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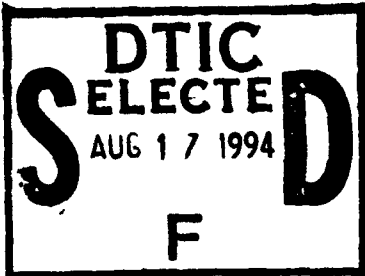


NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

Newport, RI

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THE SIBERIA EXPEDITION 1918-1920:  
AN EARLY "OPERATION OTHER THAN WAR"



by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED

94 8 16 138

| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE   |       |   |  | Form Approved<br>OMB No 0704-0188 |                               |
|---|-------|---|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION<br><b>Unclassified</b>  |       |   | 1b RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS  |                                   |                               |
| 2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY  |       |   | 3 DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT<br><b>DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE; DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED</b> |                                   |                               |
| 2b DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE  |       |   | 4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)   |                                   |                               |
| 4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)  |       |   | 5 MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)   |                                   |                               |
| 6a NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION<br><b>Naval War College CNW</b>  |       | 6b OFFICE SYMBOL<br>(if applicable)     | 7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION  |                                   |                               |
| 6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)<br><b>686 Cushing Road<br/>Newport, RI 02841-1207</b>   |       |   | 7b ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)   |                                   |                               |
| 8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION   |       | 8b OFFICE SYMBOL<br>(if applicable)     | 9 PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER   |                                   |                               |
| 8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)   |       |   | 10 SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS   |                                   |                               |
|   |       |   | PROGRAM ELEMENT NO   | PROJECT NO                        | TASK NO                       |
|   |       |   |  |                                   | WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO        |
| 11 TITLE (Include Security Classification)<br><b>The Siberia Expedition 1918-1920: An Early "Operation Other than War" (U)</b>  |       |   |  |                                   |                               |
| 12 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)<br><b>Smalser, Robert Leslie, COL, USA</b>  |       |   |  |                                   |                               |
| 13a TYPE OF REPORT<br><b>Final</b>  |       | 13b TIME COVERED<br>FROM _____ TO _____ | 14 DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day)<br><b>13 May, 1994</b>  |                                   | 15 PAGE COUNT<br><b>41</b>    |
| 16 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION   |       |   |  |                                   |                               |
| 17 COSATI CODES   |       |   | 18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  |                                   |                               |
| FIELD   | GROUP | SUB-GROUP                               | Siberia Expedition   |                                   |                               |
|   |       |   | Major General William Sidney Graves  |                                   |                               |
|   |       |   | World War I  |                                   |                               |
| 19 ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)<br>The Bolshevik peace with the Germans in 1917 was potentially disastrous for the Allies. German Eastern Front forces and repatriated POW's could overwhelm the Western Front. The European Allies quickly demanded that American and Japanese troops be sent to reopen the Eastern Front. Against strong opposition from the War Department, President Wilson committed 9000 American troops with a set of strategic goals rendered quickly obsolete by the armistice. Major General William S. Graves, commander of the expedition, underwent 20 months of turmoil translating US policy into attainable military objectives for the operation. At the end, Graves thought he had failed. Yet when the positive outcomes are weighed and the expedition is measured by modern standards for this type of operation, Graves achieved remarkable success and deserves a better reputation than what was his fate. Graves struck a balance between operational imperatives and political requirements not often achieved in the circumstances of conflicting strategic goals. |       |   |  |                                   |                               |
| 20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS  |       |   | 21 ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION<br><b>Unclassified</b>   |                                   |                               |
| 22a NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL<br><b>Chairman, JMO Dept.</b>  |       |   | 22b TELEPHONE (Include Area Code)<br><b>844-4120</b>   |                                   | 22c OFFICE SYMBOL<br><b>C</b> |

## ABSTRACT

When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia during November, 1917 they immediately ceased hostilities with the Germans. The potential impact on the Allies was catastrophic. German Eastern Front forces combined with 1.6 million repatriated POW's could be returned to fight on the Western Front. The European Allies quickly demanded that American and Japanese troops be sent to reopen the Eastern Front, launching what would evolve into an early "operation other than war" for American forces.

Against the strong opposition of the War Department, President Wilson committed 9000 American troops with a set of strategic goals rendered quickly obsolete by the armistice. Major General William S. Graves, commander of the expedition, underwent 20 months of turmoil translating Wilson's policy into attainable military objectives for the operation, against strong opposition from the other Allies and even the U.S. State Department. At the end of this unpopular operation, Graves' thought he had failed. Yet when the positive outcomes are weighed and the expedition is analyzed by modern standards for this type of operation, Graves achieved remarkable success and deserves a better reputation than what was his fate. Graves struck a balance between operational imperatives and political requirements not often achieved in the potentially disastrous circumstances of conflicting strategic goals.

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| Unannounced         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Justification ..... |                                     |
| By .....            |                                     |
| Distribution /      |                                     |
| Availability Codes  |                                     |
| Dist<br>A-1         | Avail and/or<br>Special             |

## PREFACE

The 1993 edition of the Army's capstone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, Operations, is the first to provide a detailed treatment of the various support and intervention operations short of conventional ground combat. It calls these "Operations Other Than War." None of these operations are new to the U.S. Army. Throughout American history the Army protected citizens on our frontiers, built roads, bridges and dams, conducted disaster relief and assisted nations abroad in a wide variety of missions. It even administered the nation's National Parks before the creation of the National Park Service. The last three decades, however, have been marked by an increase in the frequency, pace and variety of these types of operations, hence the increased importance for appropriate doctrine.(1)

General von Clausewitz reminds us that all military operations must have, and be subordinate to, a political purpose expressed in terms of strategic goals or end states. The diverse and often complex nature of these situations that straddle the middle ground between peace and war often cause the stated political purpose to be unclear, or the changing conditions rapidly render it obsolete or unattainable. What does the military commander do then? Ideally, he asks for and receives clarity of direction. But what if the response is not forthcoming, or is equally unclear? What if the response requires unreasonable actions that needlessly jeopardize his force? What

are his operational choices then? After all, once he's in the thick of things, he can't just pack up and go home.

I hope to provide some insight into these seemingly modern problems through the eyes of a little-known American commander of the First World War - Major General William S. Graves of the American Expeditionary Force, Siberia.



