



OFFICE OF THE  
HISTORIAN

# War, Neutrality, and Humanitarian Relief: The Expansion of U.S. Diplomatic Activity during the Great War, 1914–1917

William B. McAllister  
Seth Rotramel  
Charles Hawley  
Thomas Faith

U.S. Department of State  
Office of the Historian  
Foreign Service Institute  
2020

*The information contained in this paper does not necessarily reflect  
the views of the U.S. Government or the Department of State.*

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED



## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

# War, Neutrality, and Humanitarian Relief: The Expansion of U.S. Diplomatic Activity during the Great War, 1914–1917

## Table of Contents

Foreword .....	5
Introduction .....	8
Abbreviations and Terms .....	12
Note on Converting WWI-Era Dollars into Current Values .....	15
Persons .....	16
Chapter 1	
Early Twentieth Century Reform Initiatives to U.S. Diplomatic Practices .....	24
Chapter 2	
The Outbreak of War and the American Relief Expedition, 1914 .....	32
Assassination and Crisis .....	32
Financial Collapse .....	33
Launching the American Relief Commission .....	34
Deploying and Supporting the Red Cross .....	39
Chapter 3	
Germany, 1914-1917: Humanitarian Parity and the Diplomatic Difficulties of Neutrality .....	46
The American Relief Commission's Work in Germany .....	55
Representing the Belligerents .....	58
American Red Cross Hospitals in Germany .....	63
Inside the Embassy During the Period of Neutrality .....	73
Epilogue .....	82
Chapter 4	
Austria-Hungary, 1914-1917: American Diplomatic Boots on the Ground .....	93
"American Work" in Wartime .....	95
The Protecting Power in Action .....	100

Foreign Nationals in Enemy Territory .....	102
Initiatives for a New Era .....	104
A Day at the Office in Extraordinary Times .....	108
The Costs Borne by Neutral Humanitarians .....	113
Crucible .....	120
Chapter 5	
The U.S. Mission in Russia, 1914–1917: The Burden of the Protecting Power ....	134
The Diplomatic Playing Field in Russia .....	137
The Camps .....	145
The American Red Cross .....	153
The Issue of Neutrality and a Demand for a Change .....	155
The Second Division .....	159
Conclusion .....	165
Chapter 6	
The United Kingdom, 1914–1917: Washington’s Nerve Center in Europe .....	182
U.S. Embassy London Before the Start of WWI .....	182
The Relief of Stranded Americans at the Outbreak of War .....	185
The Embassy and U.S.-U.K. Relations, August 1914–December 1914 .....	193
Representing Belligerent Powers .....	200
Protecting U.S. Travelers During Total War .....	202
The Strain of Neutrality, 1916–February 1917 .....	205
The End of Neutrality and the Kernel of the Foreign Service .....	208
Chapter 7	
Aftermath .....	217
Transition .....	217
Association .....	220
Interlocution .....	221
Protraction .....	222
Professionalization .....	222
The United States as Great Power .....	224

# Foreword

The remarkable histories that follow stem from the work of Dr. Lindsey Krasnoff in the summer of 2014. Looking toward the centennial of the outbreak of World War I, the U.S. Embassy in Paris requested support from the Office of the Historian in establishing a sound historical foundation for the Embassy's public diplomacy. Dr. Krasnoff deployed to Paris to support that effort and embarked on an entrepreneurial research program, unearthing a series of long-forgotten, but important and vivid stories. The most prominent of these stories focused on the Embassy in Paris as the "guns of August" roared, with the post engulfed with U.S. citizens trapped in a continent-wide war zone, with financial systems in meltdown and transportation systems under martial law, leaving American citizens in desperate need of support.

Meanwhile during that terrible summer of 1914, as armies mobilized and marched across the Continent, members from the Department of State joined a U.S. Government relief expedition, sailing across the Atlantic in a pre-dreadnought armored cruiser on a half-load of coal, carrying 90 caskets full of gold to provide liquid financing for the embassies and U.S. citizens. The leaders of the expedition worked out procedures for distributing aid as they slowly crossed the Atlantic, with little idea of the situation that would face them on arrival. As the war spread across Europe, the American Red Cross deployed hospitals in support of all the major combatants, a tangible example of America's role as the great neutral power, and ultimately an instrument of U.S. diplomacy. All of these events found the Embassy in Paris woefully understaffed, with unpredictable communications with Washington, DC, and with no protocols or procedures to manage such an extraordinary contingency. The response of the U.S. Embassy in Paris in this crisis forms an integral part of the proud legacy of the State Department.

Dr. Krasnoff shaped the story and the Office of the Historian published it online that summer. But it was clear that the story from Paris was only part of a much larger tale, that U.S. diplomats in all the warring capitals faced similar crises, and that the overall response of the Department in that period was a vast epic, a pivotal point in the history of U.S. diplomacy. This story may have been overshadowed by the drama of subsequent events, but it was a story worth telling, both to honor those who served in

that time and to understand the evolution of the Department from the relatively sleepy organization of the 19th century to the worldwide enterprise that it has since become.

This major project would be undertaken amidst the ongoing workload of the Office of the Historian, and as such it was organized on a volunteer basis, with historians stepping forward to undertake the research and composition of these complicated narratives. Dr. Seth Rotramel opened the effort with his chapter on Germany, followed by Dr. Charles Hawley on Russia, and Dr. Tom Faith on Great Britain. Dr. Bill McAllister conducted general oversight of the project and contributed the chapter on Austria-Hungary. Each of these historians expanded the narrative to encompass the diplomatic activities of the embassies during the period of U.S. neutrality, from summer 1914 to the spring of 1917. Those activities included the responsibility to serve as “protecting power” for the combatants, thus assuming a role in ensuring legal and humanitarian treatment of prisoners of war and of combatant nations’ civilians trapped by the outbreak of war in a hostile land. These accounts also cover the complications of diplomacy as a neutral power “too proud to fight” in the midst of a desperate global war for survival, and the inevitable frictions that accompanied that stance.

The stories from the embassies had some powerful common characteristics. In all cases, the crisis of 1914 found the posts undermanned and unequipped by experience or existing procedures to handle the vast workload that they then assumed. Like the warring powers, the U.S. had no expectation of an imminent continent-wide war and still less of the magnitude that the war quickly assumed. Over time, as the United States conducted its responsibility as protecting power, its actions invariably led to mistrust and increasing friction with the host nations. These frictions exacerbated those occurring at the level of “high diplomacy,” with the U.S. advocating for traditional neutral rights in the midst of a battle for survival for the warring powers. The shortfalls in staffing continued as the workload grew, and as fatigue, illness, and deprivation exacted their tolls from U.S. missions abroad. For these diplomats, the privations of the war were not just facts to be reported back home; they affected directly the embassies and their staffs through the entire period of neutrality.

These general similarities across the embassies played out in the context of fundamental differences in their responsibilities and environments. In Russia, for example, there were few American citizens needing assistance, but the Embassy found itself working to ameliorate the dismal conditions of over two million Austro-Hungarian prisoners scattered in camps across Russia, with minimal tracking by the tsarist

government and primitive housing for this vast influx of prisoners of war. Conversely, in Great Britain there was little privation, but there was constant strain and overwork both on the formal diplomacy level, and in the protection of captured Germans and German civilians. Diplomats in Vienna shared the starvation and dreariness of the wartime Austro-Hungarian Empire, with illness and malnutrition taking a heavy toll on the Embassy staff.

Out of the frenetic activity and the accomplishments of this period there emerged the widespread recognition that the United States had become a global power and that its diplomatic establishment needed to reflect and support that status. The events of 1914–1917 placed the Department of State on the path toward the Rogers Act and the re-creation of the U.S. diplomatic establishment, passed into law in 1924. The actions of U.S. diplomats reported in these histories thus reflect the end of a long tradition of diplomacy in U.S. history, marked by a minimal investment in diplomatic capacity, slow and uncertain communication between embassies and Washington DC, and a heavy preponderance of political appointees across the diplomatic establishment. As it ended, however, this generation of diplomats left a legacy of selfless service, ingenuity, and commitment to the protection of U.S. citizens that even today creates a very high standard for their modern successors.

**Stephen P. Randolph, Ph.D.**

*The Historian (Emeritus)*

*U.S. Department of State*

# Introduction

Between the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 and U.S. entry as a belligerent in April 1917, Department of State officials took on unprecedented responsibilities that forever changed the practice of U.S. diplomacy. They rescued stranded fellow citizens across Europe and promoted the welfare of those who stayed behind. They supported herculean private efforts to provide humanitarian aid to civilians on both sides. At the behest of warring governments, U.S. officials also sought to improve the conditions of millions captured soldiers and to protect belligerents' property in enemy territory.

Warring states require the good offices of neutral governments to represent their interests in enemy territory, which entails protecting nationals residing there, securing property, and monitoring the welfare of captured soldiers. U.S. posts assumed responsibility for belligerent interests in several conflicts between 1865 and 1914, most notably representing the North German Confederation in France during the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian war, representing both belligerents' interests during the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese war, and representing Japan in Russia during the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war. At the outbreak of each of those wars, Department officials abroad sought clearance before acting, but when intercontinental telegraphic communications failed, Washington afforded posts the independence to take on representational duties and secure retroactive approval. Much the same transpired in August 1914. Department officers took on immediate duties they assumed would be of relatively brief duration. They soon faced the same array of issues that occurred in those earlier instances, including evacuation of U.S. citizens, facilitating repatriation of civilian detainees, negotiating Prisoner of War disputes, and emergency hiring of local staff to handle the increased workload. Given the unexpected scope and scale of the Great War, however, those commitments dwarfed all previous experience.<sup>1</sup>

No more prepared than other governments for the scale and scope of the catastrophe, U.S. diplomats confronted major impediments as they faced vast new responsibilities—poor communications, inadequate operating procedures, insufficient oversight, and myriad personnel difficulties hampered U.S. initiatives. A strikingly small cohort of overworked Department officers serving abroad suffered privation and exhaustion as they attempted to alleviate untold misery. Most importantly, U.S. officials



could not compel belligerent states to cooperate in implementing neutral humanitarian policies. Despite monumental efforts and achievements, in the typical fate of mediators, the Department of State encountered criticism from all sides for its efforts.

Through all those difficulties and despite incomplete success, Department personnel both embodied the country's arrival on the world stage and accomplished remarkable achievements in the service of humankind. In so doing, they demonstrated a professional dedication that triggered reconsideration of the status and structure of U.S. diplomacy. The experiences of 1914–1917 accelerated the Department's transformation from a modest, loosely-organized agency comprised largely of semi-autonomous foreign outposts into a professionalized, worldwide organization under centralized direction from Washington. The commitment to act as a neutral Great Power forged the foundation of the modern U.S. capacity to promote its vision of global interest in a globalized world.

In contrast to most earlier studies of U.S. diplomacy in WWI that generally focus on the high diplomacy of the time, this work is designed to tell the story of tireless, endless, usually improvised, and often hazardous efforts of U.S. diplomats in support of U.S. citizens, and in the conduct of the “protecting power” humanitarian efforts accepted by the United States in the first days of the war. This study builds upon the original groundbreaking research of Dr. Lindsay Krasnoff describing U.S. diplomatic activities in France during August–December 1914. (<https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/wwi/views-from-embassy-paris/Views%20from%20Embassy%20Paris%20WWI.pdf>) Her work illuminated a much larger untold story about how U.S. officials in Europe and Washington, DC, strove to reduce the distress generated by the Great War.

Subsequently, Dr. Seth Rotramel, Dr. William B. McAllister, Dr. Charles Hawley, and Dr. Thomas Faith investigated Department of State-related operations in other key countries for the entire 1914–1917 period of U.S. neutrality. Lacking the resources to study every government involved in the war, Department Historian Dr. Stephen Randolph focused the effort on Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The project subsequently benefitted from the services of summer intern Mr. Jack Ulses, who conducted the majority of the research for the Russia chapter.

This work focuses on U.S. neutral-humanitarian activity during 1914–1917. It provides the groundwork for additional study of this period, and provides essential perspective on the pathway from the wartime experience to the modern, professionalized Department of State created by the 1924 Rogers Act.

Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of Departmental operations by outlining prewar efforts to place its operations on a progressive, scientific basis, and to professionalize the Diplomatic and Consular Services before and during the war. Chapter 2 highlights the key events during the first weeks of war that set the stage for all subsequent Department efforts to repatriate U.S. citizens, to accept the protecting power role, and to facilitate the efforts of private U.S. entities supplying humanitarian aid. Chapter 3 details how Department officials in Germany, especially Ambassador James Gerard, attempted to adhere to the dictates of humanitarian parity under trying conditions. Chapter 4 presents the perspective of Diplomatic and Consular Service officers in Austria-Hungary as they struggled to interpret and enact directives on a daily, person-by-person basis. Chapter 5 focuses primarily on the immense challenges facing U.S. officials who sought to help the millions of prisoners of war languishing in Russia while simultaneously maintaining neutrality. Chapter 6 highlights the unique position that the U.S. Embassy in London held as a key interlocutor between Washington and Europe. Chapter 7 briefly outlines the administrative, personnel, and financial complications generated during the 1914–1917 period of philanthropic neutrality that burdened the Department long after the Armistice concluded hostilities.

The work of U.S. diplomats during the first years of the Great War forged expectations about the American role in global affairs that continue today. When a crisis occurs, U.S. diplomats frequently find themselves on the front line, responding to rapidly-developing events in environments over which they exercise little control. The extent to which they succeed rarely escapes criticism, but the assumption that a U.S. diplomat's job includes an obligation not only to report, but also to act, stems largely from the precedents established by their forebears during the Great War.

## Notes

- 1 For U.S. representational activities during the Franco-Prussian War, see Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Transmitted to Congress with the Annual Message of the President, December 5, 1870, (Washington: GPO, 1870), pp. 64-233; Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Transmitted to Congress with the Annual Message of the President, December 4, 1871, (Washington: GPO, 1871), pp. 266-414. For U.S. representational activities during the Sino-Japanese War, see Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 3, 1894, (Washington: GPO, 1895), pp. 95-134, 372-376; Foreign Relations of the United States, Foreign relations of United States, 1894, Appendix I, (Washington: GPO, 1895), pp. 5-106; Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President, Transmitted to Congress December 2, 1895, Part II, (Washington: GPO, 1895), pp. 969-970. For U.S. representational activities during the Russo-Japanese War, see Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress, December 6, 1904, (Washington: GPO, 1905), pp. 430-436, 714-722; Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 5, 1905, (Washington: GPO, 1906), pp. 599-610, 795-800; Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress, December 3, 1906, Part II, (Washington: GPO, 1909), pp. 1086-1089, 1335-1336.

# Abbreviations and Terms

**Ambassador**, the highest diplomatic rank recognized by governments. In 1914, the United States accredited 11 of its 48 overseas diplomatic posts at the ambassadorial level (Austria-Hungary, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Spain, the Ottoman Empire, and the United Kingdom).

**ANRC**, Records of the American National Red Cross, 1881–2008 (collection 783), held at the U.S. National Archives. The formal name of the American Red Cross, used in the endnotes because the U.S. National Archives uses this designation to identify the record group.

**ARC**, American Red Cross. This designation is used throughout the narrative except in the endnotes (see above).

**Attaché**, Diplomatic missions routinely included Military, Naval, and Commercial Attachés. The Department also utilized a non-specific “Attaché” designation to indicate an individual “attached” to a U.S. Embassy or Legation, with the concurrence of the host government. The title enabled the deployment of additional military and naval observers during the war, and also provided non-military individuals (often private citizens) diplomatic status that enabled them to perform important functions such as POW camp inspections.

**CDF**, Central Decimal File.

**Central Powers**, in August 1914, Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Ottoman Empire entered hostilities on the side of the Central Powers on October 29, 1914, when the Ottoman navy bombarded sites in Russia. Bulgaria entered hostilities on the side of the Central Powers on October 14, 1915, by declaring war on Serbia. The prewar Central Power alliance included Italy, but the Italian Government declined to enter the war in 1914.

**Clerk**, when capitalized, denotes a career employee of the Diplomatic Service inferior to the position of Secretary. At foreign posts Clerks usually held the most junior

position, which involved supervising the non-professional staff. When not capitalized, “clerk” denotes a salaried Department employee not of the Diplomatic or Consular Services.

**Consul/consular**, Department officials responsible for promotion of trade and commercial ties, protecting U.S. citizens abroad, and determining citizenship status.

**Consular Agent**, a subordinate position, filled by a person who exercised consular authority in the absence of a regularly appointed consular officer.

**Department or the Department**, unless otherwise indicated, denotes the Department of State.

**Diplomat/diplomatic**, Department officials responsible for government-to-government relations.

**Embassy**, the title for missions ranked at the Ambassadorial level.

**Entente Powers**, Serbia, Montenegro, France, Russia, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Japan all declared war on the Central Powers in August 1914. Italy entered hostilities on the side of the Entente Powers by declaring war on Austria-Hungary on May 23, 1915. Portugal entered hostilities on the side of the Entente Powers on March 9, 1916, when Germany declared war on Portugal. Romania (often spelled “Rumania” during the Great War era) entered hostilities on the side of the Entente Powers on August 27, 1916, by declaring war on Austria-Hungary. In a series of events and pronouncements between mid-June and early July 1917, most notably the abdication of King Constantine and the reinstatement of Eleftherios (also spelled Eleutherios) Venizelos as Prime Minister, Greece severed relations with Central Powers Governments and effectively joined the Entente Powers. Colonies and other dependencies joined the war effort at the time the states responsible for their foreign affairs did so. Several Latin American Governments, as well as China and Siam (modern-day Thailand), joined the Entente Powers in the final 18 months of the war. The United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. On April 8, 1917, the Austro-Hungarian Empire severed diplomatic relations with the United States. The United States declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire

on December 7, 1917. The Ottoman Empire severed diplomatic relations with the United States on April 20, 1917, but neither side declared war. Neither the United States nor Bulgaria officially severed diplomatic relations during the Great War era. The United States Government declared itself an “Associated Power” (rather than an “allied” belligerent) because the Wilson administration did not support many of the war aims espoused by Entente Powers.

**Foreign Relations of the United States**, The official foreign policy documentary publication of the U.S. government. For the historical development of the series, see <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus-history>. To access Foreign Relations volumes see <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>.

**GPO**, Government Printing Office (United States)

**HMG**, His Majesty’s Government (United Kingdom).

**Legation**, the title of a diplomatic mission ranked at the Ministerial level.

**Minister**, highest title accorded to U.S. representatives abroad in the 18th and 19th centuries, which remained the predominant level of accreditation well into the 20th century. The first U.S. Ambassador was named in 1893, and Ambassadorial-level appointments became more common as the 20th century progressed.

**Petrograd**, the name of the capital city of Russia beginning September 1, 1914. Prior to this date, it was known as St. Petersburg.

**POW**, prisoner(s) of war.

**RG 59**, Record Group 59, Department of State records, held at USNA.

**RG 84**, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts (Consular records) of the Department of State, held at USNA.

**St. Petersburg**, the name of the capital of Russia until September 1, 1914, when the Imperial Russian Government renamed the city Petrograd.

**Secretary**, when in reference to members of the Diplomatic Service, denotes career Department diplomatic personnel below the level of Ambassador or Minister. The First Secretary served as the second in command, roughly the equivalent of today's Deputy Chief of Mission. Larger missions might have one or more Second Secretaries and Third Secretaries, each tasked with specific areas of responsibility.

**U.K.**, United Kingdom (consisting of England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland during the Great War era). "Great Britain" referred to England, Scotland, and Wales during this time period.

**USNA**, United States National Archives, College Park, Maryland

## **Note on Converting WWI-Era Dollars into Current Values**

To calculate First World War-era dollars into today's equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator:

[https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

# Persons

**Anderson, Chandler Parsons**, Counselor, 1912–1913; U.S. Embassy London legal advisor and Member of American Relief Committee in London, 1914–1915. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/anderson-chandler-parsons>

**Baker, Newton D. Jr.**, Secretary of War 1916–1921.

**Bakhméteff, George**, Russian Ambassador to the United States 1911–1917.

**Bell, Edward**, Embassy London Second Secretary, 1913; Embassy London First Secretary, 1915.

**Bernstorff, Johann Heinrich von**, German Ambassador to the United States, 1908–1917.

**Bethmann-Hollweg, Theobald von**, Chancellor of the German Empire, 1909–1917.

**Bicknell, Ernest Percy**, American Red Cross, National Director.

**Bingham, Rutherford**, Embassy Vienna Second Secretary, 1915–1917.

**Boardman, Mabel**, American Red Cross, National Relief Board Chairman.

**Breckenridge, Henry**, Assistant Secretary of War, 1913–1916; director of the 1914 American Relief Commission mission to Europe.

**Bryan, William Jennings**, Secretary of State, 1913–1915. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/bryan-william-jennings>

**Busser, Ralph**, Consulate Trieste Consul, 1913–1917.

**Caldwell, John K.**, Consulate Vladivostok Consul, 1914–1920.



**Carr, Wilbur John**, U.S. Department of State, Director of Consular Service, 1909–1924.

**Chase, Benjamin Franklin**, Fiume Consulate Consul, 1914–1916.

**Clementi, Attilio J.**, Fiume Consulate, Vice and Deputy Consul, 1909–1915; Fiume Consulate Vice-Consul, 1915–1916.

**Cleveland, Stephen Grover**, President of the United States, 1885–1889 and 1893–1897.

**Coffin, William**, Consulate General Budapest Consul-General, 1913–1917.

**Crosby, Sheldon Leavitt**, Vienna Embassy, Second Secretary, 1915–1917.

**Dearing, Fred Morris**, Embassy Madrid, Secretary, 1914–1916; Embassy Petrograd, February 2, 1916, designated Embassy Petrograd Counselor July 17, 1916–November 7, 1916.

**Denby, Charles**, Consulate General Vienna, Consul-General, 1909–1915.

**Dodge, H. Percival**, Special Agent of the Department of State to assist the American Ambassador at Paris from August 4, 1914.

**Dolebare, Frederic Russell**, Embassy Vienna, Second Secretary, 1915–1917.

**Dulles, Allan Welsh**, Embassy Vienna, Third Secretary, 1916–1917.

**Dumba, Konstantin**, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, 1913–1915.

**Dyke, Henry van**, U.S. Minister to the Netherlands and Luxembourg, 1913–1917.

**Egan, Maurice Francis**, U.S. Minister to Denmark, 1907–1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/egan-maurice-francis>

**Francis, David Rowland**, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1916–1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/francis-david-rowland>

**Franz Joseph I**, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, 1848–1916.

**Flournoy Jr., Richard**, W., U.S. Department of State, Chief of the Bureau of Citizenship, 1909–1915; detailed September 17, 1915 to assist the embassies and legations of Europe regarding citizenship matters; assistant solicitor, August 1916–November 12, 1917.

**Frost, Wesley**, Cork (Queenstown) Consulate, Consul, 1914–1917.

**Gaffney, Thomas St. John**, Consulate General Munich, Consul-General, 1913–1915.

**George V**, King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions, and Emperor of India, 1910–1936.

**Gerard, James Watson III**, U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1913–1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/gerard-james-watson>

**Gibson, Hugh Simons**, Embassy London, Secretary, 1916–1917.

**Goschen, William Edward**, U.K. Ambassador to Germany, 1908–1914.

**Graham, Stephen V.**, Embassy Vienna, Naval Attaché, 1914–1917.

**Grant-Smith, Ulysses**, Embassy Vienna, First Secretary, 1912–1917; Embassy Vienna, Counselor, from July 17, 1916.

**Grew, Joseph Clark**, Embassy Berlin, First Secretary, 1912–February 14, 1917; Embassy Berlin, Counselor, from July 17, 1916; Embassy Vienna, Counselor, from February 19, 1917; Embassy Vienna, Chargé d’Affaires, April 7–May 23, 1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/grew-joseph-clark>

**Grey, Edward**, U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1910–1916.

**Guild, Curtis**, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1911–1913. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/guild-curtis>

**Gunther, Franklin Mott**, Embassy London, Secretary, 1914–1919; Legation Hague, Secretary, 1919–1920.

**Hale, Chandler**, Third Assistant Secretary of State, 1909–1913 (retired); recalled to temporary duty at Embassy London, 1914.

**Halstead, Albert**, Consulate General Vienna, Consul-General, 1915–1917.

**Harris, Heaton**, Consulate General Frankfurt, Consul-General, 1912–1917.

**Harvey, Roland B.**, Embassy Berlin, Second Secretary, 1914–1916.

**Heenan, Thomas E.**, Consulate Fiume, Consul, April 24–June 25, 1914 (died in office).

**Heingartner, Robert W.**, Consulate General Vienna, Vice and Deputy Consul-General, from 1907; Consulate General Vienna, Vice-Consul, from February 6, 1915; assigned to Spanish Embassy Vienna, April 1917–February 1918.

**Hoover, Charles Louis**, Consulate Prague, Consul, 1914–1916.

**Hoover, Herbert**, President of the United States, 1929–1933.

**House, Edward M.**, Adviser to President Woodrow Wilson.

**Jackson, John Brinkerhoff**, former U.S. diplomat, retired in 1913; Special Agent of the Department of State at Embassy Berlin, 1915–1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/jackson-john-brinkerhoff>

**Karl I**, Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary, 1916–1918.

**Kirk, Alexander Comstock**, Embassy Berlin, Second Secretary, 1915–1917.

**Knox, Philander**, Secretary of State, 1909–1913. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/knox-philander-chase>

**Lane, Franklin Knight**, Secretary of the Interior, 1913–1920.

**Lansing, Robert**, U.S. Department of State, Counselor, 1914–1915; Secretary of State ad interim, 1915; Secretary of State, 1915–1920. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/lansing-robert>

**Laughlin, Irwin Boyle**, Embassy London, Secretary, 1912, Embassy London, First Secretary, 1913; Embassy London, Counselor, 1916.

**Lay, Julius G.**, Consulate General Berlin, Consul-General, 1914–1917.

**Listoe, Soren**, Consulate General Rotterdam, Consul-General 1897–1920.

**Lowry, Edward. G.**, Embassy London, in charge of the German Division, 1914–1917.

**Mallett, Frank Earle**, Consulate General Budapest, Vice and Deputy Consul-General, 1906–1914.

**Marye, George T.**, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1914–1916. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/marye-george-t>

**Meyer, George von Lengerke**, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1905–1907. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/meyer-george-von-lengerke>

**Miles, Basil**, former U.S. diplomat, retired 1908; appointed a Special Agent to the Ambassador at Petrograd, August 25, 1916; Special Assistant to the Ambassador at Petrograd with the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary, January 4, 1917; Secretary of the Special Mission to Russia, May 14–October 16, 1917.

**Morgan, Henry H.**, Consulate General Hamburg, Consul-General, 1913–1917.

**Morgenthau, Henry**, U.S. Ambassador to The Ottoman Empire, 1913–1916. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/morgenthau-henry>

**Morris, Ira Nelson**, U.S. Minister to Sweden, 1914–1923. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/morris-ira-nelson>

**Moser, Charles Kroth**, Consulate Harbin, Consul, 1914–1919.

**Mummenhoff, Ernest Herbert Lawrence**, Consulate General Hamburg, Vice and Deputy Consul, 1903–1914.

**Nicholas II, Czar of Russia**, 1894–1917.

**Page, Thomas Nelson**, U.S. Ambassador to Italy, 1913–1919. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/page-thomas-nelson>

**Page, Walter Hines**, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1913–1918. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/page-walter-hines>

**Penfield, Frederic Courtland**, U.S. Ambassador to Austria-Hungary, 1913–1917. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/penfield-frederic-courtland>

**Phillips, William**, Third Assistant Secretary of State, 1914–1917; Assistant Secretary of State, 1917–1920; Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands and Luxembourg, 1920–1922. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/phillips-william>

**Poole, Jr.**, Dewitt Clinton, Consulate General Paris, Vice and Deputy Consul-General, 1914, Consulate General Paris, Vice-Consul, February 6, 1915; detailed in the Department of State, September 30, 1915; detailed for duty in the Consulate General Moscow, July 17, 1917–October 5, 1918.

**Reineck, Walter S.**, employed at Embassy Vienna from 1914; Embassy Vienna, Clerk, from July 1, 1916, remained in Vienna in charge of U.S. archives in Spanish Embassy Vienna until resignation in November 9, 1920.

**Reinsch, Paul Samuel**, U.S. Minister to China, 1913–1919. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/reinsch-paul-samuel>

**Rogers, John Jacob**, member, House of Representatives (R-MA), 1913–1927.

[https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/ROGERS,-John-Jacob-\(R000400\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/R/ROGERS,-John-Jacob-(R000400)/)

**Root, Elihu**, Secretary of State, 1905–1909. <https://history.state.gov/departmentshistory/people/knox-philander-chase>

**Ruddock, Albert Billings**, Embassy Berlin, Third Secretary, 1912–1915, Embassy Berlin, Second Secretary, 1915–1916.

**Russell, Charles Howell, Jr.**, employed by Embassy Berlin, 1914–1916.

**Sazonov, Sergei**, Russian Foreign Minister, 1910–1916.

**Schuyler, Montgomery**, former U.S. diplomat, retired 1913; Special Agent detailed to Embassy Petrograd to conduct POW camp inspections. <https://history.state.gov/departmentshistory/people/schuyler-montgomery>

**Shoecraft, Eugene Claire**, Embassy London, Third Secretary, 1915–1916, Embassy London, Second Secretary, 1916–1919.

**Skinner, Robert P.**, Consulate-General London, Consul General, 1914–1924.

**Snodgrass, John Harold**, Consulate General Moscow, Consul-General, 1909–1917.

**Stabler, Jordan Herbert**, Embassy London, Second Secretary, August 1914–July 19, 1916.

**Stewart, Glenn**, Embassy Vienna, Second Secretary, December 6, 1916–April 9, 1917.

**Stovall, Pleasant**, U.S. Minister to Switzerland, 1913–1919. <https://history.state.gov/departmentshistory/people/stovall-pleasant-alexander>

**Taft, William Howard**, President of the United States, 1909–1913.

**Tewfik Pasha (Huseyin Tevfik)**, Ottoman Ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1909–1914.

**Wilhelm II**, Emperor (Kaiser) of Germany, 1888–1918.

**Wilson, Charles Stetson**, Embassy St. Petersburg, First Secretary, 1912; Embassy Madrid, First Secretary, February 2, 1916, Embassy Madrid, Counselor, October 3, 1916–October 23, 1918.

