given moral and material

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[82]Ibid.

[83]Ibid.

aid from the United States government if sufficient strength to achieve the above goals was demonstrated. Lansing concluded that American inaction could only play into the Bolsheviks' hands, and reminded the president that the saving of Russia meant the saving of hundreds of thousands of American lives and billions of dollars. The United States, in effect, could be no worse off by adopting this course of action because Bolshevik domination in Russia offered no hope at all. After speaking of Generals Kaledin, Alekseev, Brusilov, and Kornilov in glowing terms and repeating that elements of support and strength were rapidly surrounding them, Lansing requested a meeting with the president on 11 December to discuss these matters.[84]

The situation in Russia was apparently the main topic of conversation in a Cabinet meeting that was held on 11 December. President Wilson stated that he hated to do nothing about Russia but that he was puzzled about how to take hold of the situation. It was apparent to him that the convocation of the Constituent Assembly would not help matters, for it was clear that no party would win a majority of support. Lansing indicated that he believed the Bolsheviks were influencing the soldiers in an effort to gain a majority in the Assembly. He also added that civil war was possible in Russia. Even so, Wilson main-

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[84]Ibid.

tained the same position that he had in the past and said that everything was still to chaotic to make any move in Russia.[85]

On the afternoon of 11 December Lansing cabled Ambassador Walter Hines Page in London. Lansing was apparently frustrated because he was still awaiting information from London as to the British government's actions in Russia. The telegram read:

> Department has received no information regarding the policy whichthe British Government proposes to adopt in the present Russian situation. Please inquire informally and cable immediate report. Keep Dept. advised.[86]

The last phrase was added in hand-written script, and demonstrated Lansing's discontent with the lack of Allied communication on the matter. Lansing did not receive a reply from Page before his meeting with the president, which occurred at 8:00 p.m. on 11 December.[87] He decided to present his proposal to Wilson regardless of the lack of response from London. Wilson and Lansing apparently reached a tacit agreement that evening on Lansing's proposal; for on 12 December Lansing drafted a memorandum

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[85]Diary entry by Daniels, 11 December 1917, in Cronon, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, p. 249.

[86]Lansing to U.S. Ambassador Walter Hines Page (Great Britain), Washington, 11 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/804d, DSNAM.

[87]Baker, Woodrow Wilson, 7, p. 405; See also Williams, "American Intervention in Russia," p. 41.

addressed to Oscar T. Crosby in London. This confidential memorandum not only contained the recommendation for financial aid for South Russia advanced by Consul Smith but also was written in the same tenor and with phraseology very similar to that in many of Smith's telegrams.[88]

Lansing began the telegram as follows:

> The Russian situation has been carefully considered and the conclusion has been reached that the movement in the south and southeast under the leadership of Kaledin and Korniloff [sic] offers at the present time the greatest hope for the reestablishment of a stable government and the continuance of a military force on the German and Austrian fronts. While there can be no certainty of the success of Kaledin it is not improbable that he may succeed. From Moscow and Tiflis come very favorable reports as to the strength of the movement and as to the weakening power of the Bolsheviki.[89]

Continuing the telegram, Lansing thought it unwise for the American government to openly support Kaledin and his forces "because of the attitude which it seems advisable to take with the Petrograd authority."[90] However, he did feel it necessary to show that the Allied governments were "most sympathetic" with his efforts. Lansing continued:

> Without actually recognizing this group as a de facto government, which is at present impossible since it has not taken form, this Government cannot under the law loan money to him to carry forward his movement. The only practicable course seems to be for the British and French Governments

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[88]Lansing to Crosby, Washington, 12 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/804d, DSNAM.

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

> to finance the Kaledin enterprise in so far as it is necessary, and for this Government to loan them the money to do so. In doing that we would comply with the statute and at the same time strengthen a movement which would seem at present the only possibility of retaining a Russian army in the field.[91]

Crosby was instructed to confer with Ambassador Page and then to consult with the proper British and French authorities in charge of financial matters. As soon as possible Crosby was to report their views as to whether they were willing to adopt the American proposal and, if so, to what extent financial aid would be required. Lansing, in concluding, once again pressed upon Crosby the need to act expeditiously and secretly, as it was extremely important that it not be known that the United States was considering showing the Kaledin movement sympathy, much less of providing it with money.[92]

After obtaining the approval of Secretary of the Treasury William G. McAdoo, Lansing forwarded the proposed dispatch to the president. On a cover letter attached to the dispatch Lansing wrote the following brief memorandum to Wilson:

> My Dear President:
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> After consultation with Secretary McAdoo today, and in line with our talk last evening, I have prepared the enclosed telegram which Secretary

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

McAdoo approves. If it meets with your approval will you be good enough to send it to the telegraph office so that it can immediately be put on the wires?