GENERAL WILLIAM S. GRAVES (50)

## INTRODUCTION

"It is wholly (political) business, and can only be (politicians), to determine what events and what shifts in the course of negotiations properly express the purpose of the war... It is a senseless proceeding to consult the soldiers concerning plans of war in such a way as to permit them to pass purely military judgements on what the ministers have to do." (2)

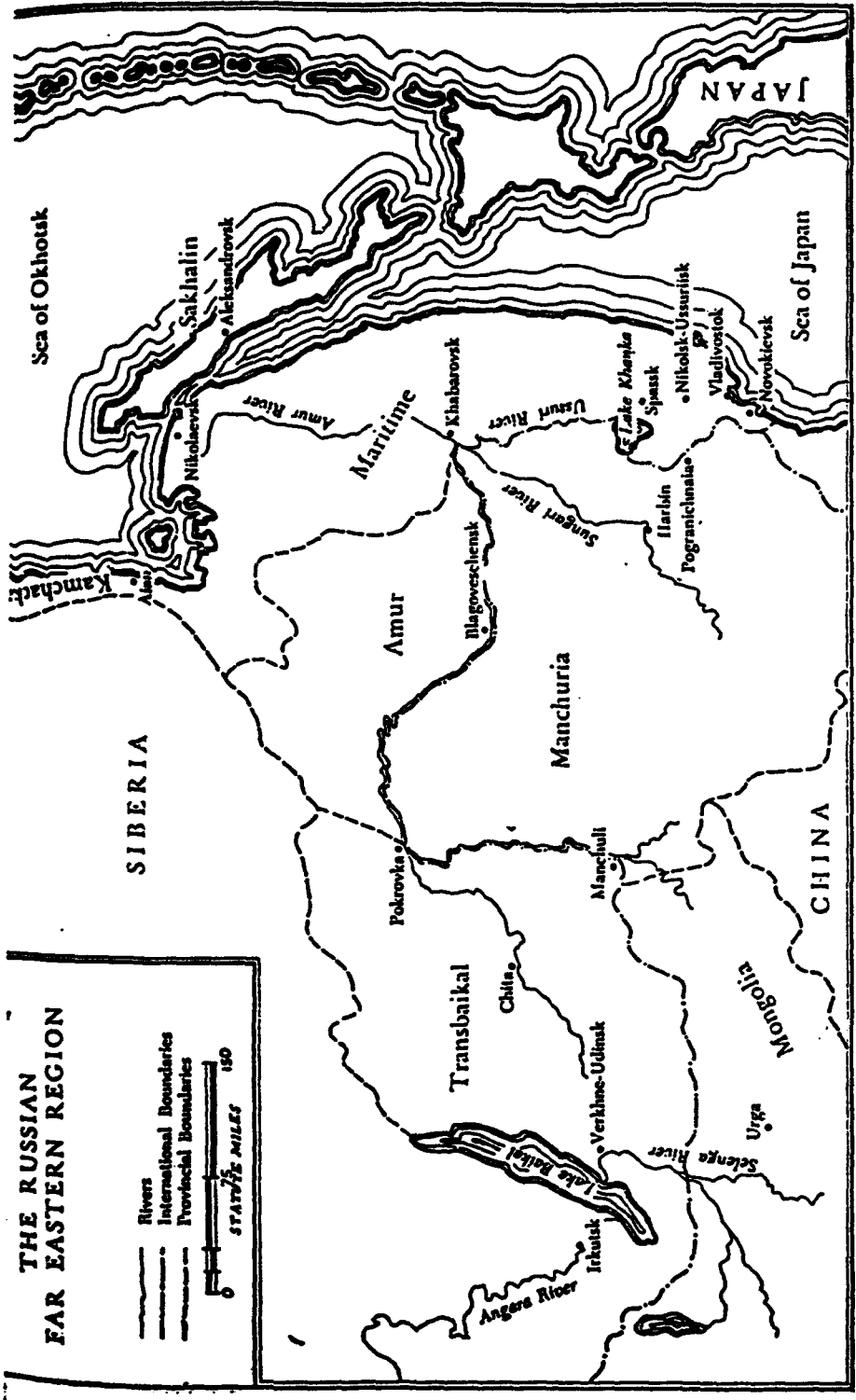
The operational commander is charged with devising the military conditions and objectives that will accomplish the strategic goal. A dilemma occurs when the strategic goal is either nonexistent or unclear. What operations does he choose when the national authorities are unsure of the desired end state? Moreover, a disaster is apt to occur when the commander's political masters are themselves divided over the desired outcome, each providing conflicting direction. Modern operational commanders tend to think of these problems as recent phenomena and use the 1983 Beirut Intervention and the 1992 Somalia Intervention as examples. These probably are good examples of the disaster that can result when an appropriate level of operational judgement and risk management are sacrificed to political requirements. A better example exists - that of Major General William Sidney Graves, commander of America's Siberia Expedition in 1918. This officer, and his superiors, found the balance between operational

and political requirements their Beirut and Somalia counterparts did not. As a result, Graves endangered his future career - but not the lives of his soldiers - doing what he felt was operationally correct rather than what was expedient in a climate of political and media intrigue designed to force him to violate both operational imperatives and Presidential guidance. The results were minimal loss of life, as much operational success as the war would allow and a major contribution to furthering the liberal ideals of Wilsonism in the post-World War era.

### THE COLLAPSE OF RUSSIA

When the Bolshevik forces of Lenin and Trotsky seized power in Russia during November, 1917, they demanded an immediate peace with the Central Powers. To the Allies, this portended a disaster of immense proportions. The war had been unparalleled slaughter and stalemate for over three years. In November, 1917, American forces were not yet participants. The French were exhausted and disillusioned. The British had just lost 400,000 soldiers at Ypres. The Austrians were beating the Allies at Caporetto. The outlook was dark. (3)

In military terms, Russia's collapse meant more than Eastern Front forces being made available to oppose the Allies in the west. Peace between Russia and Germany also meant repatriation of over 1.6 million prisoners of war back to Germany and Austria, possibly armed with the huge lend-lease stockpiles present in Russia. It could also mean the economic mobilization





of cash-poor Russia in support of the Central Powers. (4) Accordingly, Field Marshal Foch, the Allied Supreme Commander, as early as December, 1917 called for landing an Allied force in Russia to keep the Eastern Front going. (5)

In political terms, the Bolshevik doctrines of class warfare, world revolution and the overthrow of capitalism were already well-known in the west. To traditional, Victorian governments that had not yet experienced the political and social revolutionary change that would result at the end of the war, the prospect of Bolshevism was especially terrifying. Add to all these political and military dynamics the fact that Lenin's return from exile in Switzerland had been engineered by the Germans in April, 1917, and it becomes clear why America's European allies were eager to intervene in Russia to immobilize the German effort there. There were Allied and American elements who would also overthrow the Bolshevik revolution, if possible. There were differences of opinion, of course, on how Bolshevik Russia should be treated. None recognized the Lenin government but retained their representatives to the defunct Provisional Government. All undoubtedly hoped a new "sane" Russian government would emerge - one not so hostile to Allied interests. (6)