**Wilson, Hugh Robert**, Embassy Berlin, Second Secretary, June 2, 1916; Embassy Berne, Second Secretary, February 3, 1917; Embassy Vienna, Second Secretary, March 15, 1917; Embassy Berne, Second Secretary, April 18, 1917–December 10, 1919.

**Wilson, Thomas Woodrow**, President of the United States, 1913–1921.

**Winans, Charles Sumner**, Consulate Nuremburg, Consul, 1914–1917.

**Young, James Barclay**, on detail at Consulate Belgrade as Vice-Consul in Charge, April–November 1915; at Vienna, December 1915–July 22, 1916; Consulate Fiume, Consul, July 24, 1916–April 16, 1917.

**Young, Wallace**, Consulate Carlsbad, Consul, 1914–1917.

# Chapter 1

## Early Twentieth Century Reform Initiatives to U.S. Diplomatic Practices

*Seth Rotramel*

Significant impetus for institutional reform of the Department of State arose after the U.S. acquired new diplomatic responsibilities in the wake of the 1898 Spanish-American War. The acquisition by the United States of former Spanish colonial holdings forced Congress to acknowledge the woeful inadequacies of the Department in meeting its new administrative responsibilities.

Since the founding of the republic, the Department operated two types of overseas representation, diplomatic and consular. The Diplomatic Service, members of which worked out of Embassies and Legations, managed government-to-government relationships. The Consular Service provided support for U.S. citizens traveling abroad, promoted the United States' burgeoning international trade, and increasingly adjudicated cases involving determination of U.S. citizenship.<sup>1</sup> By modern standards, the two services had remarkably little contact with the Department. Few members of either branch visited the Department before voyaging to post.<sup>2</sup> Observers often remarked that the Department of State in Washington was the last place in the world to know what was going on in diplomatic and consular posts abroad.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the manner in which the Ambassador or Minister exercised "chief of mission" authority over consular officials, and the exact protocol for posts' communications with Washington, remained less than fully articulated.<sup>4</sup>

Loopholes in recent personnel reforms also rendered it difficult for Department principal officers to exert control. The civil service provisions of the 1882 Pendleton Act did not apply to the Diplomatic or Consular Services, and therefore those positions remained subject to political patronage and bribery. Private individuals—even non-U.S. citizens—could buy appointments or leverage political connections to secure a consular post in hopes of making a fortune by collecting fees on goods imported to the United States.



The 1906 Lodge Act addressed some problems by stipulating that consular officials (with the exception of Consular Agents) must be regular employees of the Government, paid only by salary. However, the Act failed to bring coherency to consulate management because it classified consular officials into pay grades based on location, rather than on the basis of rank in the services as the Department had advocated. Because some posts commanded significantly higher salaries than others, Department officials could not control transfers, and the same profit motive stymied standardization.

While the Lodge Act addressed some of the worst inequities of the Consular Service, the political spoils system still controlled the Diplomatic Service, which remained unreformed and jealous of its elite status in relation to the Consular Service. Presidents issued Executive Orders to address other reforms for both services (for example, competitive entrance exams and merit-based promotions), but such promulgations did not enjoy the power of law; they only remained in force at the sufferance of subsequent administrations.

Departmental reorganization also advanced slowly. At the time of the Spanish-American War, the Department managed its overseas responsibilities through two diplomatic bureaus and two corresponding consular bureaus. The first diplomatic and first consular bureaus managed relations with Europe, China, and Japan, while the second covered Latin America, the Mediterranean region, Russia, Hawaii, and Liberia. After much wrangling, proponents of Departmental reform abandoned hopes for congressional action and used Presidential Executive Orders to restructure the Department in 1909. Those decrees created four reconfigured diplomatic and four corresponding consular bureaus to oversee relations with Western Europe, the Near East, the Far East, and Latin America.

Further reforms stalled with the assumption of a new party to the White House in 1913. The spoils system remained in effect with regard to ambassadorial and ministerial-level appointments. By the summer of 1914, President Woodrow Wilson had named non-career diplomatic representatives, in almost all cases Democratic Party supporters, to 39 of the 44 extant Chief of Mission postings.<sup>5</sup> The President, however, supported the merit system for the Consular Service and subordinate diplomatic officers he inherited from previous executive orders. In a March 9, 1914, letter to a colleague, Joseph Grew, First Secretary in Berlin and later Ambassador to Japan, observed both change and continuity:

The Democrats came in last year after having been out of power for 16 years; they were accordingly more hungry than usual and promptly ate up most of the ambassadorial and ministerial posts, thus undoing the good work of forming a permanent Service started by Republicans. There has however, so far as I am aware, never before been such a row in the press all over the country over this looting of the Service. Formerly it was taken for granted that every single official would be changed; now it is spoken of as a scandal that those ministers who have worked their way up from the ranks should be turned out, although the entire Consular Service and all the secretaries have been left alone.<sup>6</sup>

The career of James W. Gerard, U.S. Ambassador to Germany from 1913–1917, exemplifies the longstanding norms of American diplomatic practice. Before his appointment, Gerard was a rising star in the Democratic Party of New York. His political career started after serving as a staff officer in the Spanish-American War. At the conclusion of four years as the chairman of the Democratic Campaign Committee for New York County, he was elected to the New York Supreme Court in 1907, serving until his appointment on July 28, 1913, as Ambassador to Germany. Gerard learned of his appointment en route to a European vacation aboard the German luxury cruise liner *Imperator*. Gerard's friend and shipmate Henry Morgenthau, future Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, helped him prepare for his debut at the German imperial court by translating "a little speech for me into German, which I managed to get through after painfully learning it by heart." Gerard noted later that "now that I have a better knowledge of German, a cold sweat breaks out when I think of the awful German accent with which I delivered that address."<sup>7</sup>

Upon arriving in Berlin to take up his duties in September 1913, Gerard devoted considerable attention to his housing needs. No fixed Embassy building existed because the U.S. Government typically did not own or rent property in European capitals. Instead, the Department provided the Ambassador an allowance with which to contract his own arrangements. Because the wealthy, politically-connected men who often represented the United States abroad found that stipend inadequate, they used their own funds to secure lodgings appropriate to their station. Gerard found what he described as a "palace" on Wilhelmplatz for both his residence and Embassy offices, conveniently located opposite the Chancellor's residence and the Foreign Office. However, until the renovations were completed in January 1914, Gerard and his wife, Mary, lived and worked in the world-renowned Hotel Esplanade.<sup>8</sup> To cover the

extensive renovations that Gerard contracted, as well as the rent due for the first year, the Ambassador expended over \$15,000 (approximately \$365,000 in 2017 dollars) of his personal fortune.<sup>9</sup>

When Gerard presented his accreditation to Emperor Wilhelm II in September, he encountered a longstanding dilemma of U.S. diplomacy: tension between representing republican ideals and European courtly expectations. Gerard noted that “This presentation is quite a ceremony. Three coaches were sent for me and my staff, coaches like that in which Cinderella goes to her ball, mostly glass, with white wigged coachmen, outriders in white wigs and standing footmen holding on to the back part of the coach.”<sup>10</sup> To avoid criticism at home, Gerard bucked diplomatic protocol by not wearing a uniform to his meeting with the Kaiser,

Although my predecessors, on occasions of this kind, had worn a sort of fancy diplomatic uniform designed by themselves, I decided to abandon this and return to the democratic, if unattractive and uncomfortable, dress-suit, simply because the newspapers of America and certain congressmen, while they have had no objection to the wearing of uniforms by the army and navy, police and postmen, and do not expect officers to lead their troops into battle in dress-suits, have, nevertheless, had a most extraordinary prejudice against American diplomats following the usual custom of adopting a diplomatic uniform.<sup>11</sup>

Gerard continued to encounter the myriad political complications of mingling with old world aristocrats, which required him to balance the conceits of the U.S. sense of republican simplicity with the exaggerated pomp of European imperial court life: “Invariable custom requires a new Ambassador in Berlin to give two receptions, one to the Diplomatic Corps and the other to all those people who have the right to go to court. These are the officials, nobles and officers of the army and navy, and such other persons as have been presented at court.”<sup>12</sup> These two receptions, along with a succession of formal balls, in massive chandeliered halls, were extravagant affairs with orchestras dressed in medieval costumes, trumpets, powdered wigs, countesses in gowns with long trains, guards of honor dressed in the uniforms of the time of Frederick the Great, along with wave after wave of nobles and court officials. Gerard dressed, “by night or by day, in the infernal dress-suit.”<sup>13</sup> Upon returning to the United States in 1917, Gerard reflected on the European diplomatic culture shattered by the war:

Writing of all these things and looking out from a sky-scraper in New York, these details of court life seem very frivolous and far away. But an Ambassador is compelled to become part of this system. The most important conversations with the Emperor sometimes take place at court functions, and the Ambassador and his secretaries often gather their most useful bits of information over tea cups or with the cigars after dinner.<sup>14</sup>

As those traditional diplomatic conventions disintegrated during the first year of war, internal division in Washington over the policy of neutrality caused tension and eventually turnover at the pinnacle of the Department. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan's departure in June 1915 and Wilson's appointment of Department Counselor Robert Lansing as his replacement resulted directly from disagreement about the issue that most tested the U.S. policy of neutrality. The German submarine sinking of the American-flagged *Lusitania* in May 1915, which U.S. officials concluded at length killed 139 citizens, caused a major diplomatic crisis and nearly led to a declaration of war by the United States against Germany. A longtime peace advocate, Bryan resigned instead of supporting Wilson's protests against the German Government, which the Secretary considered a step toward U.S. involvement in the war. Lansing, second in command at the Department and much more involved in its day-to-day operations, accepted Wilson's offer to succeed Bryan.

The exigencies of the Great War, along with public demand at home, galvanized congressional resolve to address the Department's inadequacies. While the United States remained neutral for the first three years of the conflict, the activities of the Department and the Diplomatic and Consular Services grew exponentially as U.S. representatives assumed diplomatic responsibilities of belligerent countries, inspected prisoner of war camps, facilitated Red Cross operations, and provided relief to U.S. citizens stranded in Europe. Once unknown to most Americans, the Department developed into the principal clearinghouse of domestic inquiry concerning the fate of those traveling or living abroad.

Department officials leveraged the greater exposure of the Diplomatic and Consular Services to convince Congress to pass the Reclassification Act of 1915. Impetus for that reform came shortly before the war when William Phillips, Wilson's Republican appointee for Third Assistant Secretary of State with oversight of Diplomatic Service personnel, convinced Secretary Bryan in June 1914 to support a bill already before

Congress.<sup>15</sup> After five months of considerable strain on the Diplomatic and Consular Services caused by the war, the bill passed into law on February 5, 1915.

Although vague in its stipulations, the Act enshrined into law Departmental policies and executive orders by mandating the appointment of consular officials based on examination and their promotion based on merit. The law also provided a guarantee of tenure in the Diplomatic Service for diplomatic officers below the ministerial/ambassadorial level. Additionally, the Act applied the system of appointment of classes to individuals rather than posts. The law also prohibited diplomatic officers from leveraging their office to make money in business ventures or by accepting fees for practicing law.<sup>16</sup> As a result, salaries did not vary by location, which removed the profit motive and eased transfers between posts. Congress appropriated funds to increase staff in Washington, which benefited the Department's domestic operations. Domestic payroll grew throughout the war—from 234 Department employees in 1910 to 708 by 1920.<sup>17</sup> Those reforms expanded the Department's capacity to respond to the massive challenges it faced during the period of wartime neutrality, and represented an interim step toward a modern, professionalized diplomatic service.

## Notes

- 1 For a bilateral case study of consular relations, see Nicole M. Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Chapters 1–5.
- 2 Willbur Carr, Chief of the Consular Bureau until 1924 and Assistant Secretary of State until 1937, noted that before the 1906 reforms appointees to consulates departed for their posts “without ever calling at the Department of State...” Katherine Crane, *Mr. Carr of State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1960), p. 125.
- 3 When testifying before the House Committee on Foreign Relations during the second session of the 59th Congress, in January 1908, Secretary of State Elihu Root noted that before the advent of reforms in 1906, “the State Department was the last place for information to be received about anything that went wrong at a consulate.” *Ibid.*, p. 123.
- 4 Rachel West’s book on Department operations and personnel covering 1913–1914, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 3, states: “I could not discover what the rules of correspondence from embassies and legations to the department in Washington were; there appear to have been rules, but no one bothered to preserve them.”
- 5 In 1914 the Department accredited 48 diplomatic posts, but only 44 postings because Charles Vopicka represented U.S. interests in Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia, Garrett Droppers covered both Greece and Montenegro, and Henry Van Dyke served the Netherlands and Luxemburg. Career diplomatic officers occupied the Chief of Mission positions in Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Haiti, and Morocco. See Department of State, *Register of the Department of State* (Washington: GPO) publications of 1913 and 1914, collated with Chiefs of Mission information on the Office of the Historian webpage <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/principals-chiefs>. (The sources cited by the extant secondary literature such as Graham H. Stuart, *The Department of State: A History of Its Organization, Procedure, and Personnel* (New York: MacMillan, 1949), pp. 226–229 and William Barnes and John Heath Morgan, *The Foreign Service of the United States: Origins, Development, and Functions* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), pp. 183–186 does not reference verifiable figures.)
- 6 Joseph C. Grew, (Walter Johnson, ed.), *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1952) Vol. 1, p. 119. See also Warren Frederick Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779–1939: A Study in Administrative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 119–127, who places the primary responsibility for chief of mission patronage appointments on Bryan.
- 7 James Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (New York, George H. Doran Company, 1917), p. 18.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.
- 9 University of Montana, Mansfield Library, Archives and Special Collections, James Gerard Papers, Series IV, Box 384, Legal Documents, 1913, Embassy Leases. To calculate First World War-era dollars into today’s equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).
- 10 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 21.
- 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 22–23. Only a few months earlier at the wedding of Wilhelm’s daughter, Grew wore a diplomatic uniform despite the potential domestic criticism. He described it as “the most uncomfortable thing you can imagine with its choking collar and tight Duke of Wellington boots, but [it] is better than a dress suit on such occasions.” Grew, *Turbulent Era*, p. 109.
- 12 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 20.

- 13 Ibid., p. 23.
- 14 Ibid., p. 31.
- 15 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, p.123.
- 16 Public Law, No. 242, S. 5614, February 5, 1915, 63rd Congress. Session III, Chap. 23.—An Act For the Improvement of the Foreign Service.
- 17 Crane, *Mr. Carr of State*, pp. 176–179; <https://history.state.gov/about/faq/departments-personnel>.



# Chapter 2

## The Outbreak of War and the American Relief Expedition, 1914

*Seth Rotramel*

### Assassination and Crisis

Like almost all observers, U.S. officials did not think the June 28, 1914, assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand would lead to a Great Power war. Friction in the Balkans, including armed conflict between smaller states in the region, occurred with sufficient frequency that even the murder of the heir to the Austrian throne by Greater-Serbia nationalists did not generate undue alarm. At the cockpit of the dispute in Vienna, Ambassador Frederick Penfield proceeded with plans for a vacation to the United States, Embassy First Secretary U. Grant Smith travelled to London, and the Department approved stateside trips for both Budapest Consul-General William Coffin and Vienna Consul-General Charles Denby.<sup>1</sup> In Germany, Ambassador James Gerard continued his pleasant summer program of Baltic Sea yacht races and sumptuous dinners among the elite.<sup>2</sup> Neither the Department nor the Tsar hastened newly appointed Ambassador to Russia George T. Marye's departure for Petrograd.<sup>3</sup> U.S. Ambassador to Italy Thomas Nelson Page departed for America via Paris, where Vice-Consul Dewitt Poole dismissed the news from Sarajevo as "simply another Balkan assassination."<sup>4</sup>

The crisis came to a head several weeks later. On July 5, Emperor Wilhelm assured the Austrian Government that Germany would support retaliatory action against Serbia. Through mid-July officials of the two states negotiated the precise wording of an ultimatum to be delivered to Belgrade. As a pretext for invasion, on July 23 Austria presented Serbia with a list of demands that threatened Serbian sovereignty. The next day marked the beginning the "July Crisis." Although Belgrade accepted all but one clause of the ultimatum, Vienna nevertheless rejected—with Berlin's blessing—the conditional acceptance. Up to this point, few people knew of the Central Powers' machinations, but on July 24 the Austro-German intransigent position became public. The system of Great Power alliances magnified the regional conflict into a European conflagration: Russia backed Serbia, causing Germany to promise Austria-Hungary full



support, which triggered Russia's alliance with France. On July 28, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and Russia mobilized for war. On August 1, Germany declared war on Russia. By August 3, Germany declared war on France. A day later, Germany invaded Belgium, in response to which the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. The same day, August 4, President Woodrow Wilson declared U.S. neutrality, extolling Americans to remain neutral "in thought as well as in action." By then the Department had directed its vacationing officials scattered on both sides of the Atlantic to return to post as soon as feasible amid the unpredictable travel disruptions that accompanied the march to war. For example, Consul-General Coffin required twelve days to travel from France to Budapest, entirely by automobile, "owing to repeated arrests and detentions and detours necessary to avoid zones of military operations."<sup>5</sup> Consul-General Denby made it all the way to Washington by August 3, only to receive orders to return immediately on USS *North Carolina* along with ten other consular officials. His journey back to Vienna took over three weeks.<sup>6</sup>

## **Financial Collapse**

The July Crisis triggered a global financial meltdown, which posed the most immediate challenge to U.S. diplomatic representatives in Europe. The open, integrated nature of prewar financial markets rendered them fragile, which exacerbated the severity of the crisis. Capital flowed freely throughout the world via the financial houses of London, the epicenter of global credit and banking. War tensions caused the closure of the Bank of England, European and American stock exchanges shuttered their doors for almost six months, and nearly all exchanges across the world closed for at least six weeks. Austria's ultimatum initiated a massive sell-off of assets in exchange for sterling, already unstable owing to tensions between Catholic Irish Nationalists and Protestant Ulster unionists. The crisis deprived foreign banks of their ability to cover end-of-month short-term call loans, causing London's key financial markets to collapse within a week. The rising cost of sterling (owing to its sudden scarcity) when coupled with the pound's strict fidelity to gold convertibility, rapidly increased gold prices in London and on the Continent relative to New York. On July 29, the sterling/dollar exchange rate increased sufficiently to entice profit-seeking U.S. firms to ship gold to London. By July 31, the exchange rate exceeded all records. Gold shipments between July 27 and August 1 totaled more than \$30 million (approximately \$750 million in 2017 dollars), equivalent to one-sixth of the Bank of England's pre-crisis gold reserve.<sup>7</sup> As a consequence,

numerous gold-laden ships plied the Atlantic just at the moment when Europe went to war.

The Department of State and its representatives abroad suddenly found themselves called upon to facilitate the security and transfer of U.S. citizens' private assets. For example, the German-flagged luxury liner SS *Kronprinzessin Cecilie*, carrying over \$10,000,000 in U.S. gold, failed to arrive on schedule in the U.K. The company insuring the gold for U.S. bankers feared the German Government had rerouted the ship to a home port to steal the gold, and quickly requested Secretary Bryan to "...kindly take up this matter at once with the German Government and make proper representations that this gold is the property of neutrals and that all their rights should be recognized and strictly observed."<sup>8</sup> Bryan immediately cabled Gerard concerning the suspected foul play but, indicative of the confusion in the first days of the war, his instructions admitted that the "Department is in doubt as to real ownership of this gold..." Bryan left it to his Ambassador to investigate: "...but in case you ascertain that it is the property of the American consignors you will make immediate and suitable representations to the German Government with a view to protect the interests of Americans in the shipment."<sup>9</sup> Gerard already knew, however, that the German Government had ordered *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* to return to the United States to avoid capture, and thus he could do nothing to address U.S. bankers' concerns.<sup>10</sup>

## **Launching the American Relief Commission**

The chaotic global financial collapse determined the U.S. Government's first relief priority: repatriating an unknown but substantial number of U.S. citizens stranded in Europe. The breakdown rendered letters of credit from U.K. or U.S. banks worthless on the Continent. U.S. citizens vacationing or residing in Europe, including President Wilson's sister, suddenly found themselves unable to access funds to secure food, lodging, or transportation.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, European militaries commandeered all available land and seaborne conveyance for mobilization and operations; even those holding prepaid tickets often found their trips cancelled without advance notice. Chapter 3 illustrates the unprecedented degree to which U.S. citizens besieged their embassies, legations, and consulates across the Continent for help.

Congress acted quickly to provide repatriation assistance by appropriating government-owned gold and creating a Relief Commission to oversee disbursement

of the funds. On August 3, a joint resolution allocated \$250,000 for transport of U.S. citizens home from Europe with the provision that aid recipients reimburse the taxpayer.<sup>12</sup> Two days later, another joint resolution appropriated an additional \$2,500,000 and granted the president authority to deploy government personnel, utilize military transport and supplies, and charter private vessels necessary to effect repatriation.<sup>13</sup> The State, Treasury, and War Departments coordinated to requisition a Navy cruiser, USS *Tennessee*, to transport the gold and Relief Commission personnel. The cruiser USS *North Carolina* conveyed additional Commission staff as well as vacationing Department officials hurriedly returned to their assigned to European posts. Collier USS *Vulcan* was assigned to supply U.S. warships operating in European waters.<sup>14</sup> Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckinridge led the Commission, accompanied by three Department of State officials, two Treasury Department officials, five representatives of U.S. banks, and more than 20 U.S. Army officers (assigned to oversee distribution of the gold). Ernest P. Bicknell, National Director of the American Red Cross (ARC), accompanied the contingent in order to reconnoiter the situation in war-torn Europe and make recommendations about how his organization might provide assistance.<sup>15</sup>

At 9 o'clock in the evening of August 6, *Tennessee* left New York harbor destined for Falmouth, England. The ship carried around 90 wooden casks filled with gold, each weighing 200 pounds and bearing the seal of the Treasury of the United States. \$1,500,000 was allocated to aid stranded U.S. citizens, and banking firms shipped an additional \$3 million. Cash in hand, it was not until *Tennessee* was underway that the Commission decided the expedition's destinations. The relief force was to be divided into three groups, each of which was led by a major in the Army. The Commission directed the officers to establish headquarters in London, Paris, and Berlin. From those bases, individuals from these groups could visit different sections of their respective territories.<sup>16</sup>

The rapid crisis response, coupled with transportation and communications difficulties, required U.S. officials to engage in an interagency coordination process in conjunction with non-government actors. A spot coal shortage caused *Tennessee* to depart New York harbor without full bunkers, forcing it to travel at a slower speed to conserve fuel. The voyage to Falmouth consumed ten full days, which enabled the American Relief Commission to work out most of the details of its aid program. They prepared a 26-page *Manual of Instructions for Relief Work*, complete with blank receipt forms to ensure proper accounting of funds distribution, sample letters of

credit, and a guide to the U.S. legal code pertaining to who should be considered a U.S. citizen (and therefore eligible for relief).<sup>17</sup> The *Manual* cited General Orders, No. 2, August 8 (presumably promulgated by Breckinridge while on board *Tennessee*), which emphasized the Army's leading role in the expedition and noted that inadequate facilities must not deter the Commission from accomplishing its mission. Although the authors of the *Manual* dedicated much energy to fulfilling their charge, the day before their arrival at Falmouth Bicknell noted that "...all these plans, at this writing, must be regarded as tentative. For nine days the expedition [h]as been at sea, both literally and figuratively. Although the *Tennessee* is equipped with a wireless station, the amount of world news which has been received on board has been so fragmentary that we shall land in England with very little knowledge of the conditions which we are to find."<sup>18</sup>

Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that the Commission adopted assumptions that did not fully encompass the realities they faced. They presumed they would encounter primarily "a class of people used to the greatest comfort of living. It is likely that much nervousness, impatience and irritability will be encountered. Our concern is that no provocation be permitted to ruffle our patience. Everyone must be treated with patience, toleration and infinite consideration."<sup>19</sup> General Orders, No. 2 also assumed that only about 20,000 required immediate transportation home, and calculated the removal could be accomplished by six transatlantic American ships each carrying six to seven thousand passengers. Those estimates did not fully appreciate the scale of the removal, the socio-cultural diversity of citizens seeking refuge, nor the difficulty in securing ground transportation to ports and passage aboard westbound Atlantic steamers.

In an era when governments did not require passports for travel, determining the citizenship of those seeking aid comprised the most immediate and complex task relief officers faced. The *Manual* required officials to recognize multiple forms of identification unfamiliar to almost all U.S. citizens. Illustrating the modest U.S. requirements for international travel, the *Manual* assumed it only "probable" that U.S. citizens possessed passports, or certificates of registration, or certificates of naturalization. Two kinds of U.S. passports existed: the "ordinary" passport, issued by the Secretary of State and valid for two years, and the "emergency" passport, issued by a diplomatic mission or selected consular officials and valid for six months. Consuls' responsibilities included registering any American living in their district, thus a Certificate of Registration could also verify U.S. citizenship. Various local courts in the United States issued Certificates of Naturalization, commonly called "Citizen Papers" at the time, which also constituted

proof of citizenship. Moreover, absent any of those records, the *Manual* enjoined relief officials to consider other documents that might establish citizenship. Even as the Commission crossed the Atlantic, Department officers throughout Europe fielded thousands of emergency requests for certification of U.S. citizenship, which generated additional non-standard documentation. Avoiding fraud or misrepresentation under such circumstances presented a challenge for relief officials. Through the remainder of 1914 and in subsequent years, the Department issued a series of instructions, amendments, and responses to specific questions to further clarify rules under which European officers should issue emergency passports.<sup>20</sup>

Upon determination of valid citizenship, the *Manual* prioritized relief officials' options and required extensive record keeping. Relief-in-kind comprised the preferred form of aid, such as meals, lodging, and transportation; "Only in an unusual case will relief be extended by cash advances." Applicants could offer bank drafts, money orders, or securities of any kind in exchange for cash. However, if a stranded U.S. citizen possessed none of those, they could obtain cash by signing a promissory note to repay the government. Anticipating difficulties, the authors of the *Manual* offered tips on how to avoid fraudsters when making cash advances:

While the greatest care should be taken in satisfying yourself of the safety in making advances as above mentioned, it should also be borne in mind that in general, greater care must be exercised in making advances to males than females, because of the fact that it will be in this nature of advances that you will have to deal most largely with dishonest and irresponsible people. It has been widely advertised that the United States Government is sending to Europe two and a half millions of gold for the relief of Americans in distress.<sup>21</sup>

The Relief Commissioners understood that cooperation with Department of State officials already in country would bolster the integrity of the operation. The *Manual* instructed each relief party, which consisted of one "chief" and one "special disbursing agent," to consult with diplomatic and consular officials whenever possible. They should jointly appoint relief committees, or recognize those committees already in existence, which would manage the clerical work of organizing the distribution. The *Manual* stated "while relief parties are solely under the authority of the Special Commissioner, it is expected that they will work in close cooperation with the diplomatic and consular

officials, seeking advice from them whenever necessary as, owing to their official position, they will best be able to advise.”<sup>22</sup>

In fact, Department personnel played a greater role in directing relief efforts than the *Manual* anticipated because many European posts quickly formed committees independently. In some cases, Embassy officers and staff not only performed much of the work assisting stranded U.S. citizens, but also donated considerable amounts of their own money to aid the effort. Owing to their familiarity with the documents proving citizenship and their local knowledge, the direct involvement of diplomatic and consular officials played a crucial role in facilitating repatriation and preventing fraud during the distribution of relief.

After arriving in London and ascertaining European conditions, the Relief Commission continued their pragmatic flexibility by adjusting the initial plan. As originally intended, the bankers’ committee representatives deposited \$3 million of private gold with the Bank of England. The Commission concluded, however, that “the American Committee in London had the work of relief very well in hand and, in truth, needed no assistance from us whatever except in the matter of money.” Although they had originally planned to disburse only \$50,000 of the government gold in London, the Commissioners deposited \$300,000 with U.S. Ambassador Walter Hines Page, “to be expended according to his discretion through the American Committee,” as well as \$100,000 with two U.S. Army officers for distribution.<sup>23</sup> They divided remaining Army personnel into disbursement teams bound for the Continent with gold and copies of the *Manual*, unsure whether other U.S. posts would have matters as well in hand as London.