Faithfully yours,
Robert Lansing[93]

Wilson then attached a hand-written response to Lansing's memorandum. Dated 12 December 1917, Wilson simply responded, "My dear Mr. Secretary, This has my entire approval. Woodrow Wilson."[94] With those few words President Wilson thus approved the first American decision in principle toward the Bolshevik-controlled Russia.

In the subsequent days that followed the 12 December decision it became increasingly apparent that the administration's decision had not only been premature but also based on exaggerated and inaccurate information. On the evening of 12 December, after Wilson had approved the memorandum and the dispatch had been wired to London, Ambassador Page responded to Lansing's 11 December request for information regarding the policy of the British government toward Russia. Page reported that Foreign Secretary Balfour had informed him that his government would not recognize Lenin's "so-called" government, certainly not until it showed some sort of authority from the

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[93]Memorandum from Lansing to Wilson dated 12 December 1917, ibid.

[94]Chit from Wilson to Lansing dated 12 December 1917, ibid.

people.[95] Although it appeared that the Ukrainians, Cossacks, and other peoples in different parts of the Russian Empire opposed Lenin and his platform regarding the war, Balfour had also advised Ambassador Buchanan to refrain from dealing with those groups until events warranted a change in views. These factions would, however, deserve help if they remained anti-German and if it was feasible to advance such aid. Page concluded that the "whole attitude of the British Government toward Russia is now under consideration and Balfour promises further information as fast as conclusions are reached."[96] It is interesting to note that Balfour made no reference to the steps that the British had taken weeks earlier to support and finance the Cossacks in South Russia.

Consul Smith, unaware of the administration's 12 December dispatch to London, continued to barrage the Department of State with requests for money and recommended plans of action. On 13 December Smith cheerfully reported that the Southeastern Federation and the Cossack Union were on their way to uniting with Little Russia, Poland, and Siberia. Generals Kaledin and Alekseev were being joined by Cossack officers and loyal troops from all over Russia and already had sufficient strength to fight

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[95] Page to Lansing, London, 12 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/797, DSNAM.

[96] Ibid.

both the Bolsheviks and the Germans. There was little doubt of their success of they could only be given men, money, equipment, and administration.[97] Also on 13 December Smith "strongly recommended" that either he or another diplomatic or consular officer be dispatched to the Cossacks' headquarters at Novocherkassk in order to assure them "sympathy and assistance."[98] The next day Smith reported that the Transcaucasian government was in danger of falling to the Bolsheviks if they were not advanced money immediately and that he was energetically supporting a union of all of the peoples of the region.[99]

The Department of State, however, was becoming somewhat annoyed by Smith's persistence and over-zealousness. After thanking him for his "thorough reports" on the situation in his district, Lansing informed Smith that the Department had been in touch with the Allied governments and that it soon hoped to give him definite instructions on the "whole subject."[100] The dispatch of 15 December continued, "Meanwhile do not commit this Govern-

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[97]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 11 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/807, DSNAM.

[98]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 12 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/801, DSNAM.

[99]Smith to Lansing, Tiflis, 13 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, pp. 589-590.

[100]Lansing to Smith, Washington, 15 December 1917, RG 59, 861.00/807, DSNAM.

ment. No country either belligerent or neutral has recognized [the] Bolshevik Government [in] Petrograd."[101]

The Department of State finally received a reply from London on 19 December. Oscar T. Crosby informed the Department that about ten days before the British government had authorized agents in South Russia to offer ten million pounds to each of two groups and an unfixed sum to the Armenians and the Georgians in an effort to continue the fight against the Turks. However, nothing had resulted from those authorizations and the latest reports received in London indicated that the situation was "unpromising" for the South Russian movements.[102] Crosby continued:

> However, have reason to believe that British effort will achieve all that can now be considered possible in this direction Since this effort was made quite independently even of French both Ambassador and I feel it unnecessary for us to offer just now to share liability though British have been given to understand we will consider sharing in any wise effort.[103]

Ambassador Page was convinced that the Wilson administration had made this decision based on faulty evidence. He added to Crosby's note a brief message that stated:

> I should go further than Crosby and decline to risk money in an enterprise so doubtful and about which

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[101] Ibid.