#### DEBATE OVER INTERVENTION

Foch's, and later the Allied Supreme War Council's proposal for intervention was to land Japanese troops in Siberia to secure the Allied war stocks in Vladivostok, secure the Trans-Siberian

Railway and move west to rehabilitate the Eastern Front. This was probably based on a long-standing Japanese offer to put 10 divisions into the war on the Russian front through Vladivostok. This Allied view was supported practically unanimously by American State Department representatives in Russia and the Far East. (7)

All these intervention ideas were, of course, totally unacceptable to President Woodrow Wilson and by early 1918, America's economic and resulting political influence was such that they would go nowhere without U.S. support. Wilson's objections were many. First, intervention on European terms was against the American principle of self-determination in government - one of many ideals Wilson had so poignantly expressed in his "Fourteen Points" for a peace settlement in January, 1918. Second, his military advisors, notably General Tasker H. Bliss, American representative on the Supreme Allied War Council, argued against it as a "sideshow born of desperation" - that the distances and disorder across Siberia were too great for intervention to materially affect the war in Europe. (8) Third, America's "Open Door Policy" of equal commercial opportunities for all mitigated against acceptance of Japanese troops anywhere on the Asian mainland. Wilson felt that Japan's only interest in entering the war was to seize influence in the maritime provinces of China, Manchuria and Russia. She had already seized the German leasehold of Tsingtao in China and for decades had been aggressive in the region.

Wilson's dilemma was worsened when the British and Japanese reached an agreement that resulted in sending four Japanese and

one British warship to Vladivostok in January, 1918. Wilson responded by sending the cruiser U.S.S. Brooklyn under Rear Admiral Austin M. Knight to demonstrate U.S. interest and resolve.

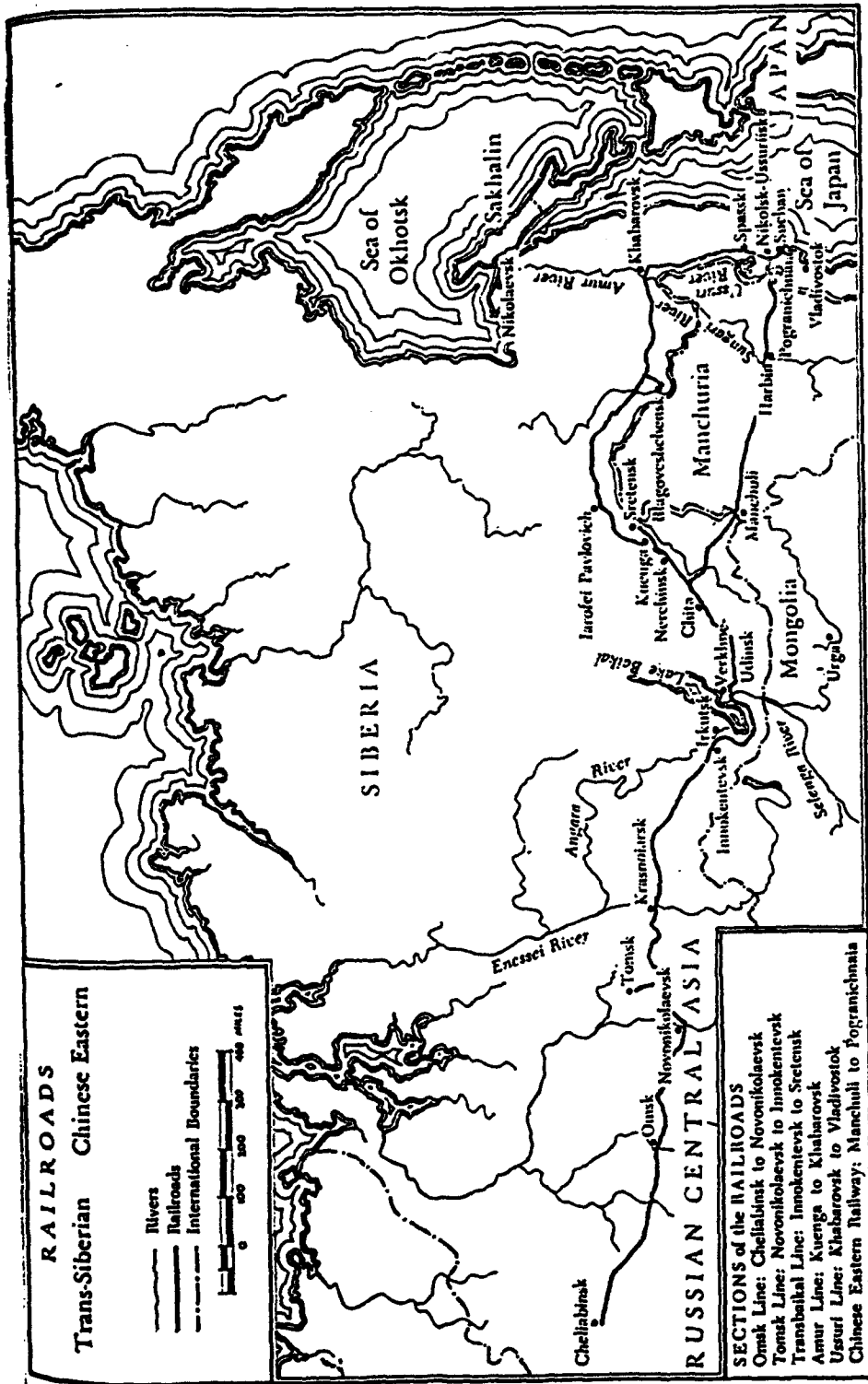
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As the first half of 1918 ensued, the Allies continued to pressure Wilson. The Trans-Siberian Railway was not operating reliably and American lend-lease supplies for the Eastern Front were deteriorating in stockpiles in Vladivostok, ripe for pillage, yet American interests of greater importance mitigated against intervention. It would be the plight of the Czechoslovak Legion that would cause Wilson to change his mind.