*Tennessee* carried additional government-owned specie because U.S. officials operating in Europe required gold to function. The salaries of diplomats, consuls, Treasury Department special commissioners, and military attaches, as well as foreign nationals employed by posts could only be paid by exchanging gold for local currency. The Department routinely incurred bills for office rent, utilities, supplies, insurance, and other necessities. Telegram expenses skyrocketed, and cable operators soon refused to extend credit; they demanded cash before transmission.<sup>24</sup> The private money of government officials also accounted for some of the gold shipped to Europe because Ambassadors at major posts contributed significantly to the upkeep of their missions. For example, at Gerard’s request the Department arranged for Relief Commission officials bound for Berlin to convey \$32,000 of his personal funds.<sup>25</sup>



## Deploying and Supporting the Red Cross

Department officers also played a key role in supporting another extraordinary endeavor at the outset of war, the American Red Cross initiative to set up hospitals for wounded soldiers in all the belligerent countries. By 1914, the ARC acted as a *de jure* extension of the U.S. Government; the Red Cross moved quickly to establish military-medical units staffed by U.S. doctors and nurses in England, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and Russia, which bolstered the Wilson administration's policy of even-handed neutrality. The hospitals' success and their relationship to diplomatic and consular officials illustrate another way U.S. representatives reacted to unprecedented challenges brought on by the war. Although established and funded by the ARC, the hospitals fell under the *de facto* authority of diplomatic and consular officials. With minimal direction from the Department, U.S. representatives in Europe developed *ad hoc* systems to support—and sometimes even manage—these American civilians embodying U.S. neutrality, who sometimes operated perilously near the front lines. Active involvement in the ARC's initiative created an exemplar of coordination between Department personnel and philanthropic organizations, thereby broadening the scope of responsibilities U.S. diplomats must be prepared to undertake in subsequent decades.

The ARC's institutional relationship to the federal government provided the basis for coordination between the Red Cross and the Department of State. The development and incorporation of the ARC as an extension of the government began as a consequence of the U.S. Civil War and the international Red Cross movement. The first Red Cross organization in the United States formed in 1881 along the lines prescribed by the 1864 international treaty that created the International Committee of Relief for the Wounded in War (renamed the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1876). The "American National Association of the Red Cross" subsequently operated through several reincorporations as an independent association with only minimal direct ties to the U.S. Government. As a result of poor performance during the Spanish-American War, Congress reincorporated the Red Cross again in 1905 on the premise that "the importance of the work demands a repeal of the present charter and a reincorporation of the society under Government supervision." The law instructed the president to choose one representative each from the Departments of State, War, Navy, Treasury, and Justice to serve with 59 other individuals on the "body corporate and politic." Those federal government officials comprised five members of the Central

Committee, along with six elected by state and territorial societies, and another six elected by the incorporators, plus a chairman appointed by the president. The Central Committee devolved decision making responsibilities onto a seven-member Executive Committee that included several federal officials.<sup>26</sup> During the period of neutrality, Woodrow Wilson acted as the President of the Society, former President William Howard Taft served as Chairman of the Central Committee beginning in 1915, and the Executive Committee included Robert Lansing (Counselor of the Department and then Secretary of State), Interior Secretary Franklin Lane, the Surgeons General of both the U.S. Army and Navy, and Mabel T. Boardman, the organizational dynamo of the ARC who also served as Chairman of the War Relief Board. This structure necessitated some level of Department involvement in any overseas ARC initiative.

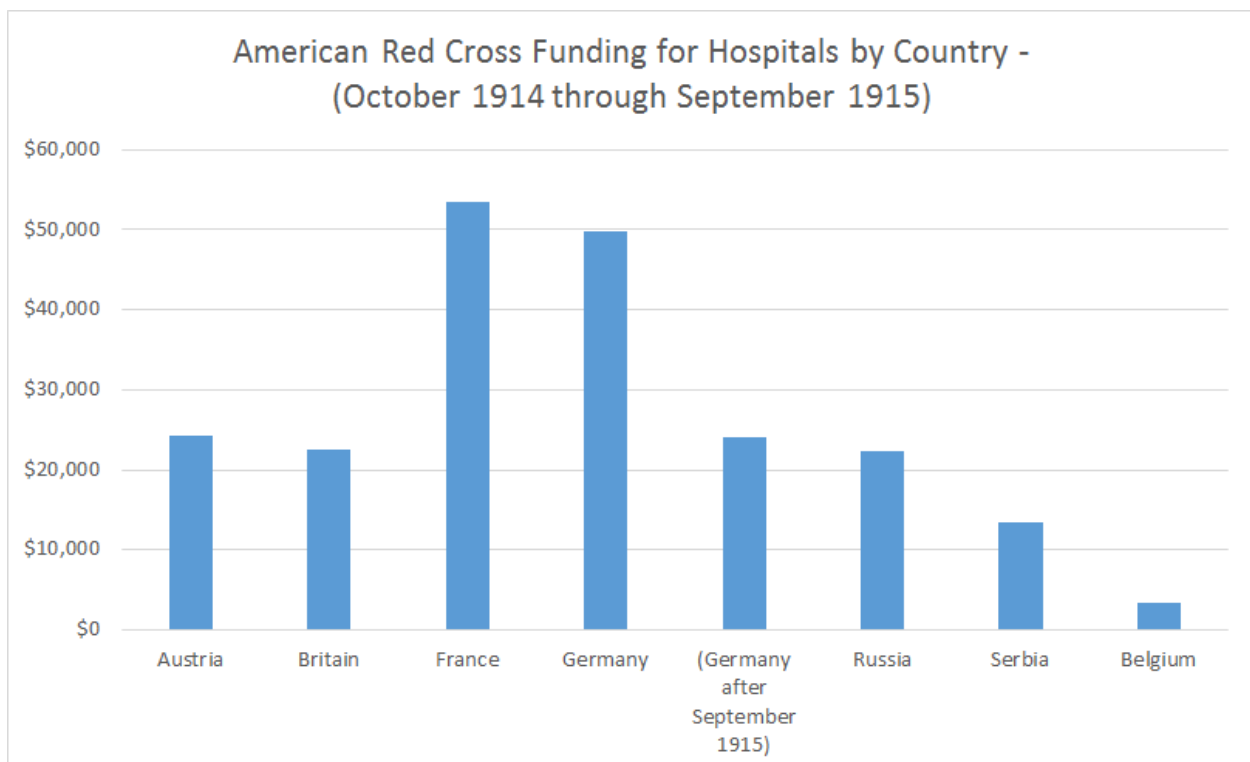
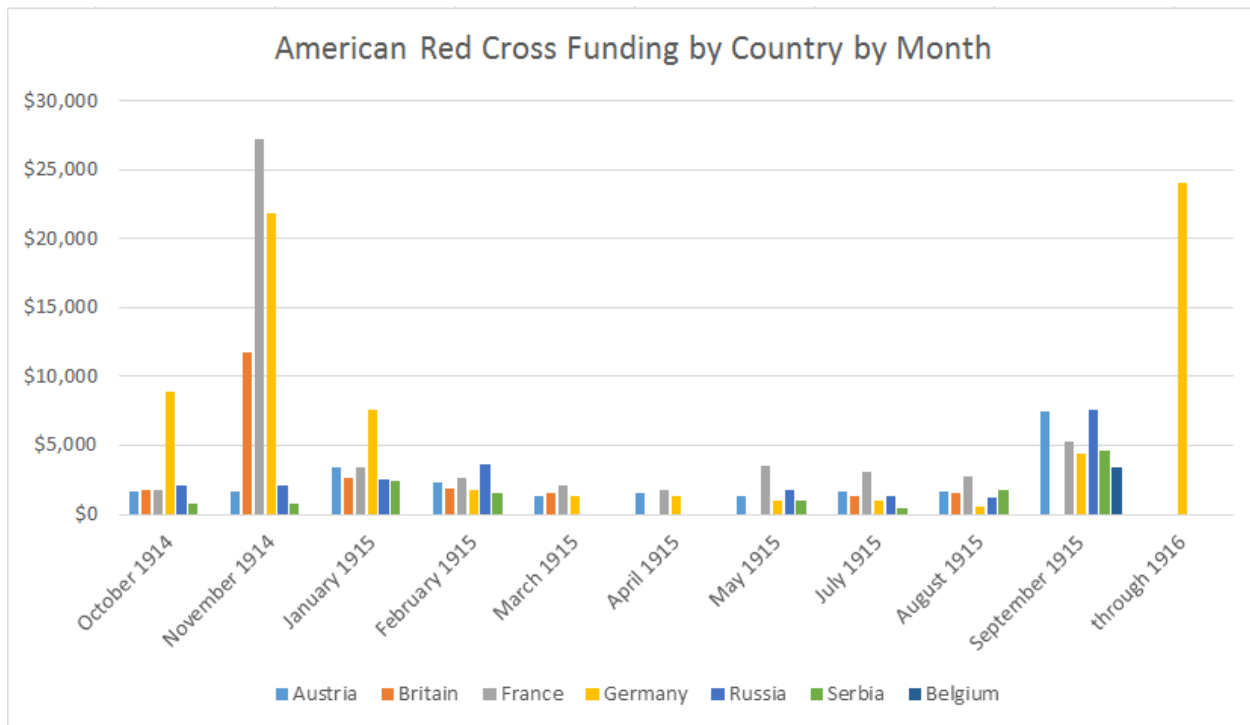
Upon news that the war had begun, the Red Cross and the federal government wasted no time. In early August 1914, a joint meeting of the ARC's International and War Relief Boards decided to contribute trained personnel and hospital supplies to every European state at war. The U.S. Government consented and the Department communicated with the belligerents in accordance with the stipulations of the Geneva Treaty.<sup>27</sup> To convey medical teams and supplies in light of wartime shipping shortages, on August 20 Congress authorized the ARC to charter a ship of foreign registry.<sup>28</sup> The Hamburg-Amerika Line donated SS *Hamburg* for one Atlantic crossing. Congress passed a special act to rename the ship SS *Red Cross* and reflag it under the neutral stars and stripes for the voyage.<sup>29</sup>

The Executive Committee also supported U.S. neutrality policy by declaring that donors could choose which country's ARC efforts they wished to support (in addition to hospitals, primarily designated for belligerents' national Red Cross societies). Churches and community organizations across the country typically conducted the donation drives. This directed-donation approach implicitly acknowledged deep divisions among the U.S. public between supporters of the Entente Powers (led by France, the U.K., and Russia) and proponents of the Central Powers (led by Germany and Austria-Hungary). Ingenuously, the policy both adhered to the dictates of neutrality and encouraged participation, while skirting domestic dissention. The donations enabled the ARC to sponsor 16 hospitals across Europe for a year.<sup>30</sup> The Red Cross withdrew most hospitals from Europe in late 1915 for several reasons (see Chapter 3, Germany), but the directed-donation policy continued to generate considerable, and remarkably evenly-distributed, contributions. From October 1914 until September 1915, total Red Cross expenditures on its hospitals in Europe totaled at least \$194,000.<sup>31</sup> The Entente countries received



only marginally more donations than the Central Powers. Since the ARC hospital in Munich remained in operation after October 1915 (as did the Belgian hospitals, for which all donations are not represented in the charts below), U.S. donations for Red Cross hospitals in the Central Powers actually exceeded those of the Entente through December 1916. By any calculation, the scope of donations is impressive. The three hospitals in Germany received more than \$40,000 during the first year of war, and after other Red Cross units withdrew, Munich received another \$24,000 between October 1915 and December 1916. In addition, the ARC simultaneously operated separate donation drives for each belligerent's national Red Cross societies. In the period from October 1914 until November 1916, the German Red Cross received nearly \$100,000 (approximately \$2.5 million in 2017 dollars) in donations from residents of the United States.<sup>32</sup>

Facing challenges that only days earlier would have seemed unimaginable and even though the country remained neutral, the Wilson administration embarked on an array of commitments that inextricably embroiled the United States in the complexities of an unprecedented global war. U.S. officials met their primary responsibility by immediately generating a coordinated interagency response to rescue fellow citizens in peril. But Washington also facilitated the insertion of American Red Cross units into all belligerent countries, which portended a new, deeper type of involvement in the European crisis. Moreover, by the time the Relief Commission arrived in Falmouth, the U.S. Government had agreed to represent the interests of multiple belligerent states in enemy countries, a responsibility that quickly entailed extraordinary obligations no one could have anticipated. For Department of State officials charged with implementing U.S. policy in the field, their world changed suddenly, and forever.



## Notes

- 1 Penfield to Bryan, July 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123SM61/97; Smith to Bryan, July 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123SM61/98; Carr to Coffin, July 11, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123C651/88; Denby to Bryan, July 9 and 14, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123D41/120 and /121.
- 2 James Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany* (New York, George H. Doran Company: 1917), pp. 105–108.
- 3 Phillips to Mayre, August 27, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123M361/8. For the complexities of Russian-U.S. relations at the beginning of the war, see Chapter 5, Russia.
- 4 “Views From the Embassy: The Role of the U.S. Diplomatic Community in France, 1914” <https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/wwi/views-from-embassy-paris/Views%20from%20Embassy%20Paris%20WWI.pdf>, p. 9.
- 5 Coffin to Bryan, August 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123C651/96; Penfield to Bryan, undated (received August 14, 1914), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 873.72/402.
- 6 Denby to Bryan, August 28, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123D41/124; *Washington Post*, August 12, 1914, p. 9. See “Views From the Embassy: The Role of the U.S. Diplomatic Community in France, 1914” <https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/wwi/views-from-embassy-paris/Views%20from%20Embassy%20Paris%20WWI.pdf>, p. 10 for additional examples.
- 7 Richard Roberts, *Saving the City: The Great Financial Crisis of 1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 26–27. To calculate First World War-era dollars into today’s equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).
- 8 A.J. Hemphill to Bryan, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Reel 188, 763.72112/2.
- 9 Telegram from Bryan to the Embassy in Berlin, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Reel 188, 763.72112/2.
- 10 Gerard later reported to the Department of State that he learned of the German Government’s telegraphic instructions to the SS *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* on July 31, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Reel 14, 763.72/830. The ship made port in Bar Harbor, Maine, where it offloaded \$10,679,000 in gold, approximately \$3 million in silver, and 1,216 passengers, including British Army reservists. In accordance with Wilson’s neutrality policy, the Coast Guard interned what U.S. newspapers dubbed the “Treasure Ship,” eventually turning it over the Navy when the United States entered the war in April 1917. United States Coast Guard, Historian’s Office, “Androscoggin, 1908” <https://www.uscg.mil/history/webcutters/Androscoggin1908.pdf>.
- 11 U.S. Government officials offered estimates ranging from 50,000 to 150,000 citizens living, working, studying, or touring in Europe when war erupted. *New York Times*, August 5, 1914, p. 4. For Annie Wilson Howe see “Views From the Embassy: The Role of the U.S. Diplomatic Community in France, 1914” <https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/wwi/views-from-embassy-paris/Views%20from%20Embassy%20Paris%20WWI.pdf>, pp. 9–10 and “Views From the Embassy” interactive timeline <http://cdn.knightlab.com/libs/timeline/latest/embed/index.html?source=0Aro0E4o5NdoydExZRXduMzgZr1VkRWZ6cmF1TG81d1E&font=Bevan-PotanoSans&maptype=toner&lang=en-24hr&height=650>.
- 12 U.S. House of Representatives, H.J.Res 312, 63rd Congress, Session II, August 3, 1914.
- 13 U.S. House of Representatives, H.J.Res 314, 63rd Congress, Session II, August 5, 1914.

- 14 Branden Little, "Evacuating Wartime Europe: U.S. Policy, Strategy, and Relief Operations for Overseas American Travelers, 1914–1915," *Journal of Military History*, 79, no.4 (October 2015): pp. 943–947; *New York Times*, August 9 1914, p. 4 and August 28, 1914, p. 1.
- 15 For a complete list of passengers aboard USS *Tennessee* see USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 46, 618.61 Americans in Europe.
- 16 USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 46, 618.61, Americans in Europe.
- 17 *Ibid.* The *Manual* was created under the direction of 28-year-old Breckinridge, serving as Special Commissioner, Percival Dodge, Special Representative of the Department of State, James Wilmeth, Official Representative of the Department of the Treasury, Bicknell, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Allen and Major A. Logan of the U.S. Army, and H.D. Gibson, Vice-President of Liberty National Bank.
- 18 Report by Bicknell, titled "Relief of Americans in Europe," undated, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 46, 618.61 Americans in Europe. For example, Gerard notified Washington only that day (August 15) that the German Government granted the Relief Commission permission to travel to Berlin and begin operations. USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/264.
- 19 *Ibid.*, *Manual*, p. 1.
- 20 Multiple documents dated August 1, 1914, to December 21, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 721–731; multiple documents dated February 9, 1915, to December 17, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 899–913; Executive Order 2362–A, April 17, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1929), pp. 787–794; Executive Order 2519A, January 24, 1917, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1931), pp. 573–579.
- 21 USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 46, 618.61, Americans in Europe, *Manual*, p. 16.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 23 Report by Bicknell, titled "Relief of Americans in Europe," undated, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 46, 618.61 Americans in Europe.
- 24 McAdoo to Bryan, August 4, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 102.102/44. See for example telegram from Mallett (Acting Budapest Consul-General) to Penfield, August 6, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Vol. 364: "No funds at Consulate and no means of obtaining any. My personal resources exhausted. Food supply in Hungary will not suffice for long. Banks will not buy my drafts. Foreign money worthless. No funds for cables. Please repeat to Department."
- 25 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, August 6, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123G31/10.
- 26 Public Law 58–4, 58th Congress, Session III, Ch. 23, 1905.
- 27 Mabel T. Boardman, *Under the Red Cross Flag at Home and Abroad* (J.B. Lippincott Company: Philadelphia, 1915), p. 268.
- 28 Public Law 63–43, 63th Congress, Session II, Res. 33, 1914.
- 29 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, August 21, 1914, USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 15, 114.22, Minutes of the Central and Executive Committees of ARC 1911–1915. Like the Relief Commission, the doctor-nurse teams on board *Hamburg* made good use of their travel time by receiving lectures on surgical procedures, studying sanitary protocols, and practicing bandaging.

See multiple documents in USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, S.S. Red Cross. See also *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 824–831.

- 30 Two each in England, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Belgium, three in Germany, and three in Serbia.
- 31 The figures on ARC expenditures are compiled from expense reports sent from the ARC Executive Committee to the Secretary of State found in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, Volumes: 851 through 854, and USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881-1916, Box 69, 951.52, Germany, Munich American Red Cross Hospitals.
- 32 The figures on ARC donations to the German Red Cross are compiled from USNA, ANRC, Central File 1881–1916, Box 63, 900.02, German Red Cross. An initial \$29,000 was donated to European Red Cross societies in September 1914, but the breakdown by country is not known. (Lansing to Charles Magee, Secretary, ARC, December 19, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, Volume 852, 811–142/392.)

# Chapter 3

## Germany, 1914-1917: Humanitarian Parity and the Diplomatic Difficulties of Neutrality

*Seth Rotramel*

When war engulfed Europe in August 1914, U.S. diplomats and consular officials on assignment in Imperial Germany reacted swiftly to the unprecedented and unexpected crisis. In addition to Ambassador James Gerard, the U.S. Embassy's professional diplomatic staff included three Secretaries and a Commercial Attaché. The Department also maintained 23 consular posts staffed by 68 officials across the country.<sup>1</sup> The fancy-dress balls and yachting parties that typically occupied the diplomatic corps, as well as the routine services consular officials provided to U.S. citizens summering in Europe, abruptly gave way to emergency measures to help tens of thousands of stranded Americans.

U.S. Embassy officials, situated at the heart of Berlin's political center, witnessed a steady stream of shocking events. On July 31, crowds filled Berlin's streets and protested angrily at the Russian and French Embassies. On August 2, the National Guard occupied parts of Berlin and the German Foreign Office requested the U.S. Embassy to take charge of German affairs in Russia and France. The day also marked the last chance for tourists to freely leave Berlin as the German Army mobilized. On August 3, amid false news reports that France had begun the war by crossing the German border and bombing Nuremburg from an airship, German officials arrested and shot alleged Russian spies. The Russian Ambassador and his staff fled Berlin after escaping the angry mob demonstrating at the Russian Embassy.<sup>2</sup> Years later, Gerard recounted that he sent his personal chauffeur and car to take the Russian Ambassador to the train station. When Gerard's chauffeur returned, he reported that "the police protection was inadequate, that the automobile was nearly overturned by the crowd, and that men jumped on the running board and struck the Ambassador and the ladies with him in the face with sticks."<sup>3</sup> The next day, when the United Kingdom declared war, war fever in Berlin continued its crescendo. The French Ambassador and his staff were spirited out of Berlin, and Germans attacked the U.K. Embassy and shattered all of the building's windows. The Italian Embassy was also set upon after news spread that

Italy had declared its neutrality.<sup>4</sup> In the middle of the chaos was the U.S. Embassy, now almost cut off from the outside world. When the German Government severed telegraph communications, Gerard and his staff established an arduous system to send messages by courier to either Copenhagen or Rome, to be forwarded to Washington.

While the Berlin crowds despised the Russians and the French, they saved their special loathing for the British. Gerard described the feeling against U.K. subjects as continuing with a “white heat.”<sup>5</sup> Americans faced the danger of being mistaken for Britons. On August 1, the German authorities issued an order that all communications must be in German, which meant English could not be used in letters, telegrams, or phone conversations, nor spoken on the street. German authorities policed the order diligently: English-language signs and advertisements were painted over, and Gerard recounted that one word of English spoken over the phone caused the connection to be severed. The U.S. Embassy intervened to free two American reporters arrested on suspicion of espionage because they had spoken English and had written telegrams in English. Despite the danger of being associated with the British, Gerard offered the U.S. Embassy as sanctuary for the harried Britons still remaining in Berlin. He drove to the U.K. Embassy during the worst of the demonstrations in order to offer the United Kingdom Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, the relative security of spending his last two nights before his departure in the U.S. Embassy; Goschen declined the offer. While driving back to the U.S. Embassy, Gerard (accompanied in his car by U.S. Embassy Second Secretary Roland Harvey) later recounted that

a man of respectable appearance jumped on the running board of the automobile, spit at me, saying ‘*Pfui*,’ and struck Harvey in the face with his hat. I stopped the automobile, jumped out and chased the man down the street and caught him. My German footman came running up and explained that I was the American Ambassador and not an Englishman. The man who struck Harvey thereupon apologized and gave his card. He was a Berlin lawyer who came to the Embassy next morning and apologized again for his ‘mistake.’<sup>6</sup>

After Goschen’s departure on August 5, the U.S. Embassy sealed the archives and took charge of the U.K. Embassy.

Anti-British sentiment was indeed high in the streets of Berlin during those hectic days. Because any remaining Britons were “attacked or spat upon in the street



and arrested whenever found by the police,”<sup>7</sup> Gerard recommended that Americans wear a small American flag in their lapel for safety. The German authorities were also concerned about further misidentification, and German newspapers made a special appeal to the public not to confuse U.S. citizens with U.K. subjects, because “the former were friends.” In fact, Gerard reported “a marked attitude of ultra-friendliness to us at the Foreign Office and by all officials.” One explanation for such “ultra-friendliness” was that the German Foreign Office was reeling from the universal condemnation of Germany’s invasion days earlier of neutral Belgium, and sought to counteract the negative reaction in neutral countries, most importantly in the United States. Winning favorable American public opinion was a priority. The German Foreign Office circulated among Americans in Berlin English-language pamphlets (in contravention of the Government’s own prohibition) that justified Germany’s invasion of Belgium. The German Foreign Office hoped that returning Americans would bring Germany’s side of the story of why it had invaded a neutral country back to the United States because, as Gerard notes, “Germany is well aware that the press despatches to the American newspapers come from England and France and that they are naturally prejudicial to her interests.”

Amid the ominous bellicosity on the Berlin streets that often erupted in violence, and despite the sudden and sharp fracturing of normal life, Gerard and his staff improvised quickly and effectively to aid U.S. citizens in need. The Embassy carried out four basic functions in that role: accounting for U.S. citizens and verifying their citizenship, protection, support, and transportation. Thousands of destitute Americans (many of whom had never known want and were thus unprepared for deprivation) thronged the U.S. Embassy. The intensity of the need for services increased overnight. The demand for passports skyrocketed: on July 31, the Embassy issued 35 passports; on August 1, the number climbed to 200; and on August 3, even though all foreigners were forbidden to leave Berlin until after the mobilization of the German Army, the Embassy issued 418 passports. By August 6, while eagerly awaiting assistance from Washington (see Chapter 2), Gerard had established a makeshift organizational structure that resembled the rudiments of systems that one would find in a U.S. Embassy today:

The Embassy has organized various departments, each under the supervision of a chief and assistants, as follows: Correspondence Department, Passport Department, Inquiry Department, Relief Department and British Department. All departments are thronged daily from 9 a.m. until midnight. Many Americans have volunteered



their services as assistants and the office staff now numbers some thirty persons, every one of whom is needed. The crowd waiting to gain admission into the Embassy daily extends far into the street. The Embassy is endeavoring to keep Americans throughout Germany informed of developments and possible means of returning to the United States by notices published in the press and by circulars sent regularly to the Consuls. A register is kept and card-catalogued of all Americans and British subjects who come to the Embassy, so that inquiries from friends may be answered immediately, and the various Consuls are, at the Embassy's direction, preparing lists of American citizens desiring repatriation.<sup>8</sup>

The Embassy's card catalogue proved particularly useful for responding to inquiries sent by the Department of State on the behalf of worried relatives of stranded Americans. One such inquiry from the Department of State, dated August 10, 1914, listed 25 names and corresponding last known addresses. The Department's copy of the sent telegram shows handwritten check marks next to each name, apparently indicating Washington's confirmation that the Embassy in Berlin accounted for the person in question.<sup>9</sup> The multitude of such lists still extant at the U.S. National Archives indicates that, because of the war's outbreak, the Department of State became a clearing house for domestic inquiry into the whereabouts of friends and family overseas.