[102] Page to Lansing, London, 18 December 1917, FRUS, 1918, Russia, 2, pp. 591-592.

[103] Ibid.

> so little is known either by [the] British Government or ourselves. I should surely wait till these people give some hopeful evidence of their strength and spirit.[104]

The British government was also surprised that the American government had attained such an optimistic view of conditions in South Russia. As early as 7 December Lancelot Oliphant had commented that reports originating from the American consulate general in Moscow, which had played a major role in the American decision of 12 December, were "apt to be misleading."[105] On 15 December the Foreign Office received a dispatch from Ambassador Spring Rice in Washington reporting that Lansing had a "high opinion" of Kaledin, Brusilov, and Alekseev and that it appeared that Lansing attached more importance to "the Moscow point of view" than to reports from Petrograd.[106] Minutes attached to Spring Rice's dispatch indicate that the entire Foreign Office believed Lansing was taking "much too optimistic" a view of the situation in South Russia.[107]

Lansing had obviously become much too enamored with

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[104] Ibid.

[105] Minute by Oliphant, 7 December 1917, on Oliver Wardrop, British consul at Moscow, to FO, 7 December 1917, FO 371, 232001/3018/224559, PRO.

[106] Spring Rice to FO, 14 December 1917, FO 371, 237152/3000/3743, PRO.

[107] Ibid.

the optimistic reports that he had received from Consul Smith at Tiflis and Consul General Summers at Moscow. It became clear almost as soon as the 12 December decision was made that Lansing had acted upon inaccurate and, to a degree, biased consular reports. Although optimistic reports continued to stream in from Tiflis and Moscow in late 1917 and early 1918, the American government would be content in the future to simply observe the Allies' efforts to provide financial support to pro-Allied forces in South Russia. Although no American money ever reached General Kaledin and the Cossacks, the fact remains that President Wilson committed himself to a venture that has unfortunately been misinterpreted and misunderstood for far too many years.[108]

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[108]United States Congress, "Proceedings of the Sixty-Seventh Congress," Second Session, Loans to Foreign Governments (Washington, 1921), pp. 89-105; See also Frederick Schuman, American Policy Toward Russia: A Study of Diplomatic History, International Law, and Public Opinion (New York, 1928), p. 66.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study of Consul F. Willoughby Smith's role in the formulation of America's initial decision in principle toward the Bolshevik Revolution. First and foremost, it is now clear that Consul Smith exerted far more influence on the Wilson administration's 12 December decision than has been previously acknowledged by American diplomatic historians. Evidence clearly indicates that Secretary Lansing based his 10 December memorandum to the president primarily on Smith's reports, which had been closely monitored by the Department of State since the Bolshevik coup. Lansing's unmistakable reference to the "favorable" reports from Tiflis in his 12 December telegram to Oscar T. Crosby demonstrates his reliance on Smith's dispatches. In fact, it was apparently Smith's dispatches of 7 December that convinced Lansing that his "do nothing" policy toward Russia was preventing the United States from offering support to the one group that had pledged loyalty to the Allies, the Cossacks in South Russia.

It is evident that, contrary to the assertions of some historians, the 12 December decision was made independently without pressure from the British. To be sure, the British government had initially approached the Wilson

administration about taking action in South Russia. However, as indicated by Lancelot Oliphant's comment that "we will have to act alone if anything is to be done," the American government in early November gave clear indication to the British that it preferred to pursue a policy toward Russia independent of the Allies.[1] Although the British Foreign Office on several occasions again approached the Wilson administration about pursuing a dual policy in South Russia, there is no documentary evidence that reveals any British influence whatsoever on the final decision by Wilson and Lansing to give financial aid to the Kaledin enterprise. In fact, the British government was genuinely surprised to learn that Lansing had such an optimistic view of conditions in South Russia.