#### THE CZECH LEGION

The Czech Legion was a 72,000-strong force of Czechoslovak colonists, expatriates and eastern front prisoners of war and defectors to the Allied cause. They were disciplined, organized and politically liberal. They had been a Russian fighting force since 1914. Their goal was the establishment of a Czech homeland independent from Austria-Hungary and they would fight for the Allies to see it attained. France had also established a force of Czech expatriates and, after Lenin seized power, the Allies got the Bolsheviks to agree to release the Legion, whereby they would be transported across Siberia and embark in Vladivostok for France to link up with their countrymen on the Western Front. (10)

The evacuation plan broke down in Siberia. A Cossack warlord named Captain Gregory Seminoff was opposing Bolshevik takeover



with armed force. The idea of a fully armed Czech Legion transiting through disputed territory became too much for the Bolsheviks. They stopped the evacuation and attempted to disarm the Czechs, resulting in an outbreak of hostilities. An able military formation, within weeks the Czechs had seized all the major rail points between central Russia and Lake Baikal and there were isolated Czech elements in Vladivostok. (11) But British reports on the plight of the Czechs were inflammatory and raised the specter of hoards of German POW's ravaging the disarmed Czechs: (12)

#### WILSON DECIDES TO INTERVENE

President Wilson was moved. He viewed the Czech independence movement as a small, oppressed people striving for liberal self-government - an embodiment of the principles put forth in the Fourteen Points. He now had a moral reason to intervene, and "rescuing the Czechs" became the framework for sending American troops to Siberia. Japan had refused to put forces ashore in Siberia without U.S. support, putting the complete onus of the crisis on Wilson's shoulders. He convened a conference of his advisors on 6 July, 1918 and informed them of his intention to intervene in Siberia in cooperation with Japan. Abandoning the unsound idea of traversing Russia to reopen the Eastern Front, Wilson's cabinet formulated a plan for a combined American-Japanese landing of 7000 men each to open Vladivostok and the rail line west to Irkutsk to aid the egress of the Czech

Legion. Moreover, the plan called for no interference or impairment of Russian political or territorial sovereignty. This was written into an "Aide Memoire" defining American national objectives in Siberia. (13)

#### THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

The War Department had been vigorously opposed to any endeavor not focused on France, and Secretary Newton Baker was surprised by Wilson's decision to intervene. Later, Baker would write that the intervention in Russia was the only military decision Wilson determined personally during the course of the war. (14)

At the recommendation of the Army Chief of Staff, General Peyton March, Baker selected the commander of the 8th Infantry Division at Camp Fremont, California to command the expedition - Major General William Sidney Graves. Graves was well-known to both men, having served as the March's Secretary to the General Staff just prior to taking divisional command in July, 1918. (15) Graves was an interesting choice. A 53-year-old West Pointer from rural Texas, he was the seventh son of nine sons and one daughter. His father had served as a constitutional committeeman for the Republic of Texas, had been a Colonel in the Confederate Army, and was both a rancher and the local Baptist minister. His grandfather had fought at the battle of Tippecanoe. Graves had served as a junior infantry officer on the American frontier for 11 years, had been decorated for heroism during the Philippine

Insurrection in 1901 and had been assigned to the General Staff since 1909. He had been an important figure in Pershing's Punitive Expedition to Mexico in 1916. He was well known in the Army for his integrity, high personal and professional standards and for his kindness and consideration. (16) From his background and assignments he was also probably fiercely independent, intelligent, tough, bold when necessary, and uncompromising on matters of principle.

Graves had been forewarned in May, 1918 that he would be the choice should anyone have to go to Siberia, yet he was surprised when he received secret orders to proceed to Kansas City to meet with Secretary Baker. On 3 August, 1918 they met in the waiting room of the railway station there where Baker handed Graves a sealed envelope, which merely consisted of the Aide Memoire, saying, "Watch your step, you will be walking on eggs loaded with dynamite. God bless you and goodbye." (17)

Graves understood both the strategic objectives and limitations contained in the 17 July, 1918 document at first reading. They were: 1) Effort at the Western Front will not be slackened to divert assets to other theaters. 2) Any effort to reestablish an Eastern Front merely makes use of Russia, it does not serve her. 3) Intervention is admissible only on a scale sufficient to guard military stores, consolidate and evacuate Czech forces to their kinsmen (in France) and to steady any Russian attempts toward self government and self defense that were acceptable to the Russians themselves. 4) There will be no organized intervention in Russian affairs and forces will be



*From a U. S. official photograph*

Staff of the A. E. F. in Vladivostok

(53)



*U.S.S. Brooklyn arriving in Golden Horn Bay, Vladivostok,  
with H.M.S. Suffolk in foreground*

(54)



withdrawn if this policy is violated. The participating Allies contemplate no interference in Russia's political sovereignty, international affairs or impairment to her territorial integrity. (18) By late September, 1918, all the participating Allies had agreed to this policy and were provided copies. (19)

#### THE EXPEDITION

Forces were alerted on 3 August and began movement within 10 days. The combat forces were the 27th and 31st Infantry Regiments in the Philippines. Both contained primarily long-term professional soldiers but were at less than 50 per cent of authorized strength, requiring 5000 individual replacements from Grave's 8th Division at Camp Freemont. These were mostly young draftees from the Pacific Coast states. An infantry regiment in 1918 consisted of three battalions of four rifle companies each, a headquarters company, a machine gun company, a support company and the regimental band - 3805 men, total. Supporting units consisted of field and evacuation hospitals, an ambulance company, a medical supply company, a telegraph signal company and a bakery company. Graves built his AEF staff from officers and headquarters detachments sent from Camp Freemont and the Department of the Philippines. (20)

Earlier in 1918, President Wilson had sent other service agencies to assist in Siberia. These included Colonel George Emerson and his 350-man Russian Railway Service Corps, who were instrumental in keeping the Trans-Siberian Railway operational.

Also present were the American Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Knights of Columbus. These agencies were not under Grave's control but there was considerable cooperation, especially with the railway group. Military attache's and War Department observers were located in Harbin, Manchuria and Omsk, Siberia. State Department representatives included Ambassador Roland Morris in Tokyo, Consul General Ernest Harris at Irkutsk and Consul John Caldwell in Vladivostok. (21)

#### THE SITUATION - EXPECTATION VERSUS REALITY

During his month-long preparation and journey to Siberia, General Graves concentrated on organizational and supply matters. He had formulated no operational objectives or plan because he recognized he was totally ignorant of the situation on the ground in Siberia. Colonel Henry Styer was the 27th Infantry commander and senior of the two regimental commanders. Styer had landed in Vladivostok on 16 August and cabled Graves on the 19th concerning the situation as briefed to him by the Japanese forces on the ground. The Japanese were planning a general Allied offensive north to Khabarovsk against 15,000 Bolsheviks and German prisoners then west to Irkutsk along the Amur River to rescue the Czechs there from 40,000 enemy with the objective of relieving the Czechs before the onset of winter. The arriving Americans were expected to participate under Japanese command. (22)

The facts were that instead of the 7-10,000 troops envisioned by Wilson (and agreed to by the Japanese), there were nearly

72,000 Japanese troops on the ground at the time of Graves' arrival. They had also placed a 12,000-man division in control of the Chinese railway zone in Manchuria. In Siberia, the combined efforts of the Czechs and Japanese had practically crushed Bolshevik resistance. The Czechs had been in control of the railway towns east of the Urals since May, had seized Vladivostok with 13,000 men in June and were establishing non-Bolshevik governments in most of the towns taken. The linkup of the Vladivostok Czechs with the Irkutsk Czechs, which Graves was sent to support, had taken place in Chita one day prior to Graves' arrival. There were no groups of organized German POW's threatening the countryside. Moreover, when the Supreme Allied War Council learned of the Czech linkup at Chita, they cancelled plans for their seaborne evacuation from Vladivostok - probably as an incentive for them to reopen the Eastern Front against Germany.