The Embassy in Berlin played a central role in supporting U.S. citizens who were affected by the dislocations of the war. Americans from all parts of Germany sent more than a hundred letters and telegrams a day to request information about leaving the country and securing money. First Secretary Joseph Grew, second-in-command at the Embassy, described the Embassy's operations as one resembling "a large business house, with many typewriters clicking in every room, people swarming outside, far into the street, and held back by the faithful porter, and hurrying about inside on one job or another."<sup>10</sup> Given the large number of Americans in Germany (Gerard estimated over 3,000 Americans in Berlin and an additional 10,000 across the country who sought transportation to the United States), the Embassy sought the Department's assistance in impressing upon the German Government the seriousness of the situation. Complying with the Embassy's pleas, Bryan instructed Gerard to:

Say to the Foreign Office that this Government is besieged with most earnest appeals throughout the country in behalf of American citizens

being detained in Germany who have important interests demanding their presence in the United States to say nothing of the volume of heart rending requests from relatives in France. The Imperial Government has been assured of the friendly attitude of this country far removed from seat of war and you will strongly express the deep appreciation which would be felt in the United States if out of respect to the Government of the United States the German Government would for humanity's sake and most urgent business reasons take prompt measures to permit American citizens in Germany to return to their homes and vocations.<sup>11</sup>

Even before the Department's instructions were received, Gerard had already arranged to transport Americans in Berlin and those arriving from all over Central Europe by train to Rotterdam, from where they would sail to the U.K. before crossing the Atlantic. Gerard also sold tickets to Americans at the Embassy for a special train that would depart once the German authorities rescinded the travel ban on foreigners. For general evacuation, Gerard ordered the staffs in the Embassy and the Consulates to divide Americans into three groups in descending order of preferential consideration for evacuation: 1) families with small children, 2) women traveling alone, 3) all others.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever the order for preferential treatment, the Embassy still required cash to purchase tickets. On his own initiative, Gerard organized four financial mechanisms to aid stranded Americans. Albert Ruddock, Third Secretary of the Embassy, along with other staff members, contributed funds to the Embassy's Relief Department. Attesting to the affluence of the Diplomatic Service of the era (as well as its generosity in this case), Ruddock personally contributed 10,000 marks (\$2,500 in 1914, equal to about \$60,000 in 2017) and requested \$100,000 (approximately \$2.4 million in 2017) to be sent from his grandfather.<sup>13</sup> Some of the money was used to aid stranded Americans who had inundated the Embassy in Berlin, and the Embassy's Relief Department sent the rest to U.S. Consulates across Germany for distribution. Mary Daly Gerard, the Ambassador's wife, along with Ruddock's wife, Margaret, ran the Relief Department. Ambassador Gerard also convinced the Dresdener Bank to cash letters of credit and checks from U.S. banks if they were stamped with the consular seal as confirmation of the bearer's U.S. citizenship. Gerard arranged for consular officers to draw their salary and expenses from the Dresdener Bank as well.<sup>14</sup> In addition, he negotiated a credit swapping scheme whereby the U.S. Government deposited money with a German bank in New York and the Reichsbank (Germany's national bank) made equivalent funds available to the

Embassy in Berlin.<sup>15</sup> The Embassy also created an *ad hoc* banking system of its own by advancing money to purchase steerage tickets for the Atlantic crossing, for which friends and relatives would reimburse the Department of State in Washington.<sup>16</sup>

With funds available, significant progress towards evacuation was soon at hand. On August 12 or 13, the Embassy sent the first special train to Rotterdam with nearly 300 Americans on board. Gerard expected a second special train of 400 to depart Berlin on August 19, another train a day later, and a fourth sent the week after. Gerard also assisted in scheduling special trains for Americans leaving from Munich, Carlsbad, and Switzerland.<sup>17</sup>

Ambassador Gerard sought to coordinate his Embassy repatriation efforts with U.S. Consulates across Germany, but poor communication and transportation disruptions forced consular officials to manage much of the crisis on their own. Similar scenes of stranded Americans and makeshift solutions played out in regional capitals. As with the Embassy in Berlin, Consulates carried out four basic functions to aid stranded U.S. citizens: accounting, protection, support, and transportation. Frankfurt Consul General Heaton Harris resorted to telegraphing his counterpart in Copenhagen requesting him to inform the Department that “A committee of about 1,000 American tourists among whom several important bankers and businessmen want me to find out what transportation facilities will be made for their return.”<sup>18</sup> A handwritten notation on the telegram indicates that the Department responded to the inquiry, most likely by informing Harris of the special trains to Rotterdam. In Cologne, help came from the local government when the mayor supported stranded Americans by a personal donation of 3,000 marks (or about \$900 in 1914, equal to about \$21,500 in 2017).<sup>19</sup> Hamburg Consul General Henry H. Morgan convinced Hamburg’s mayor to petition the region’s military authorities for a special train to take U.S. citizens to Rotterdam. However, a large number of Americans were forced to remain due to lack of funds. Even though they were stranded, Morgan assured the Department that “no special concern need be entertained on their behalf for a number of American firms in this city as well as a number of German firms have contributed to a charitable fund which I have opened for their relief and which, at the present moment, amounts to upwards of two thousand dollars.” Nevertheless, the need appears to have been great, and the work kept Morgan busy. His office processed 238 American passports while also dealing with “an enormous number” of telegrams and letters of inquiry from across Germany. Morgan noted, “... with the exception of a few hours the office has been continuously open since the first of August.”<sup>20</sup>

Morgan's overworked office also contended with its new responsibility for U.K. subjects:

At five o'clock on the morning of August 5, 1914, the British Consul General called and informed me that he had been notified by the Foreign Office at Hamburg that war had been declared and that a train would take him and his staff to the frontier of Denmark at 11 o'clock. He requested me to take over the archives and records of his office at once which I did, and within a few hours several hundred British subjects invaded my office and demanded protection.<sup>21</sup>

Morgan issued 525 U.K. passports in the period from August 4, when he took over U.K. affairs, until August 17. Despite such efforts, most Britons were not allowed to leave Germany. By the end of August, United Kingdom subjects of military age were interned in German camps. Moreover, because of his status as a U.K. national, (the United States did not yet require its consular officers to be U.S. citizens), German authorities revoked the exequatur of the U.S. Vice and Deputy Consul in Hamburg, Ernest H.L. Mummenhoff, and forced him to resign his posts. On Morgan's advice, Gerard appointed two American citizens to fill the posts of Vice and Deputy Consul.<sup>22</sup>

The situation in Nuremburg illustrates how Americans fared in the early days of the war outside the big cities, as well as how the activities and attitudes of U.S. officials changed because of the crisis. To Nuremburg Consul Charles S. Winans, the war's outbreak came like "...a thunderbolt from the serene heaven." Winans reported his activities in a September 15, 1914 letter to Consular Service Director Wilbur Carr. Winans explained that his motivation for writing was to set the record straight.<sup>23</sup> In the letter, Winans lamented:

Since cable communication between Germany and America lies in British hands and the numerous enquiries from the Department about Americans supposed to be in this district and the rarity of direct news from this country, observable in all the American newspapers which I have been able to see, show that the real situation here is not fully presented, I have therefore decided to report what has actually happened here and what this Consulate has done in these critical times.<sup>24</sup>

The suddenness of the crisis, and Winans's inclination to defend German officials' actions, led Winans to volunteer his reportage of events. Winans described in great detail the transformation of a small, idyllic German city ("a toy and tourist town," as he described it) into a hive of panic. Not only was the town transformed, but Winans's own undemanding position as Consul became work without end. The Consul noted that before the war's outbreak, "No one visited the Consulate. The only knowledge I had that Americans were in town was the chatter of English in the down-town streets." The Americans who were in Nuremburg were mostly wealthy tourists, chauffeured in private cars, who, as Americans "feel themselves immune from all regulations when travelling abroad." For the luxuriating U.S. citizens and the normally unencumbered Consul,

the panic began on Saturday evening, August 1, when several Americans were held up in their automobiles and searched by the police. The upheaval grew more intense on Sunday. Not finding the Consulate open in the early hours of the morning, panic-stricken Americans went to the residences of myself and of my Vice Consul.

Woken in the middle of the night at their homes by a gaggle of well-to-do Americans who were incensed at being harassed by the local constabulary, Winans and his deputy sought to reassure them by explaining how orderly the Germans were:

We endeavored to calm them, telling them to remain in this city, keep quiet, and look to us for protection. We immediately got in touch with the new military authorities, visited hotels and police stations, answered every call of distress which we heard, and worked day and night. The Germans are a thorough nation. This thoroughness was needed in a time when the enemy was marching over two frontiers and spies were working in the land.<sup>25</sup>

Winans worked tirelessly until the turmoil receded after a couple of weeks. As if after a long exhale, Winans reported: "The panic gradually subsided. Most of the Americans followed my advice and decided to remain in Nuremburg. A large number of them being wealthy lodged in the Grand Hotel, the proprietor of which showed them every courtesy and credited them for board and lodging when they were unable to procure cash." Regardless, the area remained on high alert. The city was gripped with what the Consul called "spy hunting." In order to thwart misidentification as British

spies, Gerard empowered Winans to issue emergency passports to Americans, which turned the Consulate into a “passport factory.”

After completing all the stamping and checking of documents, Winans focused on evacuating the Americans from Nuremburg. He claimed that through his efforts alone, with no help from Gerard, the Bavarian Government made two trains available for direct journeys to Amsterdam on August 17 and August 24. The accommodations were not paltry: available for the fleeing American were first and second class cars, a dining car, a baggage car, and several sleeper cars. For the most part, it seems, the lifestyle of those stranded remained at a tolerable level, and there was no great need for loans or handouts. To Winans, any interest in charity indicated guile rather than want:

Some Americans had read in the meanwhile that the cruiser *Tennessee* was bringing gold and decided to tarry here in order to get some of it and enjoy a free passage home. They were not encouraged in this delusion. All were duly notified of the special trains, either by letter, by interview, or by announcement in the newspapers. All had ample opportunity to leave. The few, half a dozen in all, who had no means, were assisted to reach Holland.

The crisis of war, through the increased reporting by U.S. consular officials across Germany (as exemplified by Winans’s desire to set the record straight) drew the Department in Washington closer to the details of diplomatic activities in the field. Besides what he considered undue criticism against German police activities, Winans’s only other complaint was the modesty of his Consulate, located on the third floor of a “tenement house” well outside the city instead of in the business district. Such a location “caused not a little inconvenience to Americans and met, in several instances, with their hearty disapproval.” Winans’s letter to set the record straight was also a vehicle for change. Carr drew a line and a question mark in pencil next to the Winans’s description of his meager offices and wrote on the top of the first page of the letter, “Tell him to locate a better consulate.” While Winans wrote the report in order to show that he had handled everything properly, the Department used the information to signal its willingness to respond to complaints and improve the convenience of the services provided to American citizens abroad. Moreover, Winans’s depiction of the Germans as “in no case rude or barbarous,” and his other remarks that could be interpreted as not conforming to the Department’s injunction to demonstrate “impartial amity” (see below) indicated the difficulties individual officers already experienced maintaining



neutrality. Winans's letter exemplifies the hundreds of missives sent to Washington that contributed to a growing awareness of the multitudinous organizational, procedural, communications, fiscal, attitudinal, and personnel challenges facing the Department of State.

## **The American Relief Commission's Work in Germany**

By the time the gold-bearing American Relief Commission (see Chapter 2) arrived in Berlin on August 23, 1914, the Embassy had already organized its own evacuation system and funding sources.<sup>26</sup> Since operations were up and running, the Commission set to work supporting the Embassy's efforts, which the overworked staff greatly appreciated.<sup>27</sup> Because Gerard had worked out the credit swapping scheme with German banks that made money available to American citizens, the Commission only left \$20,000 in gold with the Embassy. Gerard found accommodations for the director of the Relief Commission, Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckenridge, and other Commission members in a nearby hotel, but the work continued to be run out of the Embassy's ballroom.<sup>28</sup> The Commission helped the Embassy's Committee organize the expeditionary units, composed of at least two Embassy officers (or American volunteers found at the Embassy), to be sent out across Germany to aid stranded travelers. Supported by the expeditionary units deployed in the field, the Embassy's Committee soon accelerated the American exodus from Central Europe. Besides sending daily trains out of Berlin carrying 200 to 400 Americans to Rotterdam, the Committee also worked with the expeditionary groups to assemble Americans and charter trains from Central European cities such as Carlsbad, Munich, Hamburg, and Lucerne.<sup>29</sup> Thus the Embassy's already robust transportation arrangements grew into a systemized evacuation, carrying tens of thousands of Americans out of Central Europe a week.<sup>30</sup> The situation appearing to be in hand, the Commission stayed in Berlin for only a week. Breckinridge and Department of State Special Representative Percival Dodge left for Vienna in early September to organize a committee there, while ARC National Director Ernest Bicknell (see Chapter 2) and Treasury Department official James Wilmeth returned to the Netherlands.

Although the evacuation out of Germany proceeded apace, the operation as a whole encountered several challenges. When Bicknell returned to the Netherlands, he discovered that, while great strides had been made transporting Americans out of

Germany, ships ferrying the evacuees to the United Kingdom could not keep up and the facilities in the Netherlands had been “completely swamped.” The U.S. Minister in The Hague persuaded Bicknell to stay in order to manage the situation until transportation to the U.K. could be arranged, from where Americans could more easily secure a transatlantic crossing. The evacuees in the Netherlands were in varying states of need, “Some of the Americans require no help whatever; others require only advice, while many must be given advances from our relief fund or must be paid the amounts which have been deposited in the State or Treasury Departments at home to their credit.” To his surprise, Bicknell discovered that the Commission required interpreters “not for dealing with the authorities of the various countries, but for dealing with our own Americans who are on their way home. It gives one a new realization of the cosmopolitan character of our population.”<sup>31</sup> Bicknell’s understanding of why many evacuees needed interpreters is one possible reason. However, there were also certainly non-American evacuees who reached Berlin via trains organized for Americans, and who sought transportation out of Germany. On September 2, Gerard informed the Department that some people *en route* from Central Europe were not U.S. citizens and asked what should be done with them.<sup>32</sup> Bryan insisted that only “bona fide American citizens” were to be given assistance.<sup>33</sup> It is likely that some evacuees streaming out of Central Europe and westward across the Atlantic were not, in fact, “bona fide Americans.”

Developments on the Eastern Front compounded the difficulties caused by the lack of transportation out of the Netherlands and the inclusion of non-U.S. citizens in the flow of evacuees out of Central Europe. Germany’s victories in late August and early September against Russia precipitated the immediate redeployment of almost all German units to the Western Front, which required the cessation of any non-military rail traffic. Only after hundreds of thousands of German troops completed their redeployment did the special trains begin again to shuttle Americans out of Germany and Central Europe.

Despite these daunting hurdles, the Embassy in Berlin and its Relief Committee successfully completed the bulk of repatriations by late September.<sup>34</sup> On September 23, Berlin Consul-General Julius Lay took over the Relief Committee’s remaining funds and responsibilities. Lay’s staff actively encouraged the few remaining Americans to leave and the number of applications for transportation dwindled to only four to six per day.<sup>35</sup> On November 30, Lay declared the relief operation “practically completed.” Lay then redirected the Relief Committee staff to search for missing American baggage,



which turned into an issue of significant public interest because most Americans fled Europe without most of their belongings.<sup>36</sup> Authority to disperse funds and aid stranded Americans then switched back to Gerard, who submitted statements to the Department every three months. Conservative with the public purse, by January 11, 1915, Gerard and the Berlin Embassy Relief Committee had only spent \$8,000 of the \$20,000 allocated the preceding August.<sup>37</sup> The Embassy reported no further expenditures. On February 12, 1915, the War Relief Board unanimously declared the emergency was over and no more aid was to be extended except in exceptional cases.<sup>38</sup>

The effort to repatriate desperate Americans trapped in Europe at the outbreak of the war reveals not only compelling individual stories, but also fleshes out how U.S. diplomatic posts functioned in 1914, how they confronted Europe's greatest crisis up to that point, and the nature of their relationship with the Department of State. Interactions between Gerard and the Department of State, Gerard and his fellow Ambassadors, and the Embassy's improvisational Relief Committee and the interagency Relief Commission sent from Washington, all illustrate what U.S. diplomatic representation looked like on the ground during this era. Ambassadors and Embassies often operated independently, reporting to or taking orders from Washington sometimes infrequently. How these actors confronted the crisis also reveals the *ad hoc* nature of their solutions. The Relief Commission organized its mission while on board the *Tennessee* with little information about what was happening in Europe. While U.S. military and banking interests directed the endeavor, the Department of State's involvement was significant and testifies to the emergence of an interagency response to a crisis. While the response was rapid and included different agencies, the impromptu nature of its execution reveals both the absence of systems designed to meet such contingencies as well as the Department's remarkable adaptiveness in organizing such a complex undertaking so quickly. With comparable adaptiveness as well as self-reliance, U.S. Consular officers across Germany used any method available to repatriate Americans under challenging conditions including an almost complete collapse of direct communication with Washington. Despite limits in transportation and communication, and the lack of standardized bureaucratic structures, U.S. representatives managed to evacuate tens of thousands of Americans out of Central Europe in a matter of weeks.

## Representing the Belligerents

At the outbreak of the war, the U.S. Embassy in Berlin also undertook significant diplomatic responsibilities for the nations at war. On August 1, the German Government requested that the United States represent its interests in France and Russia,<sup>39</sup> while the Spanish took charge of French and Russian interests in Germany. After the United Kingdom entered the war days later, London asked Washington to assume responsibility for U.K. affairs in Germany, and the Japanese made the same request on August 23. Gerard agreed to those requests extended in Berlin on his own, a move that the Department approved as soon as communications permitted. Gerard thus became a chief point of contact between the German Government and its adversaries. Gerard's Embassy on Wilhelmstrasse went from a sleepy if opulent stop on Berlin's fancy dress ball circuit to the nexus of Europe's wartime diplomatic relations. The responsibilities, Gerard noted, were not insubstantial:

The interests of Germany in France, Great Britain and Russia were placed with our American Ambassadors in these countries. This, of course, entailed much work upon our Embassy, because we were the medium of communication between the German Government and these Ambassadors. I found it necessary to establish a special department to look after these matters.<sup>40</sup>

All complaints made by the Imperial Government with reference to the treatment of German prisoners, and so forth, in enemy countries were first given to me and transmitted by our Embassy to the American Ambassadors having charge of German interests in enemy countries. All this, with the correspondence ensuing, made a great amount of clerical work. I think that every day I received one or more Germans, who were anxious about prisoner friends, making inquiries, and wishing to consult me on business matters in the United States, etc.<sup>41</sup>

Gerard's work as proxy for belligerents rapidly expanded. Initially, the Embassy functioned as an *ad hoc* communications hub, passing messages from the German Foreign Office on to its counterparts in London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. At first Washington exercised little input as Gerard defined the Embassy's role in caring for belligerents' interest.

Recognizing that the diplomats required guidance, the Department issued a circular on August 17, 1914, titled “Instructions to Diplomatic and Consular Officers of the United States of America Entrusted with the Interests of Foreign Governments at War with the Governments to which such Officers Are Accredited.”<sup>42</sup> While the title was expansive, the circular itself was short and vague. The document emphasized that an Embassy’s position as a representative of belligerent powers was based on the consent of both Governments, that no official function was to be exercised (only the “use of unofficial good offices”), and that the Embassy’s attitude toward the belligerents should be one of “impartial amity”—a term that led to a wide range of interpretations among the Embassy’s staff.<sup>43</sup> Within these loosely defined parameters, Gerard broadly interpreted the concept of “impartial amity” when he expanded his Embassy’s involvement in U.K. interests.

For Gerard, representing United Kingdom interests chiefly meant looking after U.K. prisoners in Germany. In this capacity, his employment of “impartial amity” eventually compromised the Embassy’s appearance of neutrality. First, the Ambassador sought to mediate the repatriation of civilian prisoners, after which he concentrated on ensuring humane treatment for U.K. military prisoners through POW camp inspections. At the declaration of war, thousands of U.K. subjects resided in Germany and, conversely, many Germans in the United Kingdom. At first both Governments allowed the expatriates to remain free but barred their departure from their host country. In the third week of August, Gerard informed the Department that he had set to work on organizing an exchange of British civilians for Germans living in the U.K. by making “urgent representations to the Foreign Office.”<sup>44</sup> After a month of negotiations conducted through Gerard and Ambassador Walter Hines Page in London, the German and U.K. Governments agreed on a plan to release civilian prisoners, and on October 20, the German Government announced that it would repatriate all United Kingdom subjects except men between ages 17 and 55.<sup>45</sup> German authorities imprisoned the nearly 5,000 British men of military age at Ruhleben for the duration of the war, while similar numbers of German civilians languished in U.K. camps. After reports of mistreatment in the camps surfaced,<sup>46</sup> Gerard and Page developed over the next several months a system of reciprocal and nonpartisan camp inspections.

Gerard then attempted to apply the arrangements for reciprocal civilian detainee inspections to a much larger program promoting adequate standards of care for military prisoners. His efforts, however, generated conflicts between U.S. neutrality policy and obligations to look after U.K. interests. The titanic battles during the first months of the

war led to skyrocketing POW populations. Consequently, London and Berlin sought to ensure proper treatment of their captured soldiers. Reports of ill treatment of German POWs in the United Kingdom contributed to resentment toward the U.S. Embassy in Berlin. The verve and efficiency with which Gerard and his staff sought to ensure the welfare of U.K. prisoners in Germany, however, created even greater problems. Grew cited such efficient management of the issue as one of the causes for the “unfortunate anti-German reputation which we all have here.”<sup>47</sup> Gerard and his staff faced multiple difficulties in expanding the system of reciprocal inspections to the massive proportions necessary to address the military POW population.

The credibility of inspections and inspectors comprised the first hurdle. Initially, the Department charged Chandler Anderson, former Counselor for the Department of State and current member of the American Relief Committee in London, with the inspection of camps in the United Kingdom and Germany.<sup>48</sup> However, the German Foreign Office insisted that any inspection of German POW camps in the U.K. be conducted by someone from the U.S. Embassy in Berlin.<sup>49</sup> In the midst of those negotiations, the Department complicated matters by issuing a circular on November 20 that forbade U.S. diplomatic officers from conducting camp inspections in order to avoid charges of partisanship.<sup>50</sup> Adding to Gerard’s challenge was the fact that he was unsure if the order had in fact been given:

This I have been given verbally to understand and in addition I have received a note which refers to the fact that it is reported from Hanover that the United States has forbidden its representative to visit or inspect detention camps, continuing: ‘Such an order would have the result that the interests of German prisoners of war or detained Germans in belligerent countries would not be sufficiently looked after. The Foreign Office therefore begs the American Embassy to inform it whether such an order really has been issued and if such is the case on what grounds.’<sup>51</sup>

Gerard’s third hand knowledge of the new prohibition during such complicated negotiations is a striking illustration of the lack of effective communication between the Department and its posts. Nevertheless, while the tension between the policy of neutrality and charges of bias simmered, the Department rescinded its prohibition<sup>52</sup> and Gerard successfully nominated John B. Jackson, former U.S. Minister and current

member of the Embassy staff at Berlin, as a special agent charged with POW camp inspections.<sup>53</sup>

The German military's domination of wartime government presented another major obstacle for U.S. efforts to protect captured soldiers. The declaration of martial law in Germany during the first hours of the war created a structural and hierarchical division in German national authority between the military and the civilian government. The civilian government (the Chancellor, Parliament, and Foreign Office) had no authority over the prosecution of the war, which meant no authority over economic decisions, domestic security, transportation, or POWs. Military governors, who became the highest authority of any given district in Germany, answered only to the Kaiser. Even the German General Staff could only make recommendations to the military governors. Further complicating the Embassy's efforts to aid U.K. POWs, American diplomats had neither direct access to German military authorities nor established means to communicate with them. The civilian government functioned, in effect, merely as a method of passing complaints and requests to the German General Staff, which in turn passed them to the military governors. Gerard pleaded with German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg to break diplomatic protocol and allow him to speak directly with military authorities, even threatening to "take a chair and sit in front of your palace in the street until I receive an answer."<sup>54</sup> Bethmann-Hollweg relented and convinced the German General Staff and the military government of the region to send representatives, along with the commandant of the Ruhleben internment camp, to Gerard's office.

The two sides worked out an agreement whereby the U.S. Ambassadors in Berlin and London, or ten representatives named by each, secured the right to visit any camp after giving 24-hour advance notice. Inspectors could speak to prisoners in sight but out of hearing of camp officials. The agreement also obligated each camp to enact a system of arbitration for complaints and improvements. Both the German and U.K. Governments soon ratified; although with frequent exceptions, inspections operated under its provisions.<sup>55</sup> Jackson, aided by Grew and others, took up inspections in the winter of 1915. Jackson first inspected camps in the U.K., and later took responsibility for inspections in Germany as well.

Although German authorities came to an agreement on inspections, the struggle to improve the prisoners' conditions had only begun. Gerard and Grew devoted considerable effort to lobbying the German Government to improve the welfare of the

detainees at Ruhleben. For example, there was only one doctor on staff to care for the health of 5,000 prisoners. In a diary entry, Grew noted Gerard's efforts to ease the plight of the interned U.K. subjects: "The Ambassador plugged away at it, took a firm stand, charged the higher officers with lack of humanity..."<sup>56</sup> By June 1915, Grew reported that Embassy officials had inspected nearly all the camps in Germany, which he described as "uniformly good," and that Jackson and the other camps inspectors were now on such good terms with the military authorities that "a word from them will insure an immediate improvement."<sup>57</sup> Conditions at most camps did improve, along with relations between prisoners and guards. Gerard reported that on

New Year's Day [1916], on invitation of the Commandant of Ruhleben, where 4000-5000 English civilians are interned, the entire Embassy attended a Christmas pantomime given by the prisoners. Very well done; costumes and scenery all made in the camp. Yesterday, the Commandant and the second and their wives lunched here. All this helps on prison questions.<sup>58</sup>

The New Year's Day pantomime may have been a high point. In the winter of 1916, the Embassy's effectiveness in securing improved conditions for United Kingdom POWs waned. As the war dragged on, the Entente blockade caused acute food shortages in Germany. With food riots breaking out across the country, German camp commanders refused to allow POWs to eat better than the general population. The German Government also reneged on its agreement to allow camp inspections without prior notice, which prompted Lansing to forbid Gerard from conducting any more visits. Gerard entreated Lansing to reverse his directive, "There is much that should be remedied in these camps and it is only visits by me or members of Embassy that can bring about change. I cannot properly otherwise protect British interests."<sup>59</sup> After several weeks of effort, Gerard pried from the German Government permission for unannounced inspections,<sup>60</sup> although camp commandants did not uniformly comply.

Despite those victories, by the summer of 1916 the war's ferocity, the growing anti-Americanism in Germany, and pro- and anti-German division among Embassy staff almost completely curtailed the Embassy's ability to look after U.K. POWs. In an August 8 letter to (Colonel) Edward M. House, President Wilson's confidential aide, Gerard reported:



The treatment of prisoners is going from bad to worse. The Chancellor and Foreign Office can do nothing against the Military. Jackson of our Embassy has become so violently pro-German that he can see no wrong in anything the Germans do to prisoners - the whole Embassy is against him on this issue, and Dr. McCarthy, when he returns, can enlighten you on this and other points. I hope to be able to effect a tactful reorganisation, and side track Jackson to inspect officers' camps which are all right and do not need inspection.<sup>61</sup>

A week later, Gerard painted for House an even bleaker picture of the situation, "Everyone here is getting more on razor edge, prisoners are treated more roughly and get worse food, there is a total failure of any Central Government."<sup>62</sup> The Embassy's efforts hobbled along until the United States severed diplomatic relations Germany on February 3, 1917. The United Kingdom then transferred representation of its interests in Germany to the Dutch Embassy.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, Gerard's Embassy had expended a great deal of energy on the camps issue and successfully improved the lives of U.K. POWs in Germany. Gerard and his staff developed and instituted effective measures to confront challenges new to American diplomats, generally operating with little direction or supervision from Washington. In July 1917, to demonstrate the United Kingdom Government's appreciation for his efforts, King George V conferred the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath on Gerard at a ceremony in London.

## **American Red Cross Hospitals in Germany**

When it established hospitals in all of the belligerent European countries shortly after the outbreak of the war, the American Red Cross (ARC) devolved significant additional responsibilities on the Department of State. The United States Government's support of the presence of hospitals in both the Entente and Central Powers was an expression of humanitarian parity (see charts entitled "American Red Cross Funding by Country by Month" and "American Red Cross Funding for Hospitals by Country," in Chapter 2). The hospitals' success and their relationship to Department officials illustrate another facet of the U.S. Government's response to the unprecedented administrative challenges brought on by the war. Although established and funded by the ARC, the hospitals functioned under the *de facto* authority of U.S. diplomatic and

consular officials. Again, with little direction from the Department, U.S. representatives in Europe developed systems to manage, support, and, the case of Germany, oversee the hospitals that set an important precedential example of coordination between U.S. diplomats and private organizations.

The ARC established two hospitals in Germany for treating wounded German soldiers, one in Gleiwitz and the other in Kosel (renamed Gliwice and Koźle and now located in Poland). A third hospital in Munich, founded by two German-American physicians with the aid of the Bavarian War Ministry, claimed affiliation with the ARC. Designed to treat German war wounded, the two ARC units in Germany consisted of three doctors and 13 nurses, along with interpreters. U.S. representatives in Germany worked diligently to make the hospitals effective. Gerard exercised executive control over the two hospitals in eastern Germany, while the Consul-General in Munich, Thomas St. John Gaffney, a pro-German Irish nationalist, involved himself in the hospital's day to day operation (much to the extreme consternation of the Department, the ARC, and Gerard).

After their long journey from New York via Falmouth and Rotterdam, the staffs of Germany's two ARC hospital units and the two units destined for Austria received a grand reception upon arrival at the Embassy before continuing on to Breslau—a staging area for Germany's Eastern Front. The U.S. Consul in Breslau reported that the city luminaries and the president of Upper Silesia officially greeted and feted them for the next four days. At lunch that day at the Hotel Savoy, the “tables were decorated with small American flags and the hotel orchestra rendered appropriate music. This was highly appreciated and an immense crowd gathered in front of the hotel to express their good wishes.” The units bound for Austria-Hungary left that day, but only with the help of local police who had to make a path through the enthusiastic crowd. Two days later the remaining nurses enjoyed a concert at the Roland *Konzerthaus* where lunch was served, and:

When the National hymns of Germany and Austria were played, the entire American delegation rose to their feet. They were followed immediately by the German patrons of the house, of which there were about 500 present. At the conclusion of the program when the orchestra played the Star Spangled Banner and the delegates united in singing this hymn, the entire audience arose as one man to express their kind respect for America.<sup>63</sup>



After the celebration of mutual amity, the hospital personnel left for the front on October 17 to establish the installations at Gleiwitz and Kosel, both around 40 miles from the front.

Once the ARC staff arrived in Gleiwitz, they immediately set about converting public buildings into hospitals. American doctors and nurses installed 50 beds in the town's theater, constructed a surgery, and took over the operations of the newly established clinic for eye and ear injuries with its 20 additional beds.<sup>64</sup> From the theater, the ARC unit moved some time later to the city's concert hall (the same Roland *Konzerthaus*) which accommodated 140 beds, and had during the interval acquired the management of another clinic servicing wounded German officers. Thus, at its height, the Gleiwitz ARC nurse staff of 11 (reduced in number since deployment) were responsible for 173 beds. At its close in September 1915, the unit had served 1,527 wounded German soldiers.<sup>65</sup> In Kosel, the city's military hospital, comprising 700 beds, ceded charge of 80 beds to the ARC staff. The unit acquired another 30 beds in a nearby converted school house a few weeks later. By the time the unit closed down operation in September 1915, the Americans had treated 750 cases and had performed 275 major surgical operations.<sup>66</sup> In both units, the staff worked tirelessly attending to wave after wave of German war wounded who inundated the hospitals during the first year of the war. The ARC staffs' energy and accomplishments were all the more remarkable considering the privations and long hours that the American nurses and doctors endured.

Despite the remarkable accomplishments of the units in Gleiwitz and Kosel, the management and administration of the hospitals was posed serious challenges for the ARC. At several points during their deployment, personnel issues threatened to compromise the units' important work. While the difficulties reveal the strains of wartime exigencies experience by the ARC, the management of those problems highlight the adaptiveness and dexterity of U.S. officials, including Gerard and his staff.

The Embassy in Berlin intervened in the running of the hospitals in order to fill the void left by the lack of leadership on the ground, thus helping the units succeed. The ARC's original plan was to have the German Red Cross take over their direct administration once established. Also, one hospital was to operate on the Western and the other on the Eastern Front. However, due to poor communication between the ARC and German authorities, neither plan was realized. Both hospitals deployed to Germany's Eastern Front, and the German Red Cross never received the request to

take over administration of the units.<sup>67</sup> Thus, the ARC did not have officers in place to oversee the hospital's management,<sup>68</sup> but rather relied on an impromptu coordination with German military hospital officials and a loose affiliation with the local chapter of the German Red Cross. The hospitals ran effectively enough until personnel problems began to plague both units, which led in turn to increasingly direct oversight by Embassy officials in Berlin.