On 21 December the British Foreign Office learned of the Wilson administration's willingness to fund the Cossacks through the British and French governments.[2] Again, the British were surprised at the American decision, so much so that John Maynard Keynes, the British director of Allied purchasing, felt that His Majesty's Government should have the Americans commit to the under-

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[1]See Chapter V, page 3, for this quotation by Lancelot Oliphant.

[2]Oliphant to Cecil, 21 December 1917, FO 371, 741/3283/2, PRO.

taking in writing.[3] Lord Hardinge, obviously disturbed that the Wilson administration had no prior knowledge of the actions his government had already taken in South Russia, commented that he thought that Oscar T. Crosby should have been informed of Britain's previous financial commitments to South Russia.[4] Such a lack of communication was characteristic of Anglo-American relations at this time.[5] As late as May of 1918 the British and Americans were at cross-purposes in South Russia, blaming each other for not having done enough to salvage the situation in the region.[6]

It is thus clear that the Wilson administration made its decision not as a result of British pressure but because of recommendations received from within its own consular establishment. It is also apparent that Lansing gave priority to the consular dispatches received from Tiflis and Moscow and that these were crucial in his decision to recommend the course of action outlined on 10 December to the president. Yet it must be acknowledged

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[3]Undated chit by John Maynard Keynes (director of Allied purchasing, British Treasury Office), ibid.

[4]Undated emendation by Hardinge, ibid.

[5]Daniel R. Beaver, Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort (Lincon, Neb., 1966), p. 114.

[6]Minute by Clerk, 1 May 1918, on Macdonogh to Balfour, 29 April 1918, FO 31, 75611/3284/2, PRO.

that the reports originating from Tiflis and Moscow were probably the most biased received by the State Department.

As previously indicated, Consul Smith was born and raised in Imperial Russia. He grew up in a family that had close ties to prominent officials in South Russia and his father clearly supported Tsarist rule in Russia. Willoughby Smith was, therefore, quite naturally opposed to the Bolsheviks and their radical platform. Indeed, he later referred to the Bolsheviks as "a group of men without principle or mercy" and believed that "the danger to the world from the spread of Bolshevism is greater than the danger of Germany, and is as much the enemy of mankind."[7] Furthermore, evidence suggests that his recommendations may have been particularly biased because he had "large trading interests" in the region, which would have been seriously jeopardized by Bolshevik rule.[8] As for Maddin Summers, he was married to an aristocratic Russian woman who had close ties with Imperial Russia. After the Bolshevik coup Summers was subjected to extreme pressure from his wife and her friends who had lost their land and fortunes in the revolution. According to a close acquaintance, they "seized poor Summers at night with their

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[7]Smith to Lansing, London, 4 October 1918, RG 59, 861.00/3033, DSNAM.

[8]New York Times, 13 January 1920.

laments and demands."[9] Summers has been described by one historian as having the "firmest and most uncompromising anti-Bolshevik attitude" of all of the American officials in Russia.[10] Another historian has commented that "ruin and Bolshevism were synonymous to Consul Summers; and he drove himself without limit" in an effort to destroy the Bolsheviks.[11] The British Foreign Office even distrusted Smith and Summers, whose reports they believed to be unworthy of serious consideration.[12]

Smith and Summers were certainly accurate in reporting that a conservative Cossack movement was beginning to develop in the Don valley in late November and early December of 1917. By 15 November Generals Kaledin and Alekseev had begun to form an armed force that was designed to incorporate all of the loyalist elements South Russia -- old officers, soldiers, cadets, and even schoolboys -- into a volunteer army that they hoped would restore order in Russia and uphold her international obligations. Within the next month all of the generals who

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[9]Poole, "Oral Memoirs," pp. 85-86.

[10]Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, pp. 43-44.

[11]Williams, American-Russian Relations, p. 113.