(23)

As to Graves' task to "steady" Russian attempts at self government, there were now 24 different governments or political authorities in his Area Of Responsibility, most locked in a bitter civil struggle with the Bolsheviks. (24)

Into this politico-military cauldron was thrown General Graves. Each of his strategic objectives from the Aide Memoire had already been accomplished or rendered impossible. All that remained were the limitations regarding interference in Russia's sovereign affairs and a now-murky piece about "steading" her attempts at self government and self defense.

**OPERATIONAL CHOICES - THE DECISION OF COMMAND**

Upon arrival in Vladivostok on 1 September, 1918, General Graves was briefed on the situation by Colonel Styer and Admiral Knight, who had been there for six months. The 27th Infantry had disembarked 15-18 August and Colonel Styer had ordered two rifle companies to participate in the opening phase of the planned Japanese offensive to the north. This commenced on 24 August with the 27th Infantry companies serving as flank guards during the advance through Ussuri towards Khabarovsk. The enemy had been represented as mostly German POW's so General Graves saw no conflict with the Aide Memoire and approved of Styer's action.

(25) Styer had questioned Japanese General Otani's claim that Otani had been agreed upon as Allied Commander-in-Chief but the response to Styer's query to the War Department only said that General Graves would have instructions when he arrived. Graves had no such instructions, and felt that Wilson's limitations on the use of U.S. troops made subordination to the Japanese impossible. His visit to Otani on 2 September resulted in an agreement whereby Graves would retain command of American forces but would cooperate with the Japanese within the limits of the Aide Memoire. (26) Graves' decision to retain command was insightful, given the excesses to U.S. policy that would be asked of him, yet Otani was correct about being the overall commander.

The State Department had agreed on 16 July to overall Japanese command and President Wilson was probably aware of it - but nobody had informed the War Department. (27) The chain of command for

the 20-month duration of the expedition would remain President Wilson through Secretary of War Baker to General Graves.

#### OPERATIONAL CHOICES - THE DECISION ON MILITARY OBJECTIVES

Graves' initial employment of the 27th Infantry was based on Japanese misstatements about the German POW threat. On 6 September, four days after the Graves-Otani meeting, the Japanese cancelled their major offensive and began a consolidation of forces at Khabarovsk. Because Graves was uncomfortable with the information he was getting from the interior and probably also about Japanese intentions, he visited the "front lines" at Khabarovsk in early October. This visit confirmed the decision on courses of action he had developed during September in Vladivostok. His conclusions were: 1) all organized resistance in Siberia has disappeared, 2) Japanese intentions were to control the railways, and with them, the economies of Siberia and Manchuria, and 3) the French and English were trying to get the Allies committed to some act that would rehabilitate the eastern front; the means to this end appeared to be the overthrow of the Bolsheviks. (28) He kept Secretary Baker informed by cable and was instructed, in turn, not to place any U.S. forces west of Lake Baikal and, if the Czechs withdrew westward, to keep the railroad open. When communications opened in the interior, he learned from Colonel Emerson of the Railway Service that the Czechs controlled the railway all the way to Irkutsk. As a consequence, in consultation with General Otani, Graves decided to employ his force

to protect the railroad junctions from Vladivostok to Khabarovsk, to guard war stocks around Vladivostok and to employ a combined Japanese-American force in the Suchan coal mining district to keep fuel flowing to the railroad. (29) The deployments commenced in October and were effected by company-size elements from both regiments with a battalion at Suchan. He also sent companies to protect the Chinese Eastern Railway Headquarters at Harbin, Manchuria (and to watch the Japanese) and to run the POW camp at Krasnaya Retshaya. (30) The military objective was to protect these assets from all belligerents, not just the Bolsheviks.

General Graves' Commander's Estimate designed an operation that fits the model for what we now call a "Peace Enforcement" operation in FM 100-5 - an intervention "in support of diplomatic efforts to restore peace...between hostile factions that may not be consenting in the intervention. Units...must be prepared to apply...combat power to restore order, to separate the warring factions and to return the environment to conditions more conducive to civil order." (31)

General Graves soon found that American soldiers were confused about their purpose in Siberia - many thought they were there to crusade against Bolshevism. Graves launched a command information program to correct this and was diligent in enforcing his intervention mandate. When, during his first visit forward, he learned Americans had arrested a Russian simply because he was a Bolshevik, he issued a statement that became the basic format for American Rules of Engagement in Siberia:

"Whoever gave you those orders must have made them up himself. The United States is not at war with the Bolsheviki or any other faction in Russia. You have no orders to arrest Bolsheviks or anybody else unless they disturb the peace of the community, attack the people or the Allied soldiers...The United States is only fighting the Bolsheviki when the American troops are attacked by an armed force." (32)

#### DISSENSION AND INTRIGUE

Graves' military objectives and policies did not sit well with the other Allies, who were growing in number daily. What had begun as a 15-20,000-strong Japanese-American expedition would grow, likely because of distrust for each other's intentions, to 72,000 Japanese, 9000 American, 2000 Italian, 1600 British and 4200 Canadian. (33) It was in the European best interest to overthrow the government that took Russia out of the war and British and French representatives, notably British General Alfred Knox, launched a diplomatic and media campaign against Graves. Knox was Chief of the British Military Mission to Siberia, had been a long-service attache' to Russia and was a strict Czarist. Even after the armistice in November, 1918, when the need for an Eastern Front disappeared, the European Allies switched their complaints to Graves' failure to support a White Russian government trying to establish itself in Omsk under anti-Bolshevik

Admiral Alexander Kolchak. Graves' problem with the Omsk government was its support to Cossack warlords terrorizing the peasants of eastern Siberia with an increasing series of atrocities and driving them to the Bolshevik side for protection. He intended to continue reporting and remain neutral until ordered to do otherwise by the War Department. These warlords were being actively supplied by the Japanese, who likely saw the Omsk government as their potential puppet - a similar strategy they had used with local governments in Manchuria for decades. Graves was being called an obstructionist and even a Bolshevik in reports to the British, French and Japanese Foreign Offices and in leaks to the press. The Japanese newspapers were particularly virulent.