The personnel problems may have been a result of the haste with which the ARC assembled and deployed the cadre of medical officers and nurses. Dysfunction became apparent when the two supporting physicians and the head nurse at Gleiwitz complained that Charles Saunders, the unit's director, was "idle, meddlesome and that he does not comply with the regulations governing the actions and conduct of the personnel of a unit. They have demanded that he resign." The discovery that Saunders had no surgical experience whatsoever only amplified the complaints. Bicknell and Mary Gerard called upon the Ambassador to intervene. At Bicknell's suggestion, the Ambassador sent for Saunders in March 1915 and requested him to "quietly resign, giving any reason which might seem to him most satisfactory..."<sup>69</sup>

Around the same time, the Kosel hospital experienced its own turmoil. When the ARC sent Gilbert Bailey to Kosel to replace the unit's director who had retired two months earlier, the unit's second-in-command, Robert Newman, bitterly resented being passed over for promotion and threatened to resign.<sup>70</sup> Again, Gerard stepped into the fray. He ordered Bailey to serve as director at Gleiwitz instead and appointed Newman director of Kosel.<sup>71</sup> Unfortunately, problems persisted. Bailey's habitual drinking drew condemnation from both his staff and visiting German physicians and military officers. In an April 19, 1915 letter, Bicknell lamented to ARC National Relief Board Chairman Mabel Boardman that "The complications which have afflicted our two units at Gleiwitz and Kosel seem extremely difficult to settle," and noted:

I venture to suggest that some of the difficulties which have arisen among our force of doctors in our Red Cross work in Europe might have been avoided if we had had some intimate and reliable knowledge concerning their capabilities, habits and personality before they were appointed...I see no reason why we should not be just as careful and take as many precautions in selecting doctors as in the selection of Red Cross nurses.<sup>72</sup>

When Gerard learned of Bailey's behavior informed ARC officials in Washington in a strikingly direct tone that he was "...ordering Doctor Bailey to leave as he has been howling drunk since arrival. Suggest you be more careful; out of seven doctors sent here one an ignoramus and another a drunk."<sup>73</sup> When Edwin Hamilton, Bailey's replacement, arrived at Gleiwitz, ARC National Relief Board Chair Mabel Boardman decided to take a more active role in monitoring the ARC hospitals. She ordered Hamilton to "fully investigate" the conditions at Kosel, "Take any action necessary secure efficiency and good name Red Cross. Report action taken. If new Director needed one will be sent from Budapest on receipt your advice."<sup>74</sup> Yet staffing problems persisted. When Hamilton made his inspection, he reported "at Cosel [sic] today, only reason do not advise change is short time we will be here."<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, Gerard's active intervention and close coordination with ARC officials in Washington helped preserve the units' effectiveness and success. Exemplifying widespread praise for the ARC's work, Baron Oeynhausens-Grevensburg, the delegate of the German Voluntary Sanitary Service at Gleiwitz, expressed "his satisfaction, as well as that of the entire population, with the work of the American Red Cross Mission at Gleiwitz during the last year." In particular, Oeynhausens-Grevensburg noted "the devotion felt for the doctors and sisters by the wounded and sick German soldiers of the station Konzerthaus; not only did the wounded have the benefit of expert care, but they were also quick to perceive the human sympathy proffered them."<sup>76</sup>

On July 16, 1915, the ARC informed the Department that it would dissolve the hospital units in Europe (except in Belgium) by October 1 due to lack of funds and difficulties in transportation.<sup>77</sup> Many ARC personnel desired to remain in Europe and continue their work, so Gerard engineered a redirection of the medical staff's energies. Induced by a suggestion from the Ambassador, the German Government requested U.S. medical personnel be sent to Russia (including Siberia) to distribute relief to German prisoners of war. The German Government offered to provide the funding.<sup>78</sup> Berlin also requested the formation of mobile "sanitary commissions" to combat the typhus and cholera epidemics raging in the Russian camps. They requested 20 American doctors to travel to European Russia and another 10 for Siberia. Gerard played a pivotal role in this ambitious initiative. He nominated individual doctors and nurses for the mission. The Ambassador also organized a team of American physicians to conduct reciprocal inspections of Russian POW camps in Germany, recommending John Spearman, the physician at Gleiwitz, as the team's director. A week after the German proposal four American doctors and 15 nurses had already volunteered to embark for Russia. Gerard

proposed that half be sent to Russia and the other half stay in Germany to look after Russian POWs.<sup>79</sup> Gerard recommended that Cary A. Snoddy, then overseeing the ARC hospital in Vienna, direct the team destined for Siberia.<sup>80</sup> The ARC, which had already chosen someone else as director of the mission, deferred to Gerard.<sup>81</sup> The volunteers from the ARC units at Kosel and Gleiwitz started their trek to Moscow on September 21, 1915, where their first objective was to inspect German POW camps outside Moscow.<sup>82</sup>

At the same time the ARC announced the closing of hospital units in Europe, the organization proposed redirecting its resources toward its ongoing program of sending medical supplies purchased with American donations directly to belligerent states' Red Cross societies.<sup>83</sup> This strategy, however, fell afoul of the Entente naval blockade of the Central Powers. The issue over the shipment of medical supplies reveals again the diplomatic and practical difficulties inherent in the United States' policy of neutrality. Not only did Entente naval supremacy stymie U.S. efforts to aid all belligerents alike, but the Department's difficulty in communicating with its representatives overseas degraded Washington's attempts to fully implement the policy of neutrality.

Never happy with the supply of hospital units to the Central Powers, the United Kingdom deployed a deliberate strategy, complete with bureaucratic obfuscation, to block American hospital supplies from reaching Germany and Austria. In May 1915, the Royal Navy began to prevent shipment of medical supplies to Central Europe because, the U.K. Government maintained, it had never received the necessary request from the German and Austrian Governments to exempt such supplies from the blockade. The German Government insisted that it had sent the request.<sup>84</sup> In order to solve the impasse, Berlin delivered another note in October through the Spanish Ambassador in Berlin that accepted U.K. regulations governing the shipment of humanitarian supplies and again requested an exemption. London insisted that it had not received this second note. The finger pointing continued, as did the delay in shipping U.S. manufactured medical supplies. A year after the beginning of the dispute, the Department discovered that neither the Spanish nor the U.S. Ambassador in London had forwarded them to the U.K. Government. In a June 9, 1916 telegram, Lansing confronted Page:

...Department has learned from Spanish Ambassador here that the German note, dated October 15, 1915, which appeared to accept the British Government's proposal and which was sent by Spanish Ambassador, Berlin, through his government to Spanish Ambassador, London, was not presented to British Foreign Office because of an

understanding between you and the Spanish Ambassador not to present the same.<sup>85</sup>

Lansing also demanded an explanation of why Page never delivered the German note to the U.K. Foreign Office and what was the nature of his agreement with the Spanish Ambassador.<sup>86</sup> Two weeks later Lansing informed Page that he was still awaiting an answer.<sup>87</sup> Page's response, sent the same day, explained that since he was not specifically ordered to present the note to the U.K. Foreign Office, he decided not to, adding that the Spanish Ambassador did not present the note because of its "inutility" because he was sure the U.K. would not agree to the German conditions reserving "the right under certain conditions to requisition medical supplies, and demanded that they be sent through a German port." Page added:

I shared this opinion with him, but it can hardly be accurately described as "an understanding" or "undertaking" between us not to present this note, since I had no instructions to present it and you had informed me that you had already given a copy of it to the British Ambassador in Washington. I assumed in the absence of instructions that this was the channel you chose to transmit it to the British Government.<sup>88</sup>

Regardless of whether the Department's omission or Page's partisanship (Page was an outspoken anglophile) was to blame for the Ambassador's inaction, Lansing's response underscores both the Department's difficulty in maintaining supervisory control of its overseas representatives and limitations of enforcing strict neutrality. Lansing's admonishment was succinct, "Department regrets that you expressed yourself to the Spanish Ambassador in such a way as to give him the impression that you agreed as to the inutility of presenting the German reply to the British government."<sup>89</sup>

Meanwhile the Department pressed the United Kingdom to renew negotiations over the shipment of medical supplies. Page informed the Department that the U.K. Government now considered the point moot and, "moreover that the Geneva Convention obviously does not apply." United Kingdom authorities made the argument that it was impossible to know what amounts of medical supplies the German population genuinely required as opposed to excessive stockpiling. Thus, the U.K. argued that nothing should be sent. London "has therefore laid down the only workable distinction that it could think of: namely that ARC supplies may be sent to ARC units,

wherever such units may be.”<sup>90</sup> Since only two ARC hospitals remained in Europe in the Summer of 1916 (one in Belgium and another in Munich, which was an ARC hospital in name only), this solution resulted in a *de facto* continuation of the embargo of medical supplies.

The ARC wasted no time in taking advantage of the loophole that the United Kingdom stratagem afforded. Since the U.K. would only allow ARC hospitals to receive medical supplies, the ARC sought to reestablish these units across Europe a year after they had closed down. On August 1, 1916, the ARC wrote Lansing that, “In view of the vain endeavors of the American Red Cross since October last to obtain permission from the allied governments to ship hospital supplies to the Central Empires...” it requested the Department to offer the Central Powers one or two hospital units with six doctors and eight nurses for each country.<sup>91</sup> Not all shared the ARC’s determination to reestablish its hospital units: it took the German Government two and a half months to accept the ARC’s offer, and the U.K. did not agree to the proposed shipment of supplies until mid-November. The ARC soon began to organize the establishment of new hospitals, but Germany’s resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare in early 1917 caused Washington to break diplomatic relations with Berlin before the ARC’s plans matured.

The history of the hospitals in Germany illustrates the extent to which Gerard and the U.S. Embassy broadened the scope of responsibilities undertaken by U.S. diplomatic representatives. The initial confusion over the deployment of ARC’s units left a leadership vacuum which Gerard did not hesitate to fill. He stepped in to deal with staffing problems. When the hospitals disbanded, the Ambassador organized volunteers from the units to remain in Europe to look after Russian and German POWs. Although the issue of transporting medical supplies revealed the practical limits on the ability of the United States to achieve its policy goals and the reestablishment of ARC hospitals in Central Europe never materialized, Embassy Berlin nevertheless promoted those initiatives in a way uncharacteristic of prewar practice. Gerard’s impromptu management of the ARC undertaking was transformational and outside what was considered in the purview of an American diplomat before the war. It set a precedent of the Embassy as a key arbiter of humanitarian initiatives in the field.

In so doing, Gerard’s groundbreaking involvement circumvented the Department’s orders. In January 1915, soon after the units in Gleiwitz and Kosel became operational, the Department issued instructions to its diplomatic and consular



officers on their proper relationship to the ARC hospitals. Explaining that “Occupation with other questions has until now prevented the Department from issuing specific instructions in regard to the relation of officers of the foreign service to the work of the Red Cross...”, the Department declared that “members of the Diplomatic and Consular Service should carefully refrain from serving as officers of Red Cross hospitals or organizations or taking any part in the administration of them.”<sup>92</sup> The cause of the Department’s new stipulation, which the ARC itself opposed, reveals much about the expansion of the roles played by U.S. diplomatic representatives, and the challenges presented by unscrupulous individuals who thrived in the chaos of war and the ill-defined bureaucratic structures of the prewar Consular Service.

The Department’s restriction originated with Director of the U.S. Consular Service Wilbur Carr’s response to a bitter feud between Munich U.S. Consul-General Thomas St. John Gaffney and the superintendent of the American hospital in Munich, Dr. Sophie Nordhoff-Jung.<sup>93</sup> The Munich hospital differed from other ARC units because the Bavarian Ministry of War supervised its operations. The Ministry appointed Nordhoff-Jung as director, but U.S. domestic donations funneled through the ARC and contributions from the large American expatriate community in Munich provided most of the funding. According to later accounts, Gaffney quickly saw the hospital as a source of political power and notoriety, as it attracted the attention of the city’s luminaries, including the King and Queen of Bavaria.

Once money began to flow from Washington and patrons in Munich, Gaffney inserted himself into the hospital’s leadership. He used his position as Consul-General to secure the Chairmanship of the Governing Board of the hospital, and to install his ally, Max Keuhnrich, a German-American, as treasurer. The accusations against Gaffney portrayed his behavior as sordid at best. Wilson Crosby, member of the hospital’s governing board, reported that Gaffney and Keuhnrich’s actions caused constant friction with the rest of the board. The two organized a public relations campaign, including a motion picture and postcards of themselves pictured with the King of Bavaria, without the King’s consent. These self-promoting products were sent to the United States and Ireland. Gaffney and Keuhnrich also took advantage of the free railroad transportation given to the hospital’s staff while on official business. The two abused the privilege until German authorities dispensed with it all together. Besides petty larceny, Gaffney and Keuhnrich were also suspected of greater financial impropriety related to the sizable contributions the hospital received. Moreover, the pair made and disseminated German war propaganda in Germany, Ireland, and the United States, which incurred several



orders from Bryan to cease all such activity.<sup>94</sup> Gaffney's reign did not last long. Once the Department's January 23, 1915 circular became known to the hospital's governing board, it quickly voted Gaffney and Kuehnrich out of office.

Even after ARC National Relief Board Chair Mabel Boardman discovered what prompted Carr to take such action, she found the policy heavy-handed and sought to reverse it. She appealed to Lansing (by this time the Chairman of the ARC's International Relief Board and soon to be named Secretary of State) arguing that the policy overturned the efforts by former Secretaries of State Elihu Root and Philander Knox to forge close ties between Department representatives abroad and the ARC. Boardman distanced the Red Cross from the Munich hospital by noting that the organizers affiliated their initiative with the ARC "without any authority from us" and "not wishing to embarrass them," the ARC agreed. While Boardman's version ignored the fact that the hospital in Munich had already received around \$34,000 in American donations, it was heartfelt. She emphasized to Lansing that the ARC "regretted such suggestions from the State Department, as we felt from long experience that there was advantage in the connection between our diplomatic agents and the Red Cross." Boardman added that in both Beirut and Constantinople, it was U.S. consular agents who organized and ran the ARC chapters.<sup>95</sup> In response, Lansing attributed the Department's decision to one of upholding policy of strict neutrality, phlegmatically adding that "it did not seem expedient for these officers to assume any position of official responsibility" in ARC matters. He did grant an exception for the ARC chapter in Constantinople.<sup>96</sup> While solicitous with Lansing, to others she expressed her frustration. She declared to Crosby that "It was a matter of decided annoyance to us to have this circular issued."<sup>97</sup> She repeated the same to Nordhoff-Jung, and added that the governing board in Munich should have voted Gaffney out sooner because his chairmanship was not *ex-officio*—he was voted in as chairman, rather than holding the position because of his status as Consul General.

Despite the scandal surrounding Gaffney, the hospital in Munich succeeded in other respects. In addition to helping patients, the hospital's popularity with Bavarian authorities (once its good reputation was restored) worked to allay growing anti-American sentiment in Germany. The hospital's relationship to the Bavarian Ministry of War exempted it from the order to dissolve all the other Red Cross units by October 1915. Indeed, the hospital benefited financially because it remained one of the few humanitarian institutions within Central Powers territory able to receive donations directly from the ARC. From the period of October 1915 to December 1916, the hospital

received around \$24,000 from American donors, almost as much as all of the ARC hospital units received before the end of the general initiative.

Nevertheless, the Munich hospital imbroglio illustrated the difficulties of executing American-financed humanitarian efforts during wartime. The Department's—and especially Gerard's—insufficient control over Gaffney combined with the intrinsic vulnerability of humanitarian efforts to the machinations of unscrupulous actors. Additionally, some dysfunction resulted from era's slow communication and transatlantic travel (instantaneous correspondence and surprise inspections might have averted such trouble). When coupled with the supremely divisive atmosphere of world war, the amalgam posed significant challenges for the conduct of U.S. diplomacy. Gaffney's career unraveled in the summer of 1915, when President Wilson dismissed him from the Consular Service because of his pro-German propaganda efforts. Department leaders recognized the larger implication and moved to improve the Department's command and control: headaches caused by Gaffney prompted Department officials to develop policies that more clearly defined the competencies of U.S. diplomatic posts.

## **Inside the Embassy During the Period of Neutrality**

The tension between Gaffney's partisanship and the U.S. policy of neutrality illustrated a dilemma faced by many U.S. diplomatic and consular representatives in Germany. The efforts of the staff in Embassy Berlin to remain neutral satisfied neither anti-British Germany nor pro-British elements in the United States. In Germany, the U.S. Embassy appeared to be pro-British, while at home, the Embassy was defamed as pro-German. The stress of adhering to American neutrality policy changed how the Embassy managed its relationships with the German Government, the Department, and the White House. Some aspects of those relationships were relics of nineteenth century diplomatic culture, while others provide evidence of the war's transformative effect on the Embassy. The May 1915 sinking of the *Lusitania* represented a turning point in the efficacy of the U.S. policy of neutrality. The ensuing crisis brought into sharp relief the incompatibility—at least for U.S. diplomats in Germany—of claiming neutrality while the United States armed Germany's enemies.

Gerard's most difficult problem was his lack of access to the military authorities who controlled German Government decisions. Accredited to liaise only with the German Emperor, and by extension the German Foreign Office, he had no direct

access to the military government. Nor did Gerard enjoy regular access to the Kaiser. He complained that from August 10, 1914 until September 25, 1915, “the Emperor continually refused to receive me on the ground that he would not receive the Ambassador of a country which furnished munitions to the enemies of Germany; and we were thoroughly black-listed by all the German royalties.”<sup>98</sup> The halcyon days of the prewar Berlin social season had certainly passed. The few times Gerard did see the Emperor, the effort to bypass the German General Staff and speak directly to him required sophisticated political maneuvers.

Gerard’s relationship with the German Foreign Office was also fraught with distrust. The German Government’s practice of reading the Embassy’s mail exemplified the Embassy’s difficulties. After the outbreak of the war, the German telegraph company began forwarding to the German Foreign Office a copy of every telegram sent from the Department of State to the Embassy.<sup>99</sup> The practice engendered awkwardness, if not resentment and distrust. Grew observed that the situation was “amusing” and that “A good many communications which we make to the Foreign Office under instructions are quite superfluous, for the Foreign Office knows about them quite as soon as we do.”<sup>100</sup>

Gerard and his staff were realistic about what they could accomplish. For example, while stymied by the German General Staff, Gerard was able to improve relations with the German military at a working level. After the German military acceded in November 1914 to a U.S. request to permit six U.S. Army officers to act as military observers (a common practice among the United States and European countries), Gerard then urged the Department of War to reclassify the officers as “Assistant Military Attachés” of the Embassy so they could enjoy the same freedom of movement and immunities as Embassy officials.<sup>101</sup> While problems still arose, diplomatic immunity and elevated status improved their access to German commanders.

Beyond official relations, whether at the upper reaches or at the working level, another aspect of the Embassy’s relationship with the German Government was the question of the personal neutrality of Gerard and his staff. Generally, the sentiments of U.S. Embassy personnel went from pro-German at the war’s outbreak to eschewing any bias whatsoever as the war dragged on.<sup>102</sup> In an August 11, 1914 diary entry, Grew declared that Germany’s politicians, officials, and newspapers were “suing for our friendship in no uncertain terms.”<sup>103</sup> At the same time, Grew described the Embassy officers as very sympathetic to the German cause. The pro-German sentiment seems to have been a result of a lack of any news sources except German papers, which daily

extolled the righteousness of the Teutonic cause. In his diary entry of August 8, Grew noted that “Germany is ready for this war, but I do not believe, from all I have seen, that she brought it on. Jealousy of her success on the part of other nations is the key factor...We all believe here that this war was carefully cooked up by Russia, England and France...”<sup>104</sup>

As the autumn of 1914 progressed, Grew’s pro-German attitude waned when confronted with alternative information and perspectives. At first, he engaged in debates with longtime correspondents in the United States about the progress of the war, but they lambasted him for questioning the veracity of reports originating from French and U.K. sources.<sup>105</sup> Similar efforts with Germans only resulted in accusations that he harbored anti-German sentiments. In March 1915, he complained that “We Americans are bitterly hated here, almost as much as the English, certainly far more than the French for whom there is no hatred, only pity.” Grew cited the origin of the hatred as anti-German sentiment in the United States, subsequently “fanned into open flame” by the shipments of arms and ammunition by the United States to the Entente. He found little success in quelling German ire by citing the factually correct argument that Article 7 of the 1907 Hague Convention (inserted into the treaty at Berlin’s insistence) stipulated a neutral power was not “bound to prevent” exportation of arms and ammunitions to belligerents.<sup>106</sup> Grew and others in the Embassy soon dispensed with debating the issues with either camp, and bemoaned the Embassy’s appearance as radically pro-German in the United States and radically anti-German in Germany.

From the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 until the United States severed relations with Germany in February 1917, the attitude among the Embassy staff evinced a siege mentality. In a July 12, 1916 letter to Colonel House, Gerard lamented, “Everyone in this Embassy is getting to the breaking point. Nerves do not last for ever, and the strain of living in a hostile country is great.”<sup>107</sup> The necessity to refrain from taking sides in the conflict was the fulfillment of Wilson’s policy of neutrality, which called upon Americans to be neutral “in thought as well as in action.” But the enormous strain of remaining officially neutral while the rest of the world took sides disabused Grew and most of the Embassy staff of their original sympathies.<sup>108</sup>

Gerard’s management of his own political aspirations illustrates the intrinsic complexity of following Wilson’s proscribed depth of neutrality in such a polarized atmosphere. While he spared no effort in pursuit of his diplomatic work, Gerard’s ultimate ambition was high political office in the United States. He always kept one eye

on how his work in Germany affected his popularity with the electorate and Democratic functionaries. Such considerations affected Gerard's relationship with his German counterparts in a way distinct from his colleagues at the Embassy. When the war came, his position as Ambassador to Germany raised Gerard's profile considerably in the United States, which his supporters in the sought to leverage.

In the fall of 1914, amidst the busiest months of his tenure in Berlin, Gerard decided to run for U.S. Senate in his home state of New York. Although it might appear astonishing that a sitting Ambassador would run for political office, the move made sense to those who knew him. Even though he had backed Wilson's opponent for the 1912 Democratic Party nomination, his status as a Democratic Party insider helped secure his appointment to the coveted post of Berlin.<sup>109</sup> Gerard's campaign manager Thomas McCarthy reminded him during the 1914 campaign, "I told you that Berlin was the best appointment in Europe for future political purposes and you just now realize that my prophecy in this connection was correct."<sup>110</sup> McCarthy had warned Gerard not to listen to those who sought to dissuade him from running. Apparently, McCarthy's political instincts were indeed keen. On September 10, Secretary Bryan informed Gerard that President Wilson "feels that it would be unfortunate to make a change in the Embassy there during the war."<sup>111</sup> In response, Gerard feigned ignorance and declared that he had no intention of leaving his post "if nominated for the Senate will accept only on condition that I do not have to come home to make campaign."<sup>112</sup> At first, pro-German perceptions about the Embassy appeared to bolster his domestic political prospects. Despite not campaigning, Gerard soon won the support of the main German-language papers in New York, the *Staatszeitung* and the *New Yorker Herold*. Thus, even though the candidate had not taken a stand, domestic partisanship concerning the war soon factored in Gerard's nascent campaign. Unlike his opponents, Gerard made no comment on allegations against Germany. In fact, in order to avoid harming his chances, McCarthy insisted that Gerard make no comment at all about the war.<sup>113</sup> McCarthy's gag order supported at least the appearance of neutrality, and allowed voters to believe what they wanted to about the Ambassador. While he won the primary (soundly beating Franklin Roosevelt for the nomination), Gerard lost the general election by a small margin. It was a hard year for New York Democrats.<sup>114</sup> Gerard fared remarkably well considering his policy of saying absolutely nothing about political issues and playing absolutely no role in the campaign.

Despite the loss, Gerard continued to seek political office. In 1916, he launched an exploratory effort to run for Governor of New York,<sup>115</sup> and in 1920, he unsuccessfully



sought the Democratic Party's nomination for President. The 1916 initiative failed to get off the ground because of Gerard's perceived pro-German leanings. Understanding the mood of the country, Gerard sought to establish his anti-German *bona fides* with the American public by publishing—within months of his return to the United States in 1917—his autobiography, *My Four Years in Germany*, and another book titled *Face to Face with Kaiserism*. Both were a combination of self-promotion and screed against Germany. The creation of these texts exemplify the same progression experienced by Grew and other Department personnel assigned to German posts who increasingly eschewed pro-German sentiments, especially after the *Lusitania* crisis. The U.S. policy of neutrality generated both positive and negative effects on Gerard's electoral ambitions. The dictates of neutrality enabled Gerard to plausibly avoid publically advocating for or against Germany. Thus he avoided alienating voters on either side of the issue. However, as anti-German sentiment grew in the United States, Gerard's inability to publicly denounce Germany damaged his electoral chances.

Another consequence of U.S. neutrality policy was the burden it placed on the Embassy's reporting function. With the onset of war, the frequency of leaked Embassy communications increased sharply. Gerard and Colonel House worried that leaks could compromise the Embassy and the Department's appearance of absolute neutrality in the eyes of the German Government. While the Embassy frequently cabled and despatched information to the Department on events in Germany,<sup>116</sup> Gerard and House restricted sensitive information and candid analysis to their in-person meetings, one consequence of which was to deprive Department and Embassy officials of impactful involvement in policymaking or intelligence.

In the first year of the war, House traveled frequently to European posts to exchange confidential information with Chiefs of Mission. U.S. officials worried about spies and leaks, especially in the case of Germany because the Government monitored sacrosanct diplomatic communications. Consequently, they adopted more protective measures. When Gerard eventually secured a meeting with the Kaiser in late 1915, his means of rapidly informing Washington were limited, "I was so fearful in reporting the dangerous part of this interview, on account of the many spies not only in my own Embassy but also in the State Department, that I sent but a very few words in a roundabout way by courier direct to the President."<sup>117</sup> During the period before May 1915, when transatlantic travel was easier, Gerard and House did exchange letters, but they only remarked cryptically on what they intended to discuss at their next meeting. The two often interspersed Democratic Party politics with affairs of state. In an October

2, 1914 note, House congratulated Gerard on his Senate nomination, adding “I believe you will be elected. I was able to be of very considerable service to you which made me very happy. I shall not go into details, but you may be assured of my best endeavors on your behalf.”<sup>118</sup>

The short letters and personal visits stopped after the *Lusitania* sinking.<sup>119</sup> The crisis threw Wilson’s policy of neutrality into upheaval. When Wilson directed Bryan to sign a note to the German Government threatening war if Germany continued its unrestricted submarine warfare, Bryan, a passionate advocate for neutrality, resigned. Robert Lansing took over the post and signed the note. In the tumult, House and Gerard were forced to abandon their in-person conferences in favor of personal letters, presumably sent through some very discrete courier. Gerard began writing expansive letters to House in July 1915. Gerard’s July 20 letter indicates the intimacy of their relationship:

Don’t think that because I sent a telegram advocating a compromise on the ‘Lusitania’ question that I am going to ‘Bryanize’ if the president takes another course... politically it will be an asset to have the German-Americans against Wilson. If he wants to attack Bryan at any time I can furnish some ammunition about various state department matters...”<sup>120</sup>

Thereafter, Gerard wrote expansively to House almost weekly.

Gerard began writing Lansing in the fall of 1915, the first indication that the Ambassador included the Department in the confidential analyses of German affairs earlier provided to House.<sup>121</sup> Face-to-face meetings remained the preferred option, but they occurred much less frequently. In a December 28, 1915 letter to Lansing, Gerard admitted, “I’m very glad to hear Colonel House is coming over. There are many things I want to tell the President but I do not dare commit to paper.”<sup>122</sup> Nevertheless, letters continued as the main method of confidential communication. Messages sent to Lansing evolved into near verbatim copies of those to House, but with some exceptions: in his letters to Lansing, Gerard omitted the paragraphs that related to the political impact of events in Berlin on Wilson and the Democratic Party.<sup>123</sup>

Although Lansing and Gerard developed functional personal communications, Lansing appears not to have shared Gerard’s reports with anyone else in the Department in Washington. In February 1916, Embassy Berlin Attaché Charles Russell returned



from a visit to Washington and informed Grew of his discussion with Third Secretary of State William Phillips. Phillips had expressed displeasure at the amount and quality of the Embassy's reporting to the Department. In a February 22 letter to Phillips, Grew sought to explain the Embassy's poor communication performance, but requested that his comments be kept confidential. Grew and the rest of the staff were "quite unaware as to the amount and character of the general information turned in by the Ambassador." Grew discovered that Gerard was sending private letters weekly to House (who forwarded them to President Wilson) and to Lansing. Gerard neither kept copies on file, nor sought advice from anyone else in the Embassy.<sup>124</sup> The Ambassador's secrecy thus sacrificed any potential input from the Embassy's staff, which degraded the functionality of the mission and limited its contribution toward keeping Washington informed.