[12]Memo from Cecil to Macdonogh, 27 November 1917, FO 371, 21990/3016/200185, PRO; Minute by Oliphant, 7 December 1917, FO 371, 232001/3018/224559, PRO; Spring Rice to Balfour, 14 December 1917, FO 371, 237152/3000/3743, PRO.

had been imprisoned at Bykhov, including General Kornilov, had joined Kaledin and Alekseev at Novocherkassk.[13] The list of prominent generals that were gathering at Novocherkassk was, on the surface, impressive. However, these leaders found it impossible to convince their soldiers that they should continue the war into a fifth year while at the same time opposing the Bolsheviks, who had promised them bread and land.[14] Thus, only hundreds responded to the generals' pleas for support while tens of thousands, following Lenin's advice, "voted with their feet" and refused to continue the war. This led General Denikin to comment in his autobiography that it was indeed a comical sight to see General Alekseev, who had once ruled over an army one million strong, fussing around to procure a dozen beds for his troops.[15] Thus, the pessimistic reports for-

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[13]William H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, vol. 1, 1917-1918, From the Overthrow of the Czar to the Assumption of Power by the Bolsheviks (New York, 1965), 348.

[14]Anton I. Denikin, The White Army (Gulf Breeze, Fla., 1973), p. 28.

[15]Ibid., 27. See also James Bunyan, ed., Intervention, Civil War, and Communism in Russia, April-December, 1918 (New York, 1956), pp. 32-33; Dimitry V. Lehovich, White Against Red: The Life of General Anton Denikin (New York, 1973), pp. 183-189; Robert D. Warth, The Allies and the Russian Revolution: From the Fall of the Monarchy to the Peace of Brest-Litovsk (Durham, N.C., 1954), pp. 185-186. Indeed, General Kaledin's Volunteer Army disintegrated before it really had a chance to develop. The collection of so many noted military leaders created quite a conflict of egos and resulted in greater fragmentation of an already fragmented army. Disappointed by his fail-

warded by Ambassador Buchanan and General Knox appear to have been much more accurate in reflecting the true strength and reliability of the Cossacks than those of Smith and Summers. Conversely, the dispatches received from Smith and Summers between 7 November and 12 December, and even afterwards, indicate that these men recommended a course of action to the Department of State that was based on inaccurate information as well as inflated hopes for the success of the Cossack forces.[16]

It is natural to wonder why the Department of State would act upon recommendations that it presumably knew could be biased. The only reasonable explanation for this action lies in the probability that Lansing and the State Department, which was dominated at the highest levels by men who were clearly conservative and in opposition to the Bolsheviks, found in the reports of Smith and Summers information that they wanted to hear.[17] Secretary Lansing in particular had traditionally advocated a conservative,

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ure to arouse his Cossacks, General Kaledin committed suicide in early February of 1918. Thus, the Don Cossacks were never a force that the Allies could have depended on to reconstruct the Eastern front.

[16]For an excellent account of the development of American policy toward South Russia and the Bolshevik Revolution after 12 December 1917, see Charles H. Briscoe, "DeWitt C. Poole and America's Intervention in Russia, 1918-1920" (Master's Thesis, Texas A&M University, 1972).

[17]Williams, "American Intervention in Russia," pp. 25, 27-28.

hard-line approach to problems encountered by the administration.[18] Josephus Daniels, Wilson's Secretary of the Navy, perceived Lansing as a man who "held to the old diplomacy that encouraged exploitation of countries."[19] Lansing certainly viewed the Bolsheviks in this way. He believed that they should be exorcised from power because they were "a direct threat to the existing social order in all countries."[20]

It is evident that, on a number of occasions, Wilson and Lansing clashed both personally and ideologically.[21] Wilson had never had great deal of confidence in Lansing and, on a number of occasions, considered asking for his resignation.[22] This Wilson considered doing as late as September of 1917, when he complained to Colonel House that Lansing interpreted his decisions too conserva-

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[18]Daniels, The Wilson Era, pp. 434, 439.

[19]Ibid., 438.

[20]Jules Archer, The Russians and the Americans (New York, 1975), p. 53; Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene," pp. 442-445.

[21]Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson: Revolution, War, and Peace (Arlington Heights, Ill., 1979), p. 16; Kennan, Soviet-American Relations, 1, p. 30.

[22]John A. Garraty, Woodrow Wilson: A Great Life in Brief (New York, 1966), p. 149; Sigmund Freud and William C. Bullitt, Thomas Woodrow Wilson (Boston, 1967), p. 179; Daniels, The Wilson Era, pp. 436-437.

tively.[23] Even Lansing's strongly conservative interpretation of the Bolsheviks, which he considered to be "moderate," was rejected by the president on 4 December.