(34)

The State Department also came to be aligned against Graves as 1919 progressed. Graves' reports to Washington on the atrocities committed by Kolchak's warlords were weighing against recognition of the Omsk government, something the local State Department representatives and Foggy Bottom's Russian Bureau desired as much as the British and French. Complaints from both Secretary of State Robert Lansing and British Prime Minister Lloyd George were repeatedly rebuffed by President Wilson: "(Graves was)...a man of most unprovocative character, and wherever the fault lies, he felt sure it was not with him." (35) In the end, Graves won this policy dispute. The Omsk government would fall on its own without ever achieving U.S. recognition.



## THE OPERATION

Graves' initial deployments of guard companies at the key railway junctions south of Khabarovsk, supply stockpiles and the Suchan mining district supported the military objectives through the winter of 1918-19. By April, 1919 the Allies had reached agreement to organize protection for the railway, and the AEF assumed responsibility for 316 miles of railroad. The 31st Infantry was assigned the main line from Vladivostok to Ussuri, the branch line to the Suchan mines and the mining district, and also provided a small operational reserve of two companies in Vladivostok. Half of the 27th formed a provisional battalion that protected the line from Ussuri to Khabarovsk. The remainder of the regiment under Colonel Styer moved 1225 miles west of Khabarovsk to a sector near Lake Baikal. (36) The increased distances now resulted in platoons widely dispersed and vulnerable to Bolshevik and Cossack alike.

General Graves strict policy of neutrality and the American values of fair play and humanitarianism had a positive psychological impact on the populace, most of whom were Bolshevik sympathizers as a result of Cossack and Japanese harassment. When a 27th Infantry platoon captured a village after being fired upon, the Americans "showed to the surprise of all the Russian people that it was possible to capture a village and confiscate all the firearms without murdering all the inhabitants and destroying their means of livelihood." A series of informal "truces" occurred at various outposts as Bolshevik and Cossack alike came

to understand there would be no trouble from the Americans so long as the railway was not disturbed and good order was maintained. (37). This good will was a direct result of Graves' refusal to take sides - and it became his most effective form of "operational fires."

In the Suchan area, the "truce" was broken on 22 June by a local Bolshevik leader who intended to disrupt the railway. Five 31st Infantry soldiers were taken hostage while fishing. The AEF G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Eichelberger (later MacArthur's 8th Army Commander as a Lieutenant General) negotiated their release while ambushes of Americans occurred in two locations in the Suchan, resulting in 29 Americans killed. Openly challenged, General Graves ordered the 31st Infantry over to offensive action. During July, 1919, a three-axis advance was made through the Suchan Valley with the Army capturing the villages then turning them over to Admiral Knight's marines and sailors for garrisoning. The final battle in Suchan occurred on 7 August when Company H annihilated a 30-man partisan platoon, prompting a Bolshevik withdrawal from the area. An estimated 500 Bolsheviks were killed in the month-long offensive. (38)

#### WITHDRAWAL OPERATIONS

After the Suchan offensive, it became increasingly clear to the Allies that nothing further could be accomplished in Russia. The Japanese government brought the issue to a head by proposing either a reinforced offensive to destroy Bolshivism or a complete

withdrawal. The United States chose to withdraw - the Czechs were withdrawing for evacuation from Vladivostok, the Bolsheviks were irretrievably in power across most of Russia and were acting in moderation. The U.S. had done everything in its power to aid the Siberians in their efforts at self government and their choice was Bolshevism. (39)

General Graves was notified by the War Department on 29 December, 1919 that his force would be withdrawn. As Bolshevik unrest was finally moving toward Vladivostok, he decided to secure a defensive perimeter in Vladivostok and a covering force outside the city. He would then withdraw the remainder of his force into the perimeter and embark for the Philippines. He moved the 31st to secure Vladivostok in early January, then withdrew the 27th from Spasscoe and Lake Baikal. Withdrawal was completed by 25 February and by 1 April, 1920, all had embarked for Manila and San Francisco.(40) Graves' diligence was wise - the final engagement of the intervention was with Seminoff's renegade Cossacks. On 9 January, 1920 a Cossack armored train attacked a platoon of the 27th Infantry near Khabarovsk, where the Cossacks lost five killed and 74 captured to two U.S. dead. (41)

### LOGISTICS

During August, 1918 General Graves coordinated logistics for the operation directly with General C.A. Devol, the Army's departmental quartermaster in San Francisco. They and the War Department agreed to bypass the Quartermaster General in

Washington to supply the expedition. As Devol's responsibility also included U.S. Army Alaska, he had access to the cold weather equipment Graves' forces would need. Graves also insisted that food be supplied from San Francisco. As a result of this relationship and the regular runs of the U.S. Army Transport Service ships tied dockside to the Trans-Siberian Railway, support for the operation was superb. Comments from soldiers who had served in both France and Siberia indicate AEF Siberia was much better supplied - a major accomplishment for a 20-month operation in the subarctic. (42)

Medical care was also excellent. With two hospitals present, physicians were present with almost every company-size detachment deployed. That these doctors also treated the local peasantry contributed much to General Graves' "operational fires." (43)

### CONCLUSIONS

The best tribute to AEF Siberia's performance came from the Soviets themselves in the early 1930's. Claims had been filed with all the Allied participants to recompense Russia for impairment to her sovereignty during the expedition. After being shown the written records of Wilson's policy and Graves' implementation of it, the Soviets dropped all claims against the United States. (44)

The positive outcomes of the operation were many. As early as the summer of 1918, when America refused to submit to the demands of the Allies for reopening the Eastern Front, she

prevented what would have been a major (and probably fruitless) military campaign against the Soviets. When America withdrew, the other Allies - notably Japan - were forced to withdraw also. World opinion would not tolerate Japan's free hand in Siberia and Manchuria. The presence of AEF Siberia had legitimized yet restrained her. When America withdrew, she had to.

The American tenets of self determination and self government - so ably expressed in the "Fourteen Points" - yet so misunderstood by our Victorian friends, were to be set in stone by AEF Siberia. There were only two alternatives for the Russian people - autocracy under a White Russian government or collectivism under the Bolsheviks - and the majority of Russians favored Bolshevism during AEF Siberia's tenure in Russia. (45) However distasteful Bolshevism was, it was what the people wanted and Wilson's principles demanded they be allowed to have it. Graves served Wilson, and the furtherance of American principles, well here.