Acting as Chief of Mission *ad interim*, Grew took advantage of Gerard's temporary absence in the fall of 1916 to implement innovations in the Embassy's reporting procedures. The Department recalled the Ambassador to Washington for consultations on September 30; he returned to his post on December 21, 1916. Presented the responsibility of drafting reporting cables, Grew incorporated the views of the diplomatic and attaché staff when reporting on German affairs. A December 1 telegram about German receptivity to peace overtures

was sent only after repeated conferences with the various members of the Embassy staff, and it was altered until it met with the full approval of the military attaché, Colonel (now General) Joseph Kuhn, and represented the consensus of opinion of the staff as a whole...I may say that I never sent an important political telegram involving personal judgement or opinion, without first consulting with my various colleagues on our staff."<sup>125</sup>

Grew admitted that some individuals offered better advice than others. He singled out Hugh Wilson and the Second Secretary of the Embassy, Alexander Kirk, as "sane and unprejudiced," while Commander Walter Gherardi, the naval attaché, was "radically pro-Ally," and John Jackson, in charge of U.K. interests at the Embassy, was "radically pro-German." Grew's experiment in utilizing his staff's expertise exemplified one of the hallmarks of modernization in Departmental practice that became commonplace procedure in subsequent decades.

Grew sought to deliver less personally biased political analysis, but he appeared to be less adept than Gerard at understanding the political inclinations of the Department or the White House. In November 1916, the Department requested the text of an American newspaper correspondent's sensitive interview of the German Chancellor. Grew maintained that he could have helped or blocked the publication of the interview if the Department had been more forthcoming about its thinking on the issues discussed in the interview:

This was one of those cases where American diplomacy is handicapped beyond the diplomacy of other nations by the failure of the Government at Washington to keep its diplomatic officials in intimate touch with the sentiment, policy and intentions of the Administration... The American diplomatic representatives are too generally treated as office boys and directed to transmit certain communications to the Governments to which they are accredited or to take certain action, without being told in confidence the underlying reasons for the communications or action or the general purpose in view.<sup>126</sup>

Grew's autumn 1916 experience as Chief of Mission ad interim illustrated the challenges of a Department facing momentous changes that demanded alterations in praxis; longstanding informal processes and procedures proved inadequate in a world radically changed by global war.

Grew's sense of disconnection emanated in part from a significant difference in social status and political standing. Gerard was a political insider of immense wealth. He belonged to the highest echelons of power in the United States, cut a prominent figure in the Democratic Party, and the president relied on his political support. He reported to and obtained information from Washington through personal correspondences with the most powerful political figures in the U.S. Government and felt no responsibility to share important information with his lieutenants at the Embassy.<sup>127</sup> While of no mean provenance (a Grotonian, Harvard graduate, cousin by marriage to J. Pierpont Morgan, and personal friends with Franklin Roosevelt), Grew exemplified the modern public servant rather than multi-millionaire politician. Grew's method of providing political analysis through consultation and input from dissenting voices, presaged standard procedure and integrated methodology for modern foreign services officers.

Indeed, the stress of war exposed the inadequacies of traditional Departmental practice. Even the confidential channels reserved for the powerful and well-connected can be judged and found wanting. Gerard's autumn 1916 discussions in Washington focused on forestalling the German Government from reinstituting unrestricted submarine warfare, which Wilson feared would draw the United States into the conflict. The President initiated a flurry of "peace notes" between the belligerents, but to no avail. Even with privileged access and political standing, Gerard returned to Berlin in December 1916 with no inside information. The central issue during that late autumn was whether the advocates for peace in the German Government would best the militarists and prevent a resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, thus supporting U.S. efforts to bring the belligerents to the peace table. The United States, the Entente, and Germany all floated peace proposals. Such was the crux of Gerard's discussion with Wilson in Washington. The Ambassador returned to Berlin on December 21 empty-handed but still sporting the traditional politicized approach to diplomatic service. Grew noted in his diary:

[Gerard] was most agreeable, but I very soon gathered that he had no confidential information from the Administration whatsoever. The President had apparently told him only two things: first, that he must be friendly and 'jolly the Germans'; second, that he must support the President's view that armed merchant ships must not be fired on without warning. When he said that he would do so, the President banged his fist on the desk and said: 'I don't want you merely to support my view; I want you to agree with it.' The Ambassador was very pessimistic as regards the outlook for the Diplomatic Service. He said that there would be few changes in missions during the coming Administration and that those would be filled by deserving Democrats and that I must 'pull the wires' if I wished to get on. He hinted that I was regarded as a Republican in Washington.<sup>128</sup>

If possessed of more candor, Gerard might have echoed Grew's complaint about policy formation by events, rather than prevision; even the well-connected Ambassador found himself out of the loop. The crises generated by espousing a policy of neutrality, while arming Germany's enemies represented the proximate cause of Washington's diplomatic distress. The wartime experience, however, revealed the Department of State's casual practices as unsuited to the complexities of the twentieth century world.

Gerard's mission to Germany demonstrated the inventiveness and dedication of U.S. officials, but it also signaled to the Wilson administration and Congress the importance of constructing a coordinated, professionalized structure for harnessing those energies.

## Epilogue

On February 3, 1917, the United States severed diplomatic relations with Germany in protest of the resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare. The Berlin Embassy had made only minimal preparations for withdrawal. The Department had only resolved two issues in advance: Spain would represent U.S. interests in Germany and the Department would pay Gerard's portion of the remaining lease of the Embassy building.<sup>129</sup> Gerard received all other instructions the day the U.S. Government severed relations with Germany. In a February 3, 1917 telegram, the Department directed Gerard and Grew to request their passports and return to the United States, while reassigning the remaining Embassy officers to other posts.<sup>130</sup>

Astonishingly, the German Government refused to allow Gerard and his staff to depart Berlin and held them under house arrest at the Embassy for the following week. Authorities also forbade U.S. consuls from leaving Germany.<sup>131</sup> In a February 5 telegram, the last he was allowed to send, Gerard informed Lansing that German authorities planned to detain him until the German Ambassador to the United States, Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, departed Washington. However, after the issue of Bernstorff's departure was settled, Gerard remained incommunicado for the next five days. The real reason for Gerard's detention was Berlin's objections to the seizure of German ships in U.S. ports. The Department became increasingly worried about Gerard's status. On February 9, Lansing requested that the Spanish Government look into the matter, adding, "The Department is naturally amazed at the action of the German Government and cannot believe that the Government would commit such a flagrant violation of international law and diplomatic courtesy."<sup>132</sup> On February 11, Gerard's report, dated three days earlier, finally reached Washington. He informed the Department:

My communication has been cut off and I am not allowed even to send even any instructions to Consuls nor to receive mail. Minister for Foreign Affairs has tried to induce me to request authorization to sign convention according to which German vessels should receive safe

conducts to return from America in case of war hinting that Americans would not be allowed to go unless I signed.<sup>133</sup>

Gerard refused to sign.<sup>134</sup> The convention was, in fact, a modification of Article 23 of the 1799 Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Prussia and the United States. Cooler heads among the German diplomats prevailed and his captors soon allowed the Ambassador, his staff, the U.S. consuls, and any other Americans remaining to leave Germany. Of his escape to the Swiss border on a special train, Gerard later wrote:

I had ordered plenty of champagne and cigars to be put on the train and we were first invited to drink champagne with the officers in the dining car; then they joined us in the private salon car which we occupied in the end of the train...The two officers left us at the last stop on the German side. I had taken the precaution before we left Berlin to find out their names, and, as they left us, I gave each of them a gold cigarette case inscribed with his name and the date.<sup>135</sup>

One cannot help but marvel at gifting inscribed gold cigarette cases in such a situation, after so much difficulty with Germany's military. It is difficult to imagine that Gerard and his staff did not enjoy the champagne on that last train ride out of Germany. Gerard's flight from Berlin was a remarkable end to a remarkable tenure.

## Notes

- 1 *Register of the Department of State* (Washington, D.C.GPO), November 18, 1914.
- 2 Letter from Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 91-97.
- 3 James Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1917) <https://books.google.com/books?id=PWELAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>, p.101.
- 4 The Italian Government obviated its obligation to fight under the Triple Alliance by declaring that Austria-Hungary had defaulted on its commitment to consult with Germany and Italy before changing the status quo in the Balkans.
- 5 Letter from Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 91-97.
- 6 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, pp.105.
- 7 Letter from Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 91-97. The proceeding quotes in this section are taken from this letter.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 The Department of State to the Embassy in Berlin, August 10, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 362.11/53b. At the war's outbreak, the Department established a special office in Washington for such accounting.
- 10 Joseph C. Grew, (Walter Johnson, ed.), *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1952), Volume 1, p. 148.
- 11 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, August 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/166.
- 12 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, undated, received via Copenhagen August 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/235.
- 13 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p. 140. To calculate First World War-era dollars into today's equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)
- 14 A few days later Gerard also came to an agreement with the Commerz and Deutsche Bank. Gerard letter to Bryan, August 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 14, 763.72/830 (Microfilm 367 materials are viewable online: see <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2017/04/04/world-war-i-foreign-policy-records-part-i-the-department-of-state/>.)
- 15 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, undated, received via Copenhagen August 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/235.
- 16 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p.114.
- 17 Letter from Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 91-97. Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 109.
- 18 U.S. Consul Copenhagen telegram to the Secretary of State, undated, received August 10, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/150.



- 19 Letter from the U.S. Vice Consul in Cologne Charles Lesimple to the Secretary of State, January 13, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1263. To calculate First World War-era dollars into today's equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).
- 20 Letter from Henry Morgan to Bryan, August 17, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/484.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 A number of accounts about the mistreatment by German officials of stranded Americans were catalogued in a *New York Times* editorial. See "J.P. Day Skeptical of Refugees' Tales," *New York Times*, September 20, 1914.
- 24 Letter Charles Winans to Bryan, September 15, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/821. The proceeding quotations in this section are taken from this letter.
- 25 With his description of the forces opposing Germans as "the enemy" and not "Germany's enemy," not to mention the use of the singular "the enemy," which connotes the idea that Germany was surrounded by all sides by a single aggressive force, Winans's less than neutral sentiments bleed through. His dismissal of German tactics as understandable is also noteworthy. When describing the search by German authorities of Americans and their hired cars, Winans emphasizes that "in no case was there any intended discourtesy, not to mention coarseness or barbarity." However, a case of burying the lead, he adds: "Most of the arrests were made at night, when the Consul could not be immediately reached."
- 26 The *Commission* was the group of U.S. officials from Washington (Breckinridge, Bicknell, et al), while the *Committees* were the groups set up in each Embassy (or Consulate) to drive the relief effort in each particular country. In Berlin, Gerard set up the *Committee* before the *Commission* arrived and the *Commission* gave the *Committee* its imprimatur (and some money). However, in other capitals, the *Commission* set up the *Committees*. There were also groups, consisting of at least two Embassy officials or U.S. volunteers that traveled at the behest of a *Committee* to various towns and cities in order to distribute funds and organize transportation. Unfortunately, these expeditionary groups were sometimes referred to as "Committees," thus adding to the confusion.
- 27 In the frantic period before the Commission's arrival, the Embassy organized the transportation of around 1000 Americans out of Germany to the Netherlands (a neutral country) where they awaited ships to take them to the United Kingdom.
- 28 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 115.
- 29 Letter from Bicknell to Davis, September 6, 1914, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 618.61, Americans in Europe.
- 30 Reluctance to leave on the part of some Americans proved to be an unforeseen hurdle. Gerard noted to Bryan that "It is hard work to get the Americans out of Germany as many of them show a desire to stay here." Offering a colorful detail in his memoir, Gerard described such people as "song-birds, piano players, and students." One can only wonder how the presence of such a group added to the chaotic atmosphere of an Embassy choked with wealthy American tourists who were temporarily penniless. Gerard letter to Bryan, September 2, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 14, 763.72/888; Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 115.
- 31 Letter from Bicknell to Davis, September 6, 1914, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 618.61, Americans in Europe.



- 32 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, September 2, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/488. "First Papers" refers to the application to become an American citizen.
- 33 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, September 4, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/488.
- 34 By September 21, the Relief Committee in Berlin reported only 28 Americans left in Breslau, 15 in Coburg, 12 in Stuttgart, 15 in Kehl, five in Nuremburg, two in Dresden, and but a "few" in Munich. One ship per week embarked from Rotterdam (thus lessening the crowding there) and the transportation facilities to the U.K. were "ample" and accommodation for the transatlantic crossing as "adequate." Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, September 21, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/659.
- 35 Letter from Lay to Bryan, September 29, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/798.
- 36 Letter from Lay to Bryan, November 30, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1113.
- 37 Gerard was also responsible for other funds that were entrusted to him for distribution, namely the British Relief Fund, the Serbian Relief Fund, and the Japanese Relief Fund, all of which had been donated by governments concerned for the wellbeing of their nationals trapped in Germany. (Letter from Gerard to Bryan, January 11, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1265)
- 38 Acting Secretary of the Treasury Newton to Bryan, August 17, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1608.
- 39 The German Ambassador in Washington made the request to the Department of State on August 1. However, Gerard reported that the German Foreign Office in Berlin made its request to him the next day.
- 40 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 208.
- 41 *Ibid*, p. 210-211.
- 42 Department of State Circular, August 17, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 740-741.
- 43 To fund these new responsibilities, Congress appropriated \$1 million on September 11, to be transferred to Embassies and Consulates that were caring for the interests of foreign governments. H. J. Res. 337, Pub. Res., No. 38. 63rd Congress, Session II. The Bill stipulated that the money was to be repaid.
- 44 Letter from Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 91-97.
- 45 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, October 20, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 332, 763.72115/138.
- 46 In late October, the German Foreign Office received reports that German civilians detained in the U.K. suffered "indiscriminate internment" under harsh conditions and "public opinion in Germany is highly incensed." Letter from Gerard to Bryan, October 23, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M 367, Roll 332, 763.72115/160. The German Government then issued an ultimatum that if "all Germans who have no[t] rendered themselves especially suspicious" were not released, then all British men age of military age would be arrested. Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, October 28, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M 367, Roll 332, 763.72115/177.
- 47 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p. 166.
- 48 Telegram from Lansing to Page, October 29, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 332, 763.72115/168.

- 49 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, November 2, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, p.752.
- 50 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, December 30, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/132.
- 51 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, December 19, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp.754-755.
- 52 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, December 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1919-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/132.
- 53 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, January 16, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 J 132/201B. Jackson previously severed as Chief of Mission in several European countries and on other continents.
- 54 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 121.
- 55 *Ibid*, p. 121.
- 56 Diary entry for May 10, 1915. Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume I, p. 192.
- 57 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume I, p. 204.
- 58 Gerard to Lansing, January 3, 1916, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I*, (Washington: GPO, 1939), pp. 675-676.
- 59 Telegram from Gerard to Lansing, January 11, 1916 (transcribed from confirmation: original not received, deciphered March 21, 1916, which misdated the document as January 11, 1915), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1367.
- 60 Letter from Robert Cecil to Gerard, January 17, 1916, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 16, General Correspondences, 1916, Lord Robert Cecil.
- 61 Letter from Gerard to House, August 8, 1916, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 16, General Correspondences, 1916, E. M. House.
- 62 Letter from Gerard to House, August 16, 1916, *ibid*.
- 63 Report attached to Letter from Harry Seltzer to Bryan, October 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 852, 811.142/373.
- 64 German Red Cross Report dated November 28, 1914, forwarded by Gerard to the Department, January 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 852, 811.142/490.
- 65 Lavina Dock, *History of American Red Cross Nursing*, (New York: Macmillan, 1922), pp. 163-166.
- 66 Dock, pp. 166-167.
- 67 ARC officials in the United States initially communicated with the semi-autonomous state chapters of the German Red Cross. Unaware of whom the ARC contacted, Mary Gerard in Berlin approach the director of the Imperial German Red Cross, Prince Hatzfeld. Hatzfeld, however, had little to do with the German Red Cross state chapters and did not know ARC officials in Washington had already contacted them. Hatzfeld assigned both hospitals to the Eastern Front and assured the Ambassador's wife that all arrangements had been completed. He let the matter drop and failed to inform the appropriate German Red Cross officials that they were to take over operational control of the hospitals. Letter from Bicknell to Boardman, January 11, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 900.02, Rockefeller Foundation.

- 68 ARC National Director Ernest Bicknell was present in Berlin in 1915, but was detailed to the Rockefeller Foundation and charged with organizing a relief campaign in Poland.
- 69 Letter from Bicknell to Boardman, March 15, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 900.02, Rockefeller Foundation.
- 70 Letter from Bicknell to Boardman, March 15, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 900.02, Rockefeller Foundation.
- 71 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, directed to the ANRC, March 15, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 853, 811.142/583.
- 72 USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 900.02, Rockefeller Foundation.
- 73 Telegram from Gerard to the Department, April 22, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 853, 811.142/669.
- 74 Letter from Boardman to Lansing, July 7, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/829.
- 75 Telegram from Hamilton to Secretary of the National Committee on Red Cross Medical Service Robert Patterson, via Gerard and the Department of State, July 22, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/856.
- 76 Letter from Gerard to Lansing, October 7, 1915 (first quote), with attached translated letter from Oeynhausien-Grevenburg (surname spelled Oeynhausien-Grevensburg in the original German-language document) to Gerard, September 27, 1915 (second quote), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/1093.
- 77 Letter from Boardman to Lansing, July 16, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 1042-1043. Boardman explained that
- ...for some time there has been a marked decrease in the amount of funds and other donations sent to the American Red Cross, with which to meet the salaries, travel, and other incidental expenses of our hospital units in Europe...Owing to the difficulties of travel under war conditions and the fact that in some instances our units have been delayed for weeks in transit, and that it has not in all cases seemed desirable to place them in positions where they could be kept fully occupied and thus justify the expense...
- 78 Telegram from Gerard to the Department of State, August 16, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1044.
- 79 Telegram from Gerard to the ARC via the Department of State, August 21, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/908.
- 80 Telegram from Gerard to the ARC via the Department of State, September 4, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/938.
- 81 Memorandum from the Acting Chairman of the ARC Executive Committee [signature illegible], September 9, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/948. Strong later decided not to participate and returned to the United States.
- 82 Letter from Seltzer to Lansing, September 21, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 854, 811.142/1057. A forthcoming chapter on Russia will address in detail ARC operations in Russia.

- 83 Letter from Boardman to Lansing, July 16, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 1042-1043.
- 84 Lansing telegram to Gerard, May 1, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 202, 763.72112/2404.
- 85 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, p. 951.
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 Telegram from Lansing to the Embassy in London, June 21, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 202, 763.72112/2404.
- 88 Telegram from Page to the Department of State, June 21, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, p. 953. According to a translation by the Department, the German October 15 note cited the provisions of Article 29 of the London Declarations that medical supplies cannot be considered contraband of war, and “in case of important military necessity the articles and materials in question can be requisitioned against indemnity if they are destined for enemy territory or for territory occupied by the enemy or for his armed forces, the German Government reserved itself this right of requisitions...” Translation from the French. Memorandum from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmerman to Spanish Ambassador to Germany Polo de Barnabé, October 15, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 197, 763.72112/1820. On April 20, the Department had informed the U.K. Ambassador in Washington of Germany’s October 15, 1915 note. Memorandum from Phillips, April 20, 1916, *ibid.*
- 89 Lansing to Page, July 3, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 953-954.
- 90 Telegram from Page to the Department of State, July 28, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 955-956.
- 91 The Acting Chairman of the Executive Committee of the ARC to Lansing, August 1, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 956-957.
- 92 Department of State, General instruction Consular, No. 379, January 23, 1915, to American Diplomatic and Consular officers, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 1040-1041.
- 93 In a January 5, 1915 letter to Third Assistant Secretary Phillips, Carr explained that “While the Red Cross does not urge a circular of this kind, I think it desirable that all of our officers should be instructed as to the general principles which should guide them in their relations with the Red Cross.” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 852, 811.142/512.
- 94 Letter from William Crosby to Boardman, July 28, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 951.52, Germany, Munich American Red Cross Hospitals.
- 95 Letter from Boardman to Lansing, June 1, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Volume 853, 811.142/801.
- 96 Letter from Lansing to Boardman, June 11, 1915, *ibid.*

- 97 Letter from William Crosby to Boardman, August 6, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 951.52, Germany, Munich American Red Cross Hospitals.
- 98 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 232-233.
- 99 Until the 1960s, U.S. Embassies used commercial telegraph system to communicate with the Department.
- 100 Diary entry May 9, 1915, Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p. 191.
- 101 The effort took Gerard a month and a half and many appeals to Washington. Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, January 23, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 370, 763.72118/42; Letter from Lansing to the Secretary of War, February 16, 1915; memorandum from Acting Secretary of War Breckenridge to Bryan, March 25, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 370, 763.72118/44 and 763.72118/45.
- 102 However, there were outliers among the Embassy staff; some came to advocate extreme support of one side against the other of one side.
- 103 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p. 148.
- 104 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p143-144. In a footnote to this sentiment, which Grew added upon the publication of his diary in 1952, he stated: "It shocks me profoundly to remember that on the outbreak of war in 1914 most of us in the Embassy in Berlin accepted the German point of view, hook, bait and sinker, for in those dramatic days we were unused to war and war propaganda, and we were for a time at least cut off from all other points of view."
- 105 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, vol. 1, p. 164.
- 106 Diary entry for March 14, 1915, Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p.183. Grew also pointed out that Germany had supplied Spain with war materiel during the Spanish-American War, which had been a financial boon to the German arms industry.
- 107 Letter from Gerard to House, July 12, 1916, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 16, General Correspondences, 1916, E. M. House.
- 108 The war had also complicated Gerard's personal financial considerations in regard to Germany. Gerard owned the Cinco Minas, one of the largest gold mines in Mexico, which required cyanide to operate. In 1914, German factories produced most of the world's cyanide supply. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, the German Government prohibited its export. By September 1914, the scarcity of cyanide reduced Cinco Minas production to 60 percent of capacity. (Letter from Thomas McCarthy to Gerard, September 22, 1914, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 9, General Correspondences, 1914, Thomas McCarthy.) Gerard successfully lobbied the German Government to repeal the export ban, only to be stymied by the U.K. refusal to allow cyanide through its blockade. In his autobiography, Gerard railed against the German decision on cyanide's export, but did refer to his direct personal stake in the matter. (Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 193-194)
- 109 Charles Edward Russell, Journalist and Socialist candidate in 1914 for U.S. Senator from New York, claimed that Gerard's appointment to Berlin recompensed his \$115,000 donation to Wilson's 1912 election campaign. Robert Miraldi, *The Pen Is Mightier: The Muckraking Life of Charles Edward Russell*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2003), p. 229
- 110 Letter from McCarthy to Gerard, October 12, 1914, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 9, folder 36, General Correspondences, 1914, McCarthy.
- 111 Telegram from Bryan to Gerard, September 10, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 G 31/24½.
- 112 Telegram from Gerard to Bryan, September 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 G 31/31½.



- 113 Letter from Thomas McCarthy to Gerard, September 22, 1914, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 9, General Correspondences, 1914, Thomas McCarthy.
- 114 Republicans won all nine of the state contests except for a judgeship.
- 115 "Seabury Leads for Governor," New York Times, June 14, 1916, p. 1.
- 116 For Embassy reporting and analysis, see *Foreign Relations of the United States: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, the World War*, as well as the volumes for 1915 and 1916.
- 117 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 185.
- 118 Letter from House to Gerard, October 21, 1914, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 9, General Correspondences, 1914, E. M. House.
- 119 House sailed for the last time during this period on the Lusitania, departing January 30, 1915, one of its final crossings before it was torpedoed with all hands. Letter from House to Gerard, January 14, 1915, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 12, General Correspondences, 1915, E. M. House.
- 120 Letter from Gerard to House to July 20, 1915, *ibid.* Gerard had known Bryan for a long time (though never as intimately as House).
- 121 Gerard did not report to Bryan in the same way. He began writing directly to Lansing about confidential policy matters sometime after Lansing became Secretary of State, many of these letters were later published in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I*, pp.664-700. While he reported confidentially to Lansing, Gerard's letters to House continued to be more fulsome and candid on political considerations. It is safe to assume that Gerard never admitted to Lansing that he was more forthcoming to House.
- 122 *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I*, pp. 674-675.
- 123 A prime example is two letters dated March 7, 1916, James Gerard Papers, Series II, Box 16, General Correspondences, 1916, Robert Lansing and E. M. House. Gerard's letter to Lansing is published in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920, Volume I*, pp. 679-680.
- 124 Diary entry for February 22, 1916, Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, p. 218-219. Quote from p. 218.
- 125 Telegram from Grew to Lansing, December 1, 1916, Foreign Relations of the United States, *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp.77-78. Quote from Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, pp. 257-258.
- 126 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, pp. 252-253.
- 127 Gerard also had a very different relationship with Bryan than did Grew. Gerard's father-in-law was Marcus Daly, the millionaire who was the principal backer of Bryan's 1896 presidential campaign. With the contribution of more than \$300,000, Daly's support for Bryan's crusade for free silver would make his extensive interests in silver mining even more profitable. Gerard, *My First Eighty-Three Years in America*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1951), p. 92.
- 128 Grew, *Turbulent Era*, Volume 1, pp. 300-301.
- 129 Telegram from Lansing to Gerard, April 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.62/6.
- 130 Telegram from Lansing to Gerard, February 3, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.62/20a.

131 Telegram from Gerard to February 5, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.62/21.

132 Telegram from Lansing to the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, February 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.62/32a.

133 Telegram from the U.S. Embassy in Madrid to the Department of State, February 11, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.62/34.

134 Later Gerard claimed that he told his captors, "...Even if I had authority to sign it I would stay here until hell freezes over before I would put my name to such a paper." (Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, p. 275.)

135 Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, pp. 278.



# Chapter 4

## Austria-Hungary, 1914-1917: American Diplomatic Boots on the Ground

*William B. McAllister*

The staffing of posts in Austria-Hungary, a medium-sized U.S. diplomatic operation in Europe, exemplifies the United States Government's preparedness for the deluge: in August 1914 the Department of State deployed a total of four diplomats and 17 consular officers to service U.S. interests throughout the Hapsburg Empire, a country of over 50 million people (see Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> At the outbreak of war the diplomatic complement of the Vienna Embassy consisted of Ambassador Frederic Penfield, two Secretaries (the equivalent of today's Foreign Service Officer), and one Clerk.<sup>2</sup> A military attaché and a half-time naval attaché assigned to the Embassy also held diplomatic rank, although normally they took little part in Department of State functions. The Embassy employed a number of additional staff, but considered those positions non-professional—they drew a meager salary and enjoyed no guarantee of job security. Fewer than a half-dozen stenographer-typists took dictation and transcribed handwritten drafts into typewritten documents. A similar number of clerks focused on discrete tasks such as filing, indexing, processing telegrams or mail, cypher messaging, and maintaining registries. A translator rendered U.S. communications into the host country's official language, as well as converted documents received into English before forwarding to Washington. An accountant kept the financial books. Embassies also typically employed a few persons in subsidiary roles such as messenger, general servant, door tender, cleaner, watchman, or stable boy. Local people filled the majority of the non-professional positions; U.S. diplomatic and consular posts routinely employ more foreigners than Americans. In addition to the Vienna Consulate-General, the Department maintained a Consulate-General in Budapest with a proportionately smaller clerical staff, which functioned in a more extensive capacity than most consular posts because the Kingdom of Hungary exercised responsibility for its domestic affairs.<sup>3</sup> The lesser consular posts typically retained a few local employees to perform clerical and other support duties, in some cases only part-time.

**Figure 1: Professional Officers Assigned to Austro-Hungarian Posts, 1913-1916**

Year	Vienna diplomatic	Vienna consular	Budapest	Trieste	Fiume	Carlsbad, Prague, & Reichenberg	Total consular	Total
1913	4	2	4	3	2	2 each	17	21
1914	4	3	4	3	2	2 each	18	22
1915	7 <sup>(a)</sup>	3	3	2	2	2 each	16	23
1916	9 <sup>(a)</sup>	3	3	2	1 <sup>(b)</sup>	2 each	15	24

The Vienna diplomatic complement includes the position of Clerk, who managed the non-professional staff rather than directly engaging in diplomatic activities.

(a) Includes Naval Attaché Stephen V. Graham, who conducted numerous POW inspections (see below).

(b) Does not include the vacant Vice Consul position at Fiume, which the Department did not fill after Burrell's May 1916 reassignment (see note 137) and Clementi's September 1916 dismissal (see below).

From: *Register of the Department of State* (Washington: GPO, November 10, 1913; November 18, 1914; October 21, 1915; December 15, 1916).