The final question to consider is why Wilson gave his "entire approval" to Lansing's 12 December dispatch to London. Since the 7 November Bolshevik coup the president had consistently advocated, both publicly and privately, a policy of nonintervention in Russia's internal affairs. Records of the Cabinet meetings indicate that Wilson never changed his view that it was "too chaotic" to act in any way in Russia. Although few documents exist to indicate his most private thoughts on the Bolshevik Revolution, it is evident that Wilson was displeased with the situation in Petrograd and that, ideologically, he clashed with the Bolsheviks. Indeed, one would be remiss to suggest that Wilson would have been terribly disturbed if Kerenskii or some other pro-Allied Russian leader would have replaced Lenin and the Bolsheviks as the dominant power in Petrograd. The question, then, is whether he opposed the Bolsheviks to such an extent that he sanctioned the forwarding of money to General Kaledin and the Cossacks in hopes that they would drive the Bolsheviks from power. There is no evidence to suggest that this was the dominant thought in Wilson's mind on 12 December. On the contrary,

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[23]Diary entry by House, 9 September 1917, PWW, 44, p. 233.

Wilson was the president of a nation that had just reluctantly entered the war, and he was becoming increasingly consumed by military rather than political questions.[24] It certainly appeared in December of 1917 that, if Russia left the war, the Central Powers could concentrate their full strength on the Western front. Given this scenario, it was quite possible that the United States and the Allies would lose the war. Furthermore, the fact that as late as 11 December Wilson was still claiming that conditions were too chaotic to act in Russia indicates that this was not a major policy decision to Wilson. Rather, it was one option that the president thought should be explored in an effort to continue to occupy two million German troops on the Eastern front. Thus, the 12 December decision by Wilson was one that was almost certainly based on military expediency rather than on political desires.

It is entirely possible that this was a military decision to Wilson and a political decision to Lansing. Lansing certainly had a greater ideological opposition to the Bolsheviks than did Wilson, and the gulf between their perceptions of the Bolsheviks continued to grow in late 1917 and early 1918. As early as 1 January, 1918 Wilson indicated to Lansing his desire to investigate "the most

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[24]Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene," p. 444.

possible and least objectionable way" to establish "unofficial relations" with the Bolsheviks.[25] However, Lansing continued to instruct all American diplomatic and consular officials in Russia to refrain from communicating with the Bolsheviks in any way and, in fact, allowed American representatives in Russia such as F. Willoughby Smith to continue to interact with anti-Bolshevik elements in South Russia. By early February of 1918 Wilson had become highly suspicious of the policy that Lansing was pursuing in Russia, and on 4 February he addressed his secretary of state on the matter, stating: "As I understand it, our official representative in Petrograd is keeping in touch with the Bolshevik leaders informally. Am I right?"[26] It was at that point that Lansing indicated to Wilson that the State Department was changing its past policy and that new instructions were being sent to Ambassador Francis in Petrograd.[27] Thus, as one historian has suggested, Wilson and Lansing cannot be regarded as interchangeable parts in a unified administration.[28] Likewise, the fact that Wil-

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[25]Betty M. Unterberger, "Woodrow Wilson and the Russian Revolution" in Woodrow Wilson and a Revolutionary World, 1913-1921, ed. Arthur S. Link (Chapel Hill, 1982), 35.

[26]Ibid., 36.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Trani, "Woodrow Wilson and the Decision to Intervene," p. 443.

son gave his "entire approval" to Lansing's recommendation to finance the Don Cossacks certainly does not mean that he entirely approved of Lansing's rationale for suggesting this course of action.

The president's true feelings regarding Russia are best expressed in the Sixth Point of his Fourteen Points address of 8 January, 1918. Drafted by Colonel House, the Sixth Point was an effort by Wilson to separate Russia from Germany by giving the Russian nation "the broadest and friendliest expressions of sympathy."[29] The Sixth Point, much more than the 12 December 1917 decision, accurately portrayed Wilson's ultimate desire to allow Russia "an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy...." Wilson prophetically noted, "The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy."[30] This statement, more than any other, is an indication of President Wilson's true policy toward the Bolshevik Revolution.

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[29]Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, 3, p. 33.

[30]Address to a Joint Session of Congress by Wilson, 8 January 1918, PWW, 45, p. 537.

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