Examination of FM 100-5 lists six principles for Peace Operations:

**Objective**

Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive and attainable objective.

**Unity of Effort**

Seek unity toward every military objective.

**Legitimacy**

Sustain the willing acceptance of the people of the right of the (authorities) to govern.

**Perseverance**

Prepare for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims.

**Restraint**

Apply appropriate military capability prudently.

**Security**

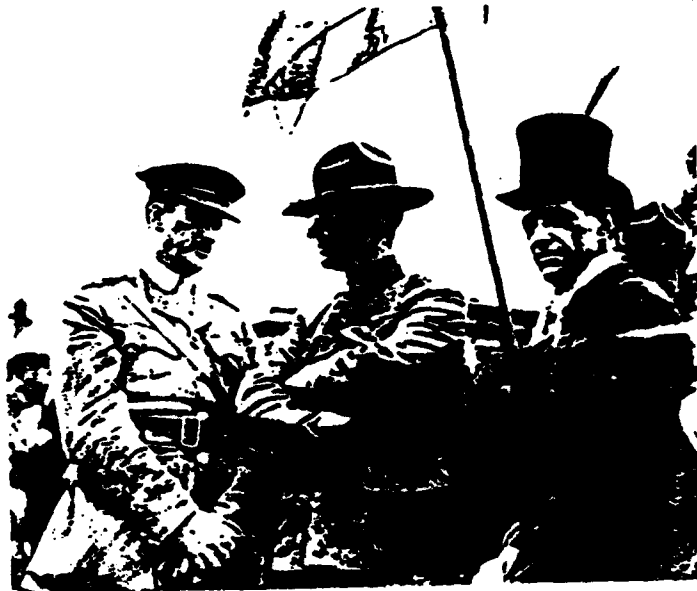
Never permit hostile factions to gain an unexpected advantage.

As I study these, I am impressed by Graves' adherence to each of these "modern" tenets for a Peace Enforcement operation. AEF Siberia put 9000 soldiers in harm's way for 20 months in the subarctic misery of World War I, half of them young draftees. That Graves only lost 35 killed, 52 wounded, 135 dead to disease and 50 to desertion is truly remarkable. This reflects favorably on the leadership, discipline and training provided by AEF Siberia. (46)

Although esteemed in the eyes of many - President Wilson, Secretary Baker, Peyton March, Robert Eichelberger and the soldiers of AEF Siberia (who continued to hold reunions well into the 1970's) - William Graves' personal reputation would be pilloried for decades. His 1931 book, America's Siberian Adventure, is a defensive treatise on policy written as though the operation was a disaster. Graves' son, in the next generation, would devote much effort to clearing his father's name. (47) Graves' superiors, to their credit, did not sacrifice him to political expediency, although there was considerable pressure to do so. Graves went on in the 1920's to command the 1st Infantry

Brigade, the 1st Infantry Division, VI Corps, the Panama Canal Division and the Department of the Canal Zone until his voluntary retirement in 1928. (48) It has been said that a man's true character is reflected in how he raises his children. Major Sidney C. Graves, the General's son, earned a Distinguished Service Cross, the British Distinguished Service Order and the French Croix de Guerre as a 16th Infantry captain in France. He volunteered for duty in Siberia during the time of the armistice and joined his father in time to earn a second Distinguished Service Cross in combat with the Bolsheviks. (49)

"Courage breeds...."



GENERAL KNOX, GENERAL GRAVES, AND  
AMERICAN CONSUL, J. K. CALDWELL (55)

## APPENDIX I

### CHRONOLOGY

1917

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 14 March    | Establishment of the Russian Provisional Government |
| 15 March    | Abdication of the Czar                              |
| 22 March    | U.S. recognition of the Provisional Government      |
| 18 November | Colonel Emerson leaves San Francisco for Siberia    |
| 15 December | Bolshevik-German armistice                          |

1918

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 12 January | First Japanese cruiser arrives in Vladivostok                         |
| 3 March    | Bolsheviks sign Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germans                  |
| 26 March   | Bolsheviks agree to permit Czechs to return to Europe via Vladivostok |
| 30 March   | Reports on German war prisoners in Siberia                            |
| 4 April    | First Czech forces arrive in Vladivostok                              |
| 4-5 April  | Japanese landing party in Vladivostok                                 |
| May        | General Graves warned of selection for AEF command                    |
| 25 May     | Trotsky order to disarm all Czechs                                    |
| 25 May     | Beginning of the Czech uprising                                       |
| 7 June     | Establishment of White government at Omsk                             |
| 29 June    | Czech seizure of Vladivostok  |
| 16 July    | State Dept agrees to Japanese command in Siberia                      |
| 17 July    | The Aide Memoire  |



|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 18 July       | General Graves assumes command of 8th Division                       |
| 3 August      | Japanese and British forces land at Vladivostok                      |
| 3 August      | Graves receives Aide Memoire. U.S. forces receive deployment orders. |
| August        | Graves coordinates logistics before departure                        |
| 15-21 August  | 27th Infantry lands at Vladivostok followed by 31st Infantry.        |
| 19 August     | Col Styer cables Graves with situation report                        |
| 24 August     | 27th Infantry commences Japanese offensive north                     |
| 1 September   | General Graves lands at Vladivostok                                  |
| 2 September   | Graves meets with Admiral Knight and General Otani                   |
| 6 September   | Japanese cancel offensive operation north                            |
| 11-17 October | Graves visits the front lines  |
| October       | U.S. forces deploy to guard railway and coal mines                   |
| 18 November   | Admiral Kolchak declares himself "Supreme Ruler"                     |

1919

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9 January   | Inter-Allied Railway agreement                           |
| 20 January  | All Czechs withdrawn from front lines                    |
| 22 June     | Five 31st Infantry soldiers taken hostage                |
| 22 June     | 31st Infantry rescue party ambushed                      |
| 25 June     | 3rd Plt, Co A, 31st Infantry attacked at Romanovka       |
| 25 June     | LTC Eichelberger negotites release of hostages           |
| July        | 31st Infantry counteroffensive in Suchan                 |
| 7 August    | Final battle of counteroffensive                         |
| 29 December | General Graves notified to begin withdrawal preparations |

1920

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| January     | 31st and 27th withdrawn to Vladivostok  |
| 9 January   | Cossacks attack 27th Infantry           |
| 7 February  | Admiral Kolchak executed by Bolsheviks  |
| 25 February | AEF Siberia completes withdrawal        |
| 27 February | Japanese announce withdrawal intentions |
| 1 April     | Last American forces leave Vladivostok  |
| 1 April     | Allied intervention ends                |

APPENDIX II  
THE AIDE MEMOIRE

*The Secretary of State to the Allied Ambassadors:*

Aide-Mémoire<sup>1</sup>

The whole heart of the people of the United States is in the winning of this war. The controlling purpose of the Government of the United States is to do everything that is necessary and effective to win it. It wishes to cooperate in every practicable way with the Allied Governments, and to cooperate ungrudgingly; for it has no ends of its own to serve and believes that the war can be won only by common counsel and intimate concert of action. It has sought to study every proposed policy or action in which its cooperation has been asked in this spirit, and states the following conclusions in the confidence that, if it finds itself obliged to decline participation in any undertaking or course of action, it will be understood that it does so only because it deems itself precluded from participating by imperative considerations either of policy or of fact.