In most respects, Ambassador Frederic Courtland Penfield and his wife, Anne Weightman Walker Penfield, exemplified the traditional U.S. approach to selecting chiefs of mission. President Woodrow Wilson broke with convention by first offering the post to Maurice Egan, a man of letters and seasoned diplomat serving as Minister to Denmark since Republican Theodore Roosevelt appointed him in 1907. Egan, however, declined because “his private means were not sufficient for him to maintain an establishment in Vienna.”<sup>4</sup> Because the U.S. Government did not provide funds for buildings or diplomatic representation, only the wealthy could afford the lodgings, entertainments, and accoutrements that made a suitable diplomatic presence at a great European court. Frederic had no difficulty in that regard because in addition to his own not-inconsiderable wealth, his wife controlled one of the greatest fortunes in the country. In 1904 Anne inherited from her father, pharmaceutical manufacturing and real estate magnate William Weightman, business interests reported in excess of \$60,000,000 (approximately \$1.5 billion in 2017).<sup>5</sup> The Penfields boasted longtime activity in political affairs: Frederic had contributed to Democratic Party candidates since the 1880s and Anne’s deceased first husband Robert Jarvis Cochran Walker served one term in Congress. They utilized their influence with the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* to support Woodrow Wilson’s 1912 presidential candidacy, provided crucial

funding before the Democratic Party nominating convention, and Frederic served on the campaign's general finance committee. The Penfields espoused Roman Catholicism, a valuable attribute for diplomatic representation at the Hapsburg court. Moreover, Anne and Frederic contributed generously to philanthropic and educational causes, especially Catholic charities; indeed, Pope Pius X bestowed upon Frederic the Grand Cross of St. Gregory the Great, the first American to receive the highest class of that honor.<sup>6</sup> Frederic also operated in the socio-cultural circles deemed suitable for diplomatic appointments. Although Penfield did not earn a university degree, he received a type of education typical of his class by traveling widely and attending courses at European universities, during which he acquired some German-language facility. He belonged to numerous gentlemen's and country clubs, patronized the arts, and cultivated a reputation as a yachtsman.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Penfield, however, stood out from most political ambassadorial appointees because he had already acquired diplomatic experience and authored publications on international affairs. From 1880 until 1885 he honed his writing skills as a journalist and editor, primarily at the *Hartford Courant* in his native Connecticut. From 1885 until 1887 he served as Vice and Deputy Consul General in London during the first Grover Cleveland administration. For the entirety of Cleveland's 1893-to-1897 term, Penfield served as Diplomatic Agent and Consul General in Cairo. That assignment functioned as a quasi-diplomatic post owing to Egypt's de-facto protectorate status under British administration. Penfield subsequently wrote two books about Egypt, South Asia, and East Asia that combined travelogue with observations about economics, trade, and geopolitics. He also contributed frequently on international affairs to the *North American Review* and authored analytical opinion pieces favoring the Panama route for an isthmian canal.<sup>8</sup> Penfield's preparation for an ambassadorial appointment exceeded the norm for his peers, but also presented difficulties for some of his subordinates because he arrived in Vienna with expectations about how a diplomatic mission should operate.

## **“American Work” in Wartime**

The immediate life-or-death issue U.S. officials encountered upon the outbreak of war involved young men impressed into foreign military forces. Because few individuals carried proof of citizenship, they could not invoke the exemption to foreign military

service enshrined in naturalization treaties such as an 1871 agreement between the United States and Austria-Hungary. High casualties from the outset of fighting spurred U.S. officials to expedite requests; any soldier sent to the front might not survive until validated papers arrived. Nevertheless, the process often took months to complete because it involved careful documentation and verification of citizenship as well as the formal passport application procedure. European armies soon experienced manpower shortages that caused military officials to interpret treaty provisions more narrowly, which necessitated additional diplomatic intervention. Moreover, U.S. expatriation laws barred the Department from helping many draftees: the statutes presumed that those who did not secure formal U.S. citizenship and remained continuously absent from the country for two years had voluntarily renounced their U.S. citizenship. The unique circumstances of such cases necessarily varied, and those nearing draft age presented special complications. Department officials toiled to address the plight of these individuals as expeditiously as feasible.<sup>9</sup>

Department officials in Austria-Hungary participated in the repatriation of U.S. citizens in ways similar to those outlined in Chapter 3 obviating the need for a detailed discussion of those events here. Because the principal railway lines ran through Germany, Penfield and his subordinates facilitated the removal of many refugees into Ambassador Gerard's area of responsibility. Alternative exit avenues existed through Italy and Switzerland, but the records indicate that fewer outgoing passengers chose those options. Taking such routes required transit through additional countries to leave Europe, largely because wartime disruptions rendered ocean liner schedules from Mediterranean ports unpredictable. Although the Southeastern border remained open through Romania, Department documents indicate practically no U.S. citizens chose the option. In addition to much less-developed transportation facilities in that direction, many no doubt feared Russian armies invading the Hapsburg Eastern provinces might block the route. A large proportion of applicants for removal from Hapsburg territories consisted of poor, rural inhabitants, especially in Hungary. All those factors complicated the task of the consular officials upon whom most of the repatriation work fell. Like their counterparts across Europe, Department officials in Austria-Hungary expended their meager personal funds to assist U.S. citizens in the immediate crisis, but never received reimbursement because the press of events rendered it impossible to generate the standard documentation required by the Department.<sup>10</sup> They filled out so many passport applications and travel documents that they ran out of Department forms. Unable to procure more because they lacked authorization and money to pay local printers,

overworked consular officers resorted to non-standard documentation alternatives such as applying official stamps to plain paper, a tactic that their counterparts down the transportation line found objectionable. Receiving U.S. officials in Germany refused to accept some of the ersatz documents, which created the problem of how to send those rejected back to Austria-Hungary.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, after laboring day and night under trying conditions for many weeks during the high tide of removal, Department officers in the Dual Monarchy eventually processed the majority of their fellow citizens safely home.<sup>12</sup>

The exodus of autumn 1914 did not extract all Americans from the Continent, however, and complications attendant to those who stayed bedeviled Department personnel for the duration.<sup>13</sup> The war trapped many poorer citizens visiting relatives or working to support families residing in the United States, while others could not escape the rapid Russian advance into Hapsburg territory. Illness prevented some from leaving, and parents remained with children too sick to travel.<sup>14</sup> The hostilities sundered families and finances: wives in the United States inquired about husbands employed in the Dual Monarchy suddenly unable to remit funds, while husbands working in America feared for the welfare of their wives and children abroad.<sup>15</sup> Although the number of removals declined after October 1914, individual cases required increasing attention from U.S. officials. Establishing bona fide U.S. citizenship proved difficult in a growing number of cases, and Relief Committee funds dwindled by year's end.<sup>16</sup> Until Italy entered the war in May 1915, Consulate-General Genoa communicated copiously with multiple posts to facilitate repatriation of these increasingly destitute stragglers via Mediterranean ports.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, Austro-Hungarian authorities sometimes questioned the validity of U.S. citizenship documents, refused to allow children born in the United States with valid passports to leave, or closed the borders altogether, which caused the Department to expend additional effort arranging departures. Even when Hapsburg officials cooperated, German authorities intermittently refused passage through their territory for those hoping to exit Europe from neutral ports in the Netherlands or Denmark.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, Department officers wrestled with how best to interpret their mandate to help "Americans." Congressional and Relief Committee stipulations decreed that only bona fide citizens merited aid. However, the Department sometimes instructed overseas officials to use available funds to assist individuals by name, regardless of their citizenship status. One such category involved "children of tender years" born in the United States of parents who had never become naturalized citizens or declared the intent to become citizens. If a relative from the United States could not travel to

collect them, such minors might enable an accompanying non-citizen parent to exit Europe at U.S. Government expense, with the promise to reimburse the taxpayer.<sup>19</sup> The Department revised the rules for granting passports several times in subsequent years,<sup>20</sup> but impoverished people who aspired to attain U.S. citizenship continued to petition Embassy and Consulate officials throughout the war.<sup>21</sup>

Department officers not infrequently experienced considerable difficulty locating citizens.<sup>22</sup> Vienna Embassy staff searched continuously for 40-year old Tillie Aarenau at the behest of her two sons, the younger a 12-year old remitted to the care of his aunt in the interim. The family scraped together \$100 to facilitate her return from the Galicia-Bukovina border region overrun quickly by Russian troops in 1914. Department officials contacted a half-dozen addresses amidst the shifting battle lines and subsequently followed up on reported sightings across Eastern Europe. Only in October 1915 did they positively identify Aarenau in Bucharest and transmit family funds to her.<sup>23</sup>

Some U.S. citizens proved extremely difficult to repatriate. Owing to hardships suffered during the Russian occupation of Lemberg, Fannie Cohen, mother of three, displayed increasingly erratic behavior and lived in destitution with her children. She refused to return to the United States, however, for fear she would be committed to an asylum and separated from them. Department officials worked for almost a year with Cohen's husband in New York City and private relief organizations in Austria-Hungary and the United States to effect her removal. Penfield intervened personally at several junctures, ultimately committing over \$500 of his own money to secure safe passage for Fannie and her children in October 1916.<sup>24</sup>

A small number of U.S. citizens still resided in the Dual Monarchy when Emperor-King Karl severed relations with the United States in April 1917. Having done so much to look after nationals from many countries, American officials could only entrust the fate of their own compatriots to the good offices of the Spanish Government, which assumed charge of U.S. interests in the Dual Monarchy.

The Embassy and Consulates contributed valuable reporting about the state of affairs in the Dual Monarchy, as well as prescient intelligence about related regional issues such as the likelihood of additional Balkan states entering the war.<sup>25</sup> Penfield regularly submitted missives focused on discrete topics, as well as intermittent comprehensive reports, that assessed the political climate at court, the state of morale among the populace, the progress of war loan campaigns and the state of Hapsburg finances, the military situation, social conditions, the mounting privations caused by



the Entente blockade, and concerns about nationalist separatism among increasingly disaffected ethnic groups. For example, on July 29, 1915, the Ambassador penned a 28-page typewritten report entitled “Austria Hungary after a Year of War,” replete with his characteristically compelling prose. After noting “If there be an official who knows how many soldiers Austria-Hungary has called up, his name cannot be learned” and estimates of 1.5 million dead, wounded, sick and captured, Penfield reported “The limits of age for service have now reached the extremes of eighteen and fifty years.” He depicted increased food deprivation affecting beasts as much as the Emperor’s subjects: “Every class of horse proves its short rations by accentuated ribs and moderate gait.” Regarding the shortage of copper, “From St. Stephan’s Cathedral in Vienna a massive but obsolete bell was removed, and has probably been fabricated into cartridge cases.” In the concluding section entitled “War’s Crushing Cost,” the Ambassador closed with foreboding

Whatever prospect Germany may have of pecuniary or territorial gain, poor Austria, battling with four enemy neighbors, can have little hope of solvency that is dependent on victory. As a matter of unsentimental fact it is the expectation of many Austrians that Germany will exact prodigious reward for sending relief to Austria-Hungary in the hour of the Empire’s desperate needs, fully as much as a conquering alien would demand.”<sup>26</sup>

A year later he wrote privately to President Wilson’s confidante Edward M. House of 400,000 Hungarian war orphans, “misery everywhere is growing,” and “Every human being is sick of war, and wants peace.”<sup>27</sup> Even after his tenure ended when Vienna severed relations with Washington, Penfield passed on reports from “confidential and extremely reliable” sources within Austria-Hungary about deteriorating conditions portending “starvation (not hunger).”<sup>28</sup> Secretaries William Jennings Bryan and Robert Lansing, President Wilson, and Colonel House all pronounced the Ambassador’s missives insightful and enlightening.<sup>29</sup>

Posts attempted to continue routine prewar trade-promotion functions, but a combination of protecting-power responsibilities and declining opportunities soon suspended any pretense of “normal” operations to enhance U.S. business interests. Still assuming a war of short duration in September 1914, Penfield conveyed initial Austro-Hungarian good feelings toward the United States and predicted enhanced commercial relations between the two states when hostilities ended.<sup>30</sup> The primary consular



activities of trade facilitation, however, trailed off quickly as the Entente-imposed blockade interdicted routine commerce.<sup>31</sup> Twelve months after the war began, Penfield reported “Imports from the United States have sunk to the vanishing point—there are none.”<sup>32</sup>

## **The Protecting Power in Action**

Even states at war require channels to communicate, arrangements to secure property, mechanisms to cooperate on mutually-shared problems, and someone to look after nationals within enemy jurisdiction. Neutral states, especially small ones, may also find it impossible to protect their nationals in belligerent countries. The Great War generated an unprecedented necessity for intermediaries willing to advocate for governments and peoples.

The United States took the leading role in providing those “protecting power” services across the globe. Washington quickly agreed to represent all eight major combatants in various enemy capitals, and assumed responsibility for additional governments as more countries joined the fighting.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, U.S. officials sometimes acted as proxies for other protecting states that lacked the capacity to fulfill their responsibilities. For example, Russia assumed Serbian and Montenegrin interests in Austria-Hungary upon the rupture of relations in July 1914, but within a fortnight found itself embroiled in the war as well. St. Petersburg then requested Madrid to serve as its protecting power in the Dual Monarchy, and thus Spain inherited the interests of Belgrade and Cetinje as well. The very small Spanish diplomatic contingent in Vienna immediately appealed to their American counterparts for help, and Washington quickly approved direct communications between U.S. Consulates and the Spanish Embassy to expedite the work. Thereafter American consular officials routinely “loaned” themselves to perform a significant proportion of the representational duties for Russia, Serbia, and Montenegro officially charged to Spain. Until April 1917, the U.S. Government represented Austro-Hungarian interests to Russia while Spain advocated for Russia in the Dual Monarchy, only to then devolve much of the work upon American officials. Spain assumed responsibility for Italian interests in May 1915 upon Rome’s break with Vienna, which increased the load on U.S. officials. As disputes about multiple issues escalated, this convoluted arrangement only exacerbated tensions, in part because U.S. personnel in Austria-Hungary found their Spanish interlocutors less than energetic

partners.<sup>34</sup> By November 1914 the Department already counted 70 cities across every inhabited continent in which consular officers took charge of belligerent or neutral interests, and Washington continued to canvass stations to determine with more exactitude the extent of U.S. commitments.<sup>35</sup> The contingencies involved in assuming protecting power responsibilities proved so complex that even a decade after Armistice Day, the Department could not render an account of precisely when it took charge of representing foreign interests across the world.<sup>36</sup>

An immediate and continuing protecting power priority involved advocating the inviolability of government officials, records, and property. In contravention of international agreements, at the outbreak of war authorities in several countries detained or arrested consular officials, and in a few cases diplomatic representatives. Such incidents recurred in subsequent years when territory changed hands or a new belligerent entered the fray. Violations of protected buildings containing diplomatic records, legal documents such as birth, marriage, and death certificates; cypher codes; money; and lists of foreign nationals' addresses also occurred along the same pattern.<sup>37</sup> Albeit not always to effect, Department officials appealed to the offending authorities whenever the United States exercised the protecting power role. One notable example occurred in January 1916 in ostensibly neutral Greece. Anglo-French forces occupying Salonika suddenly seized the Consulates of all four Central Powers and arrested every employee. The lone U.S. Consular officer present scrambled to secure control of the Consular archives and free jailed officials before the Austro-Hungarian Government instituted reprisals against U.K. and French detainees.<sup>38</sup> Despite such violations, U.S. actions as a strong, engaged neutral power no doubt prevented more incidents in the fractious atmosphere that suffused the global conflict.

The Department also devoted significant effort to mundane but necessary matters of facilities maintenance. Buildings rented for diplomatic purposes contained valuable documents, furniture, equipment, and sometimes vehicles. Governments also maintained the lodgings of departed officials, which often housed their personal items as well. In many locations states employed one or more persons to superintend this sacrosanct property in hostile territory, and they frequently lodged in the protected buildings. "Host" governments usually respected belligerent property rights because they valued the same privileges in enemy lands, and each state took responsibility to pay their own foreign bills. U.S. officials at posts all over the world created accounts to receive funds from the government whose property they protected, and then arranged for payment of rent, utilities, repairs, and salaries. They facilitated maintenance

of Austro-Hungarian assets in widespread locales including Liverpool, Capetown, Calcutta, Singapore, Auckland, Winnipeg, and Belize City. Sometimes that responsibility necessitated substantial exertion; when the war interrupted extensive renovations to the Dual Monarchy's Tokyo Embassy, Vienna tasked Washington with oversight of the considerable work remaining and inspection upon completion.<sup>39</sup> Every post rendered quarterly accounts of all payments in triplicate, a significant obligation at stations that managed multiple properties for several states.<sup>40</sup>

U.S. officials credentialed to Austria-Hungary performed the same protecting power duties for governments the United States represented within the Dual Monarchy. The French Embassy left Consul Paul Durieux behind to live in the building and safeguard the diplomatic archives. When the Austro-Hungarian Government cut off utilities, Penfield's staff successfully petitioned to reinstate service.<sup>41</sup> The Embassy failed to prevent expulsion of U.K. Vice Consul O.S. Phillpotts, delegated to oversee U.K. diplomatic assets in Vienna. Thereafter the U.S. Consulate took over the task and Embassy Chief Clerk Walter Reineck resided in the building.<sup>42</sup> In January 1916 the Japanese Government declined to buy the building that housed their Vienna Embassy when the landlord wished to sell. U.S. staff subsequently superintended a wholesale removal of Japanese government-owned property, personal effects of departed diplomats, and items left behind by private individuals. This arduous assignment entailed generating numerous detailed inventories, securing transport, locating multiple storage facilities, hiring movers, purchasing insurance, and transferring Japanese payment funds from Berlin. Arbitrating disputes about local contractors' fees charged to Tokyo extended into 1917.<sup>43</sup>

## **Foreign Nationals in Enemy Territory**

Amid multiple complications, U.S. officials did their best to facilitate the mutual repatriation of non-combatants. Women and children of enemy nationality resided in every warring state, and in principle all agreed not to hinder their departure. Reports of unfair treatment, however, caused tension and threats of reprisal. The Austro-Hungarian Government linked the issue to associated concerns, protesting that while they did not interfere with civilians returning to Russia, the Russian Government continued to impound Dual Monarchy consular personnel.<sup>44</sup> Serbia allowed Austro-Hungarian non-combatants to exit the realm only in November 1914, then complained

“bitterly” about Vienna’s failure to reciprocate.<sup>45</sup> Repatriation negotiations between the Hapsburg Empire and Japan labored into 1915 with neither side willing to act until assured the other would do so.<sup>46</sup> Questions surrounding men too old or physically unfit for military service proved even more problematic. Armies established differing maximum ages for service at the outset of war, subsequently extended to older cohorts as manpower shortages arose; the moving target of who governments considered too old to fight hindered mutual repatriation. Through U.S. intermediaries, Paris and Vienna negotiated into 1916 to arrange verifiable, supervised medical assessment of putative invalids to ensure that no service-eligible men returned.<sup>47</sup> Penfield also forwarded Austro-Hungarian concerns about reported atrocities against civilian groups, such as accounts that the Russian Army removed to parts unknown the entire Jewish population of Sniatyn, Galicia—over 3000 people.<sup>48</sup> The United States Government strictly adhered to the conventions of neutrality in acting as intermediary. Department officers conveyed great numbers of communications between belligerents without comment or advocacy, simply indicating their readiness to deliver any reply with “impartial amity.”<sup>49</sup>

The war also generated intrinsically unresolvable issues, such as the predicament of “mobilisable” detainees. All belligerents barred the departure of able-bodied fighting-age men who owed allegiance to enemy countries, and sometimes of minors approaching the birthday upon which they could enter into military service. The Austro-Hungarian Government detained mobilisable employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway office in Vienna. A.V. Clark’s wife, mother of three, refused to leave without him, and thus came under the protective responsibility of U.S. officials.<sup>50</sup> Local authorities jailed 22 U.K. nationals working at a shipyard near Trieste; the American Consul could only appeal for better conditions of confinement.<sup>51</sup> The Dual Monarchy would not release U.K. subject Dr. W.E. Crum, despite pleas communicated through the Department from his employer, the New York City Metropolitan Museum of Art.<sup>52</sup> Across the British Empire, authorities detained Austro-Hungarian and German reservists. The U.S. diplomatic agent at Cairo reported “several hundred” in his district, and Toronto estimated “a large number” within the Consulate’s jurisdiction.<sup>53</sup> In many cases, governments detained mobilisables for the duration of the war. U.S. officials assumed the unenviable task of advocating for these unwelcome aliens. Department officers responded to all manner of concerns, such as reports of bubonic plague at a camp in India, jailing internees with convicts in Algeria, and inadequate dental care in South Africa.<sup>54</sup>

The same issues arose on a much larger scale with regard to prisoners of war (POW). Belligerents quickly captured unprecedented numbers of enemy soldiers, but no government had prepared adequately to care for so many charges.<sup>55</sup> U.S. officials conveyed multitudinous accusations between combatants about poor food, inadequate clothing, deficient housing, substandard medical care, insufficient recreational facilities, interdicted personal communications, pilfered remittances, and uncivilized treatment by guards.<sup>56</sup> Complainants frequently threatened reprisals if their own prisoners did not receive better treatment. The mistrust and resentment belligerents held toward each other on account of their captive countrymen required Department personnel to pursue seemingly endless exchanges in hopes of registering improvements. Moreover, they received little thanks for their efforts. The governments and people American officials represented increasingly resented what they perceived as U.S. bias in favor of the enemy; Penfield described Austro-Hungarian authorities treating his staff as “three-fourths enemy.”<sup>57</sup>

## **Initiatives for a New Era**

In addition to representational duties, the United States Government engaged in novel activities to alleviate the suffering of those forcibly prevented from repatriation or rendered indigent by the war. The Department of State facilitated significant humanitarian initiatives on an unprecedented scale. In so doing, the United States fostered norms and procedures to promote protections that continue to shape international expectations a century later.

U.S. Government personnel developed an increasingly important role as neutral inspectors of detainee conditions. In the early months of the war, Department leaders feared that sending Embassy staff to inspect camps could compromise impartiality because host governments might interpret a critical report as evidence of bias in favor of the enemy. U.S. officials in Europe, witnessing firsthand the rapidly heightening tensions over POW and internee conditions, nevertheless declared themselves willing to observe and report. Secretary Bryan first approved *sui generis* missions on an ad-hoc basis in autumn 1914.<sup>58</sup> In each case he secured the concurrence of the host government and assurances that the requesting government would accept the inspector's report as valid. Washington progressively overcame its reticence to sanction official U.S. Government inspections as a proper diplomatic function, largely because no alternative

to address belligerents' concerns appeared feasible. By mid-1915 Department personnel conducted inspections more frequently after Lansing issued a general approval to proceed as they saw fit. At first, the Department required posts to send reports through Washington in order to determine whether inspectors' language required excisions to avoid the appearance of non-neutrality. In November 1915, Penfield insisted that the reports' value depended on rapid transmission, and he persuaded Lansing to approve European posts sending reports directly to each other. Washington delegated to receiving posts authority to excise any material they deemed "too severe a criticism based on the opinion of the investigator."<sup>59</sup>

Although the situation in each country varied, POW reporting in Austria-Hungary represents a fairly typical example of procedure. Penfield often detailed examination of civilian detainees to his personal secretary, Thomas D. M. Cardeza. Penfield likely calculated that observations conveyed by a man intimately familiar with the U.S. Ambassador increased governments' confidence in the reports.<sup>60</sup> Penfield appropriated the services of the Embassy's naval Attaché, Commander Stephen V. Graham, specifically to inspect POW camps. Graham could accomplish little for the War Department in Vienna, and his military status carried weight with Hapsburg officials.<sup>61</sup> The Embassy created administrative "Divisions" for each country the United States represented, staffed by personnel dedicated to that work. In many cases Divisional staff included a foreign national diplomat left behind under special permission, or a local Austrian subject employed by that Embassy before the war. Consuls sometimes investigated conditions within their districts. On occasions when a particularly tense situation arose, Penfield conducted inspections personally.<sup>62</sup> The archival record suggests that inspections occurred on a semi-systematic basis. When a government complained about conditions in a particular camp, a U.S. official investigated. The Embassy staff also arranged regional tours, for example, sending a team to visit camps holding U.K. subjects and French citizens in the Waldhofen district of Lower Austria and filing a suite of reports *en masse*.<sup>63</sup> Penfield committed his staff to inspect all Italian camps during February 1916 in hopes of reducing disputation between Rome and Vienna.<sup>64</sup> U.S. officials frequently negotiated with Austro-Hungarian authorities to ensure they could interview detainees without guards present. Problems associated with the obligation to properly care for prisoners sometimes generated extraordinary communications. In February 1915 material shortages caused Austro-Hungarian authorities to propose purchasing 300,000 pairs of boots from U.S. manufacturers exclusively for distribution to POWs. Vienna asked Washington to request the Entente



powers allow an exception to the blockade. In exchange (and without asking first if Washington were willing to take on the task), the Dual Monarchy promised in advance to allow U.S. inspectors a free hand to monitor and report on dissemination.<sup>65</sup> The Department also conveyed reports from external American posts concerning camps that housed Austro-Hungarian subjects. Consulate Malta, for example, included photographs and programs from Hapsburg internees' 1915 Christmas celebrations.<sup>66</sup> As occurred in all belligerent countries, Department employees routinely encountered resentment at U.S. efforts to improve the lot of internees in the Dual Monarchy. Although Hapsburg officials generally expressed appreciation for American efforts to help their captured compatriots, they also suspected Penfield's staff of acting more diligently than U.S. officials elsewhere. Nevertheless, the Embassy conducted inspections until Vienna broke relations with Washington in April 1917.<sup>67</sup>

Additionally, the Department of State acted as an ersatz international clearinghouse-bank to diminish the plight of the detained and destitute. Belligerent governments required a mechanism to deposit money in enemy states to maintain their diplomatic property and supplement the meager allowances their opponents allotted to internees. Individuals and philanthropic organizations also required a way to deliver support funds to civilians and soldiers who might reside on either side of the battle lines. Needy people in neutral countries suffered privation as well, which generated additional humanitarian efforts. The war disrupted longstanding arrangements for money transfers, currency exchange, and credit extension. Moving gold in the manner accomplished by the American Relief Committee (see Chapter 2, Outbreak, and Chapter 3, Germany) proved too unwieldy to serve as a permanent measure. On September 3, 1914, Secretary Bryan requested one million dollars to defray extraordinary diplomatic expenses associated with U.S. assumption of protecting power obligations. Citing the necessity of "an advance of money to meet drafts and cover outstanding balances," he proposed a fund to float expenses distributed on behalf of governments and organizations pending reimbursement.<sup>68</sup> Congress approved within a week.<sup>69</sup> Thereafter the Department progressively developed an extensive system to track the funds of every organization and government transferring money, as well as accounting procedures for the diplomatic and consular officials who disbursed cash or vouchers.<sup>70</sup> The key mechanism consisted of a clever paper maneuver: In an idealized typical example, the Austro-Hungarian Government would deposit 10,000 Crowns with U.S. Embassy Vienna designated for POW relief in France. Penfield's staff would then convert that amount to Francs at the official exchange rate and notify U.S. Embassy Paris to register

a deposit in their Austro-Hungarian POW account. The Crowns, however, remained in an account in Vienna to support French POWs. Embassy Paris would subsequently perform the same procedure: receive funds from the Third Republic, deposit them to the Dual Monarchy's credit in France, calculate the exchange into Crowns, and notify Embassy Vienna of the amount to deposit in the French account there.<sup>71</sup> U.S. Embassies and Consulates arranged with local banks to assure recipients could convert vouchers into cash. If a depositor's account fell into arrears, the responsible diplomatic post requested replenishment funds. Though cumbersome and labor-intensive (posts transmitted copies of all transactions to Washington), this financial sleight-of-hand facilitated an enormous international, cross-belligerent relief effort that preserved many lives and improved the quality of life for many more.

Red Cross operations in Austria-Hungary proper, unlike the problems in Germany (see Chapter 3), functioned without significant Department intervention beyond the "good offices" role. By October 1914 one military-medical hospital had set up in Vienna, and a second in Budapest. The original Director of the Budapest unit proved unsuitable, but Red Cross officials exercised responsibility for replacing him; Consulate Budapest only got involved to the extent of making a few investigations.<sup>72</sup> Department officers primarily limited their efforts to routine activities such as conveying messages between American Red Cross (ARC) personnel, transferring funds for salaries and supplies, and facilitating transport of equipment and personnel.<sup>73</sup>

As elsewhere, the wives of U.S. officials played a prominent role in war-related nursing and relief work. Anne Penfield organized a variety of efforts, contributing from her fortune to fund operations. By mid-September her team produced 100,000 bandages to treat the 20,000 wounded Hapsburg and captured Russian soldiers who had already arrived in Vienna; the Emperor quickly recognized her efforts to aid the country's Red Cross.<sup>74</sup> At Thanksgiving she organized a dinner for 2000 refugees and wounded, and also sponsored meals for all the American Red Cross personnel stationed in Vienna.<sup>75</sup> Mrs. Penfield also donated to Archduke Charles Stephen's school for invalids.<sup>76</sup> In 1916 Emperor Franz Joseph personally conferred upon Anne the Order of Saint Elizabeth, the only non-royal personage to receive that honor.<sup>77</sup> While Thomas Cardeza visited POW camps, his French-born wife volunteered for Red Cross duty on the Galician front. Working twenty-hour days and distinguishing herself in "bearing wounded from the battlefield," Hapsburg authorities recognized her as the "most efficient nurse" in that organization. By early 1915 she had taken charge of all Red Cross field nurses in the Cracow region.<sup>78</sup>

The Ambassador and his subordinates, however, also encountered significant Red Cross-related complications; efforts to treat wounded soldiers and prevent disease among the general populace in the Balkans presented myriad complexities. Major typhus, typhoid, cholera, and other epidemics undulated through the region, causing repeated public health crises that affected not only active soldiers but also the POWs and civilians under the care of Department officials, multiple ARC programs, and foreign medical organization initiatives that required American protection. Because U.S. Ministers accredited to Balkan Governments reported to Embassy Vienna as their superior diplomatic post, the medico-political and sanitary-logistical headaches that arose in Serbia, Montenegro, and even neutral Albania fell under Penfield's aegis.<sup>79</sup>

Insofar as possible, U.S. officials also attended to the individual issues of countless foreign nationals. Within Hapsburg lands, U.S. consular officers expended considerable effort to distribute relief funds contributed by foreign governments for their detained nationals. By early 1915 Consulate Budapest regularly handled 200 cases each week. The small Fiume Consulate made over 4000 payments between November 1914 and November 1915. The Department also managed significant services to Hapsburg subjects abroad.<sup>80</sup> Madam Therese Klodzianowski, residing in Nice, received her widow's pension from a Vienna insurer via the Austro-Hungarian Consulate until war broke out. The U.S. Consulate agreed to facilitate payments, but six months later she had received none; the Foreign Ministry received word of her "very sad plight," "deprived of all resources and severely ill." Vienna appealed to Washington to rectify the matter quickly.<sup>81</sup> Between May 1915 and April 1917 the Navy committed cruiser USS *Des Moines* to refugee removal in the Mediterranean, including many non-Americans, which necessitated significant interaction with Department officials.<sup>82</sup> The Department canvassed Central Powers posts about the fate of Indian Government official Colonel B. J. Singh's two teenage sons, last seen clinging to wreckage after the December 1916 torpedoing of SS *Persia*. Six months later, Penfield's staff located them in an internment camp in Lower Austria.<sup>83</sup> Interventions of this type routinely required copious communications, detailed followup, and painstaking recordkeeping.