In full agreement with the Allied Governments and upon the unanimous advice of the Supreme War Council, the Government of the United States adopted, upon its entrance into the war, a plan for taking part in the fighting on the western front into which all its resources of men and material were to be put, and put as rapidly as possible, and it has carried out that plan with energy and success, pressing its execution more and more rapidly forward and literally putting into it the entire energy and executive force of the nation. This was its response, its very willing and hearty response, to what was the unhesitating judgment alike of its own military advisers and of the advisers of the Allied Governments. It is now considering, at the suggestion of the Supreme War Council, the possibility of making very considerable additions even to this immense program which, if they should prove feasible at all, will tax the industrial processes of the United States and the shipping facilities of the whole group of associated nations to the utmost. It has thus concentrated all its plans and all its resources upon this single absolutely necessary object.

In such circumstances it feels it to be its duty to say that it cannot, so long as the military situation on the western front remains critical, consent to break or slacken the force of its present effort by diverting any part of its military force to other points or objectives. The United States is at a great distance from the field of action on the western front; it is at a much greater distance from any other field of action. The instrumentalities by which it is to handle its armies and its stores have at great

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Relations, 1918, Russia*, Vol. 11, *op.cit.*, pp. 287-290.

cost and with great difficulty been created in France. They do not exist elsewhere. It is practicable for her to do a great deal in France; it is not practicable for her to do anything of importance or on a large scale upon any other field. The American Government, therefore, very respectfully requests its associates to accept its deliberate judgment that it should not dissipate its force by attempting important operations elsewhere.

It regards the Italian front as closely coordinated with the western front, however, and is willing to divert a portion of its military forces from France to Italy if it is the judgment and wish of the Supreme Command that it should do so. It wishes to defer to the decision of the Commander in Chief in this matter, as it would wish to defer in all others, particularly because it considers these two fronts so closely related as to be practically but separate parts of a single line and because it would be necessary that any American troops sent to Italy should be subtracted from the number used in France and be actually transported across French territory from the ports now used by the armies of the United States.

It is the clear and fixed judgment of the Government of the United States, arrived at after repeated and very searching reconsiderations of the whole situation in Russia, that military intervention there would add to the present sad confusion in Russia rather than cure it, injure her rather than help her, and that it would be of no advantage in the prosecution of our main design, to win the war against Germany. It can not, therefore, take part in such intervention or sanction it in principle. Military intervention would, in its judgment, even supposing it to be efficacious in its immediate avowed object of delivering an attack upon Germany from the east, be merely a method of making use of Russia, not a method of serving her. Her people could not profit by it, if they profited by it at all, in time to save them from their present distresses, and their substance would be used to maintain foreign armies, not to reconstitute their own. Military action is admissible in Russia, as the Government of the United States sees the circumstances, only to help the Czecho-Slovaks consolidate their forces and get into successful cooperation with their Slavic kinsmen and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance. Whether from Vladivostok or from Murmansk and Archangel, the only legitimate object for which American or Allied troops can be employed, it submits, is to guard military stores which may subsequently be needed by Russian forces and to render such aid as may be acceptable to the Russians in the organization of their own self-defense. For helping the Czecho-Slovaks there is immediate necessity and sufficient justification. Recent developments have made it evident that that is in the interest of what the Russian people themselves desire,

and the Government of the United States is glad to contribute the small force at its disposal for that purpose. It yields, also, to the judgment of the Supreme Command in the matter of establishing a small force at Murmansk, to guard the military stores at Kola, and to make it safe for Russian forces to come together in organized bodies in the north. But it owes it to frank counsel to say that it can go no further than these modest and experimental plans. It is not in a position, and has no expectation of being in a position, to take part in organized intervention in adequate force from either Vladivostok or Murmansk and Archangel. It feels that it ought to add, also, that it will feel at liberty to use the few troops it can spare only for the purposes here stated and shall feel obliged to withdraw those forces, in order to add them to the forces at the western front, if the plans in whose execution it is now intended that they should cooperate should develop into others inconsistent with the policy to which the Government of the United States feels constrained to restrict itself.

At the same time the Government of the United States wishes to say with the utmost cordiality and good will that none of the conclusions here stated is meant to wear the least color of criticism of what the other governments associated against Germany may think it wise to undertake. It wishes in no way to embarrass their choices of policy. All that is intended here is a perfectly frank and definite statement of the policy which the United States feels obliged to adopt for herself and in the use of her own military forces. The Government of the United States does not wish it to be understood that in so restricting its own activities it is seeking, even by implication, to set limits to the action or to define the policies of its associates.

It hopes to carry out the plans for safeguarding the rear of the Czecho-Slovaks operating from Vladivostok in a way that will place it and keep it in close cooperation with a small military force like its own from Japan, and if necessary from the other Allies, and that will assure it of the cordial accord of all the Allied powers; and it proposes to ask all associated in this course of action to unite in assuring the people of Russia in the most public and solemn manner that none of the governments uniting in action either in Siberia or in northern Russia contemplates any interference of any kind with the political sovereignty of Russia, any intervention in her internal affairs, or any impairment of her territorial integrity either now or hereafter, but that each of the associated powers has the single object of affording such aid as shall be acceptable, and only such aid as shall be acceptable, to the Russian people in their endeavor to regain control of their own affairs, their own territory, and their own destiny.

It is the hope and purpose of the Government of the United States to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to send to Siberia a commission of merchants, agricultural experts, labor advisers, Red Cross representatives, and agents of the Young Men's Christian Association accustomed to organizing the best methods of spreading useful information and rendering educational help of a modest sort, in order in some systematic manner to relieve the immediate economic necessities of the people there in every way for which opportunity may open. The execution of this plan will follow and will not be permitted to embarrass the military assistance rendered in the rear of the westward-moving forces of the Czecho-Slovaks.

Washington, July 17, 1918.

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