## **A Day at the Office in Extraordinary Times**

The employees who endeavored to alleviate myriad suffering operated under increasingly trying conditions. Department officers and their staffs faced multiple

difficulties simply to conduct work, and eventually struggled merely to survive. Neutral humanitarianism amid global war exacted a personal toll on its practitioners.

From the moment war erupted, staffing shortages constituted the single greatest concern facing Department employees in Europe. The immediate labor emergency occurred in August–September 1914, when thousands of Americans wanted to depart, many applied to attain U.S. citizenship, and protecting power duties generated enormous additional work. Officials in-country cobbled together temporary help from a variety of sources.<sup>84</sup> They gratefully accepted assistance from resident U.S. citizen volunteers, regardless of their experience or qualifications, but that help dwindled fairly rapidly as many left for home. Americans who remained because of businesses or family commitments assisted needy compatriots beyond the early surge of removals and drew upon local community relationships to secure services.<sup>85</sup> In a few instances the Department supplied professional help, either deliberately or inadvertently. Washington loaned a Clerk to Vienna through mid-October.<sup>86</sup> Consulate-General Budapest utilized the services of two consuls temporarily unable to proceed to their assigned Balkan posts owing to war-related transportation interruptions. The principal aid, however, came from emergency hires. Officials in the field employed Americans and foreigners on their own authority. Budapest augmented its four-man professional staff by hiring 16 men and women—American, Hungarian, and French—between August 10 and September 11. The Russian, Serbian, French, and U.K. Governments agreed to pay for seven of those positions to provide protective power services, though procedures for securing reimbursement from those Governments took months to arrange.<sup>87</sup> All those extra workers required furniture, typewriters, telephones, and stationery; every post exceeded its budget for clerk hire and to rent or purchase necessary equipment. Even with all those augmentations, everyone—from volunteers to the Ambassador—worked as many as 18 hours a day, seven days a week. Penfield glowed with praise for his staff: “Each person has worked to the utmost of his physical capacity...There has been no question of office hours.”<sup>88</sup> When the immediate crisis abated, posts petitioned Washington to cover their extraordinary expenditures, and the Department drew from supplemental war funding to defray the costs.<sup>89</sup>

Principal Department officers in Washington subsequently struggled to respond to continued pleas for additional help. Trieste Consul Ralph Busser complained to Washington about “wretchedly inadequate” clerical staff “even under normal conditions.” Having no typist or stenographer for months, he performed clerical work late into the night after representing the interests of five nations all day.<sup>90</sup> Penfield

peppered the Department with requests, citing a constantly increasing workload. “Please send early, efficient expert assistant; one good accountant; two stenographers. Knowledge of German useful, good judgement and industry indispensable.”<sup>91</sup> By September 1915 the Ambassador requested “younger service men,” apparently prizing stamina given the constant strain of work.<sup>92</sup> Amid rumors of Bulgarian entry into the war, Penfield warned the Department against assuming additional protecting power obligations, describing posts as “fairly swamped with the multitudinous responsibilities already assumed.”<sup>93</sup> By Thanksgiving 1916, attrition worsened: “Business here increasing and capacity permanent staff waning. Last six months Embassy lost eight workers with places unfilled.”<sup>94</sup>

Even significant supplemental war funding could not satisfy European posts. Between 1914 and 1918 the Department secured sufficient appropriations to increase the number of Secretaryships from 70 to 97 (an increase of 38.5%). However, the new examination requirements of 1906 for the Consular Service and 1915 for the Foreign Service, designed to increase professionalism, retarded filling those positions. Only 13 of 30 applicants passed the diplomatic test in 1914. The Department lowered acceptance standards thereafter to fill more slots.<sup>95</sup> Citing similar requests from other missions, Lansing informed Penfield of the Department’s desire “to be as liberal with each as the appropriations at the Department’s command would permit.”<sup>96</sup> Sometimes Washington supplied the workers Penfield requested, more often filled only some of the positions, and on occasion temporarily loaned officers from another post.<sup>97</sup> Most frequently, however, they demurred: “If Embassy finds it absolutely necessary to have additional clerical assistance, Department will give consideration to the request” or rejected his requests outright: “Department regrets no service men available at present moment.”<sup>98</sup> Over time, Washington officials utilized supplemental funds to increase significantly the number of non-professional hires on a “temporary” basis (i.e. until the war ended). Embassy Vienna, for example, counted 34 staff in addition to career diplomatic officers in March 1917.<sup>99</sup> Comparatively low pay coupled with inflation, however, generated significant turnover. Simply keeping posts minimally supplied with the abnormally enhanced cadre of clerical employees necessary to accomplish neutral humanitarian work proved exceedingly difficult. The complement of professional staff grew hardly at all. Between 1914 and 1917, the net gain in diplomatic and consular officers assigned to Austro-Hungarian posts increased by only one per year (see Figure 1).<sup>100</sup>

The correspondence workload illustrates the cascade that engulfed this beleaguered cadre. Between July 31, 1914, and April 7, 1917, the Vienna Embassy and



Consulate-General processed 136,830 incoming and outgoing communications—an average of 140 messages every day. They also disbursed approximately \$750,000 in relief funds.<sup>101</sup> Despite modern technologies such as telegraphy, fast mail delivery by steamship or rail, typewriters, and local telephony, communications remained a laborious enterprise. A typical ARC exchange exemplifies the number of steps necessary to ensure effective messaging. Red Cross officials composed a draft telegram and forwarded it to Washington. Department officers amended it as they deemed appropriate (typically deleting words to reduce expense) and wired it to the relevant overseas post. Telegrams to Central Powers states took a circuitous path involving multiple re-transmissions: they typically landed in London, were routed through a neutral intermediary such as Copenhagen or Berne, then passed on to Vienna or Berlin. Cables from Washington routinely took two days to reach Vienna.<sup>102</sup> Messages addressed to consular posts outside the capital necessitated an additional retransmission. A local Department representative contacted the addressee, secured a reply, and communicated back through this multi-nodal chain until Red Cross headquarters received the message. The Department subsequently informed the ARC of the telegraphic expenses incurred and the Red Cross remitted the sum requested. Assuming no garbled messages or difficulty locating the addressee (which occurred with some frequency), accomplishing one such exchange required Department employees in Washington and Europe to perform as many as a dozen actions.<sup>103</sup> Officials routinely followed up cables with confirmations and more detailed reports transmitted via diplomatic pouch. Regular mail from Rome to the United States round trip commonly required six weeks.<sup>104</sup> Cypher messages necessitated additional effort to encode and decode. For approximately every 100,000 communications handled, therefore, Department personnel had to do—literally—a million things. A similarly laborious process occurred each time they facilitated money transfers between private individuals (which often involved calculation of fluctuating exchange rates and complex accounting), responded to queries from U.S. citizens about loved ones abroad, fielded entreaties from families in belligerent countries about those detained in enemy territory, attended to governments' concerns about poor treatment of their war prisoners, or encountered the plethora of additional issues that unceasingly arose.

In addition to sheer volume, a variety of communications problems bedeviled understaffed posts' work. Washington did not receive 56 of 228 telegrams sent from Vienna between September 21 and October 28, 1914. Although U.S. officials attributed much of the problem to the press of events, they also suspected Austro-Hungarian



authorities of interference.<sup>105</sup> Penfield quickly grew frustrated with the Department's costly and inefficient policy of sending all messages through Washington. He wondered why, for example, the huge number of queries concerning the welfare of individual Austro-Hungarians abroad could not be wired directly to the relevant post, with a copy sent to Washington in due course.<sup>106</sup> In response, the Department gradually devolved upon its representatives abroad more authority to initiate independent communications between posts. In November 1915 Penfield calculated that messages to and from the Austro-Hungarian Government, only one of many categories of correspondence, comprised "more than half" the work of "the greatly augmented and costly staff of the Embassy, to say nothing of the enormous expenditure for telegrams, cables, and postage."<sup>107</sup> Yet Embassy Vienna could only utilize diplomatic pouch services via Berlin for these sensitive communications because the Department had no pouch exchange with Switzerland. In early 1916 Vienna further cramped communications by restricting courier privileges to regular Department employees. Diplomatic couriers enjoyed immunity that enabled authorized persons to carry packages without going through inspection or customs, but Austro-Hungarian officials increasingly feared espionage and contraband.<sup>108</sup> During 1916 Washington painstakingly negotiated an agreement with Berne, but the service only became operational in February 1917, shortly before Vienna severed relations.<sup>109</sup>

The issue of personal "clandestine correspondence" and its relation to the sanctity of diplomatic communications presented a significant recurring difficulty. The U.S. Government quickly worked out agreements with the warring powers to treat the diplomatic pouch and other transmission vehicles for official communications as immune from inspection. However, some U.S. officials abused the privilege by conveying personal messages, including those of foreign nationals, in diplomatically-protected packets. This illicit correspondence channel enabled the sender to avoid expensive postal charges, assure unmolested delivery, and circumvent an increasingly sluggish trickle of regular mail delivery. In some cases Department officers made humanitarian exceptions for those too destitute to afford postage, especially since such messages typically included appeals for funds to relieve their plight. In other instances, U.S. officials facilitated a clandestine communication in exchange for assistance on some matter of importance, or simply as a favor. Such irregularities, however, threatened the inviolability of protected messaging; if host governments believed diplomatic packages included information injurious to their war effort, they could cripple operations by disallowing privileged communications altogether. Washington chided posts with

increasing stridency to respect the rules, but the problem persisted even after the United States entered the war as a belligerent.<sup>110</sup>

## **The Costs Borne by Neutral Humanitarians**

Understaffed and overloaded American employees in Europe increasingly suffered the privations of siege warfare as the Entente-imposed blockade tightened. In November 1915 Penfield reported food prices had at least doubled, and “scores of essential articles that cannot be had at any price.” The Ambassador presciently deployed his family fortune and Roman Catholic connections to secure key supplies. He arranged to install a cow and 100 chickens on the property of a nearby convent. Fully supplied with milk, cheese, butter, and eggs, he reported to Lansing: “Vienna society has enjoyed many a laugh over the Ambassador’s neutral cow and hens.” The U.S. Embassy operated the only functional automobiles among the capital’s diplomatic community; Penfield bargained with the Romanian Ambassador to acquire gasoline. Penfield also secured wheat flour via the U.S. Minister in Bucharest.<sup>111</sup> A month later he informed Washington that Austrian currency had depreciated by 47 percent.<sup>112</sup> By mid-1916, “without a day’s leave of absence, with a shorthanded staff, and getting jaded in consequence,” “we are driven with work and burdened with responsibility ... The food pinch and general distress are advancing so fast that it is plain the good people of this Monarchy are in for a winter of pitiful privation and misfortune. Before I could start from my home this morning for the Embassy offices, I was simply forced to give away more than \$100. And so it goes, and must for a long time.”<sup>113</sup> By early 1917, the British Board of Trade calculated that inflation since the war began had increased 111 percent in Germany, but an even more harrowing 177 percent in Austria-Hungary.<sup>114</sup>

As the situation steadily worsened, the Department consented to European diplomatic posts’ entreaties to forward some hard-to-get items through the diplomatic pouch. Despite his constant pleas for more personnel, Penfield rejected the Department’s proposed assignment of an additional employee to his staff because of concern about caring for the man’s invalid wife.<sup>115</sup> By autumn 1916 even the wealthy Ambassador felt the pinch personally. Penfield wrote Lansing asking him to ensure pouched delivery of the *New York Times* and *New York World*: “We are living on half-portions of food, which is not half so serious as to be without American newspapers.”<sup>116</sup>

Consular officers soon advocated for the same diplomatic pouch privileges, which highlighted the increasingly illusory distinction between the two services. Consuls argued they worked just as hard, performed the same range of duties, and most also had their families living at post.<sup>117</sup> Vienna Consul-General Albert Halstead worried about quality of food for his children and the “prime necessity” of soap: “... surely diplomatic and consular officers—actual American citizens—should be aided in having a healthy life.” Since most worked outside Vienna, they often experienced shortages more acutely. Prague Consul Charles Hoover prized tobacco above all: “Cigars, a luxury ordinarily, are now almost a necessity for the relaxation they bring from the constant nervous strain during the day.”<sup>118</sup> Carlsbad Consul Wallace Young wrote to Consular Service Director Wilbur Carr personally about his need of well-made shoes and the impossibility of acquiring adhesive tape for his bad feet.<sup>119</sup> The Department responded quickly, allowing consular officials to receive personal supplies via the pouch as well.

Supporting basic living needs of U.S. officials multiplied the volume of pouch traffic to an extent that it swamped Embassy London, which processed diplomatic mail to the Continent. By June 1916 shipments averaged two thousand pounds every week, delivered by special messengers, to seven diplomatic missions. In addition to many small packages of personal items and commodities, the shipments included bulky items such as “a constant supply of automobile tires.” To reduce the administrative load on Embassy London, the Department contracted with the United States Dispatch Agency to administer the burgeoning traffic.<sup>120</sup>

Nevertheless, the situation became so acute that in August 1916 Washington approached the warring powers about shipping bulk quantities of foodstuffs to posts abroad for distribution to staff. In November Austro-Hungarian authorities approved shipments of food for all U.S. citizen Department employees, strictly for their personal and family consumption. Penfield fronted the money for a massive order, intending to distribute food to staff at cost and provide essentials free of charge to those who could not pay. When additional complications delayed the first deliveries, the Ambassador spent his own money to acquire comestibles in the interim.<sup>121</sup>

Those hardships exacerbated multiple tensions about compensation and unequal treatment of U.S. employees. All but Penfield lived in near-penury by mid-1916, owing to rising prices, devalued Hapsburg money, and fluctuating exchange rates that doubled or tripled the cost of living. The Ambassador advocated increased pay for his hard-pressed professional Secretaries, noting that they must appropriately represent

“a conspicuously Great Power” and that they rightfully objected to “running into debt through serving their country.”<sup>122</sup> Fledgling Third Secretary Allan Dulles, whose career culminated as Director of Central Intelligence, sent a newsy handwritten letter after two months on the job to his uncle, Secretary “Bert” Lansing. Amid describing conditions in Austria-Hungary, he inserted: “Vienna is a frightfully expensive city. I hope that we Secretaries are going to receive a helping hand from the recent special appropriation for the benefit of indigent Secretaries and Consuls in belligerent lands.”<sup>123</sup> The Department’s options were hamstrung because statute fixed career employee salaries and Congress appropriated supplemental funding sporadically. Department principals could sometimes promote an individual Secretary and thereby increase his pay, but such a maneuver proved justifiable only infrequently—even under circumstances that required junior officers to assume extraordinary responsibilities. Non-professional clerks received enhancements from supplemental war funds, but they still found it a “hardship to more than make ends meet” under a standard of living inferior to what they could enjoy at home.<sup>124</sup> Comparatively poorly-paid and geographically isolated consular officials also advocated cost-of-living supplements.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, during the first two years of war the Department refused consular officials home leave while granting it in principle to diplomatic officers.<sup>126</sup> Owing to complaints about that inequity and in recognition of the “great strain under which many [consular officers] have labored,” in 1916 Department principals altered the policy, but only “if the condition of government business will warrant it.” That proviso hindered consuls’ ability to take overseas trips because only two or three worked at each post; during one’s absence the other(s) drew considerable extra duty.<sup>127</sup>

As stress, overwork, and deprivation took their toll, U.S. officials increasingly suffered psychological and physical debility. The war’s sudden onset caught Budapest Consul-General William Coffin in France attending to his ailing pregnant wife. He left for Hungary immediately only to return to France after one week because her condition worsened.<sup>128</sup> Mother and child survived. Thereafter, as political and material conditions fluctuated, Coffin vacillated about whether one or both should live with him in Budapest. His conscience allowing him not even a short vacation, Coffin lost weight and suffered insomnia under the daily burden of humanitarian obligations. In July 1915 Penfield urgently requested the Department assign another Vice Consul to Budapest because Coffin’s health suffered from overwork and he needed “immediate rest.”<sup>129</sup> A month later Coffin described to Consular Service Director Wilbur Carr his hollowed-out feelings: “You become hardened, like a butcher, and the sight of tears or grief has no longer

any effect. You're like a barber—'next.'" Writing in August 1915—having no idea how long the ordeal would continue—he hoped to “hold on myself till it ends.”<sup>130</sup> In October 1916 Embassy Vienna Second Secretary Frederic Dolebare underwent an emergency appendectomy, developed multiple complications, then contracted diphtheria, which eventually resulted in paralysis. His doctors attributed much of his debility to overwork. Physically unable to travel home, he convalesced in Europe for eight months. Dolebare resumed duty at Legation Berne in May 1917, only to contract pneumonia the following January, which required immediate long-term medical leave in the United States. Embassy Vienna First Secretary Ulysses Grant-Smith already suffered health problems when the war began; he took his summer 1914 leave under medical care in London until the Department prematurely recalled him to post in August. Debilitation from overwork plagued him for the duration. In 1915 Penfield allowed him the rare privilege of a month's home medical leave for recuperation. By 1916, however, Grant-Smith's health failed to such an extent that he took leave from April until August.<sup>131</sup> In December 1916 Penfield reported him “again broken down” and Grant-Smith himself wrote to Third Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips that he had “broken down completely.”<sup>132</sup> The Department immediately sent him stateside, not to return to the field until July 1917. As the exhausted Grant-Smith departed Vienna, he described the staff as “simply done to death” and therefore more susceptible to illness: Sheldon Crosby “in anything but robust health,” Allen Dulles “confined to bed with a low fever,” and the Clerks “on the ragged edge.” In an uncharacteristically poorly-typed letter that illustrated his decline, Grant-Smith declared, “I have never known a more conscientiously (sic) industrious and capable group of men than my colleagues here” but that, “they are withiut (sic) exception discouraged and in low spirits.”<sup>133</sup>

By early 1917, Penfield could count as fit for duty only one of the six diplomatic staff putatively assigned to Embassy Vienna: in addition to the absence of Grant-Smith and Dolebare, Rutherford Bingham—in danger of “following in Grant-Smith's footsteps and collapsing completely”—soon departed, Sheldon Crosby underwent an appendectomy requiring several months' recovery, and Dulles laid up at the Ambassador's residence with rheumatic feet.<sup>134</sup> Only just-arrived Glenn Stewart attended Penfield's inaugural audience with new Emperor-King Karl I on January 26.<sup>135</sup> Lansing and President Wilson soon decided to call Penfield home for consultations because he too exhibited signs of exhaustion; the only Ambassador to a belligerent country who had not taken a vacation to the U.S. since the war began, he inexplicably declined Lansing's recent offers to increase diplomatic staff in Vienna. Penfield's



absence would enable Washington to restock and reorganize the professional staff. The Department's inability to send an experienced First Secretary to act as *Chargé d'affaires*, however, prevented rapid implementation of the plan. After the United States severed relations with Germany on February 3, 1917, Lansing delayed because it became apparent that Austria-Hungary might soon break with the United States.<sup>136</sup>

The strains of global conflict also generated a variety of management and personnel difficulties. Some officials could not contain their pro- or anti-Central Power sentiments, others did not get along with their colleagues under heightened stress, a number left the service, and a few resigned owing to poor health exacerbated by wartime duties.<sup>137</sup> Every time Washington principals accommodated such exigencies, it generated a domino effect through the thinly spread front line of professional officers: removing Mr. X from Station A required assigning a replacement to that post, which in turn created a vacancy somewhere else, and so on. Department principals often shuttled incompetents and other "bad apples" from one location to another because they did not have the resources to replace them with better personnel.<sup>138</sup> Despite prewar advances in professionalizing the Diplomatic and Consular Services, accountability procedures and supervisory processes remained incompletely integrated into Departmental operations, especially at harried European posts. Two outsized examples illustrate the kind of imbroglios that could arise when fallible human beings operating within imperfect government structures encountered unprecedented global challenges.

The case of Attilio Clementi illustrates the 20<sup>th</sup> century complications of obsolescent Consular practice when coupled with Departmental procedural lacunae. For centuries, governments hired foreigners familiar with local languages and customs to represent their commercial interests abroad. The late-19<sup>th</sup> century rise of more exclusive conceptualizations about nationality, however, rendered it more difficult to serve multiple masters. Born of Italian parents in Croatia (at that time part of Hungary), Clementi lived in the United States for five years as a young adult and then returned to visit family. Upon arrival, the U.S. Consular Service offered him a job in Fiume as translator-assistant, and he worked his way up to Vice Consul. He traveled to the United States in 1913 to begin establishing U.S. citizenship and then returned to post. The war interrupted Clementi's planned return to complete that process, and thus he remained an Italian subject in the eyes of the Hungarian Government. After Italy entered the war in May 1915, U.S. officials anticipated that Hungarian authorities might detain Clementi as an enemy alien, but had difficulty finding a competent Vice Consul who could work with Consul Benjamin Chase. In July 1916 the Department ordered Chase to Costa Rica



and replaced him with James Young, previously assigned to the Belgrade Consulate until Austro-Hungarian occupation of that city rendered his position superfluous. In the customary process of transferring responsibility between officers, Chase and Young reviewed the accounts and discovered Clementi had stolen relief funds. They went to Clementi's house, found a suicide note, and prevented him from taking his own life. Clementi explained that he took the money to pay bills and intended to reinstate the funds, but the unexpected change of hands occurred before he could do so. He quickly returned all the money, but Ambassador Penfield dismissed him rather than allow him to resign. A subsequent query from an estate lawyer caused Young to initiate additional investigations, and he discovered that in January 1915 Clementi emptied the bank account of the previous Consul, Thomas Heenan, who died at his Fiume post in June 1914. As Young worked through additional financial records, he determined that Clementi also did not account for certain French relief funds distributed in autumn 1914. Clementi asked the Ambassador not to contact Hungarian criminal authorities, hoping instead to arrange for the company that held his security bond to cover the debt. Destitute and disgraced, he promised to pay back the money and pleaded for any sort of employment, or at least assistance with transportation to Vienna so he could live out the war under the roof of his sister. Penfield categorically rejected his entreaties.<sup>139</sup>

The case of Budapest Vice-Consul Frank Mallett highlighted the consequences of inadequate accountability, clearance, and notification practices. Extant accounts indicate Mallett performed admirably in the August-September 1914 crisis, especially since for much of that time he served as Chief of Mission in Consul-General Coffin's absence (see below).<sup>140</sup> On November 12, 1914, Coffin commended his efforts, declared him "badly in need of rest," and granted him a 30-day leave.<sup>141</sup> Coffin also apparently approved (or at least knew of) Mallett's intention to travel in a private capacity to Russia with Hungarian Red Cross relief funds for distribution among Hungarian POWs, but he did not inform Penfield or Washington.<sup>142</sup> Mallett soon engaged in profoundly problematic activities. He accepted additional money from individuals for disbursement to their captured relatives. Newspapers reported that Mallett received travel expenses from the Hungarian Government and that he would enjoy special railway privileges while visiting camps in Russia. No-one in Washington, Vienna, or Petrograd knew anything about it. Mallett's actions constituted participation in the political affairs of a belligerent state, which compromised U.S. neutrality and endangered the American representational program. Washington instructed Vienna, Petrograd, and Budapest to cable him with orders to desist and return to post.<sup>143</sup> But Mallett had already visited

Russian POWs in Austria-Hungary and distributed money to Hapsburg POWs in Russia without authorization. Moreover, he proposed to secure credentials from the ARC with the aim of visiting camps in Siberia, and asked Washington to instruct Embassy Petrograd to assist him.<sup>144</sup> U.S. Ambassador to Russia George Mayre reported that Mallett's unauthorized actions threatened to prejudice American efforts to secure Russian Government approval for access to POW camps. On December 8 Secretary Bryan terminated Mallett's employment and informed all the governments involved. Russian authorities first arrested and then expelled Mallett.<sup>145</sup> In February 1915 Coffin discovered that while temporarily in charge during 1913, Mallett opened an unauthorized line-of-credit account in the name of the Consulate at a Budapest bank. When Mallett departed Hungary for Russia, he left a substantial debt behind at the bank, plus an array of additional creditors.<sup>146</sup>

Thereafter the Mallett affair troubled the Department into the subsequent decade. Mallett reneged repeatedly on promises to return to Budapest. He produced no evidence of how he expended funds in Russia. He did return sufficient money to repay many creditors and some donors, but in August 1915 his remaining obligations still totaled \$7000–8000. The Budapest bank insisted that the Department reimburse the deficit, but Washington refused to recognize the account as a legitimate government liability. Lawyers haggled over the issue for years. After Mallett returned to the United States in 1916, the Department continuously hectoring him to settle accounts and he repeatedly promised to do so. In April 1920, Department officials notified Mallett that the Austrian currency collapse enabled him to erase the debt for a few hundred dollars, but he still failed to deliver. Inquiries from donors about whether Mallett delivered their funds continued until 1925. Department officers at home and abroad expended considerable time and generated massive documentation as they attempted to resolve the issue.<sup>147</sup>

From the organization's perspective, these incidents exposed flaws in Departmental procedures, processes, and policies. In the Clementi case, Consul Chase exercised lax management of his subordinate, and general accountability practices clearly required refinement. Clementi's dilemma illustrated a key disadvantage of hiring foreigners as official representatives; those lacking the inherent protections of U.S. citizenship were much more susceptible to various forms of compromise or distress. Moreover, a personnel system that provided advancement opportunities and higher pay for one class of employees while denying those benefits to others who performed the same work did nothing to enhance loyalty. The Mallett imbroglio demonstrated the

fallacy of regarding Consular officials as intrinsically separated from the diplomatic sphere. Despite the obvious political ramifications, Coffin did not seek prior approval regarding the circumstances of Mallett's leave. Nor did Coffin mention in his slow-mail notification to Washington anything about a mission Mallett would conduct in an ostensibly personal capacity. Mallett's 1913 defalcation indicated the necessity to impose more robust safeguards for the proper use of Department authorities and improve oversight of personnel.

## Crucible

The tiny cohort of American officials serving in Austria-Hungary encountered the full range of experiences attendant to the U.S. policy of active, humanitarian neutrality. Absent their ministrations, many would have died and many more would have suffered additional misery. Simultaneously, every day they witnessed evidence of travail so enormous as to defy comprehension—no matter how hard U.S. representatives tried, the task remained of Sisyphean proportions. They responded with continued effort, but also better organization. Consuls devised methods to accomplish tasks more efficiently. The Embassy worked with Consulates to streamline operations, to avoid duplicitous communication, and to determine a rational division of work.<sup>148</sup> But the fundamental structural problem lay in the assumption that the Department's responsibilities could be cleanly divided into superior diplomatic work and inferior consular functions. Already in 1916, Penfield broached with the Department how to address "...the exact relations which should exist between Embassy and consulates, in view of the many new problems which are constantly presenting themselves for solution, especially in relation to the care of foreign interests, which in all their phases have a political bearing."<sup>149</sup> Officials at other posts, as well as in Washington, reached the same conclusion: the neutral-in-wartime experience demonstrated the intrinsically "political" nature of all Department work. The boots-on-the-ground encounters of officers in the field indicated the necessity of "regularizing relations between the two branches of the foreign service."<sup>150</sup> Department principals decided the question must wait until war's end, but as soon as the guns fell silent the discussion about re-inventing U.S. diplomacy to operate in the modern world began in earnest.

## Notes

- 1 Professional staff figures based on the last prewar *Register of the Department of State* (Washington: GPO, November 10, 1913). Documents detailing the number and responsibilities of non-professional staff appear very sporadically, and even those few records rarely account for all employees, so this account presents only a general approximation of support staffing.
- 2 For a snapshot of the typical outlook and work life of rank-and-file diplomatic personnel below the plenipotentiary level, see Rachel West, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978), pp. 114–124. For the prewar socio-cultural milieu out of which most foreign service officers emerged, see Robert Schultzing, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind: The Training, Outlook, and Style of United States Foreign Service Officers, 1908–1931* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), pp. 52–59.
- 3 Nicole M. Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference: Sovereignty Transformed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), refers to Consulate Budapest as “essentially an embassy in disguise,” p. 117; see also p. 128.
- 4 *New York Times*, June 26, 1913, p. 5. The *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 10, 1913, p. 6, commented pithily on this general phenomenon: “Mr. Wilson’s diplomatic appointments for the most part are being offered to men who cannot get together the money necessary to accept the honor, the nation obligingly permitting its representatives to go broke abroad.”
- 5 To calculate First World War-era dollars into today’s equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).
- 6 *New York Times*, June 20, 1922, p. 16.
- 7 Biographic information about Anne and Frederic Penfield for this and the subsequent paragraph assembled from the following sources: folder “Biographical Sketch,” Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Frederic Courtland Penfield Collection, Box 1; Henry E. Mattox, *The Twilight of Amateur Diplomacy: The American Foreign Service and Its Senior Officers in the 1890s* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 39, 150; William Gibbs McAdoo, *Crowded Years: The Reminiscences of William G. McAdoo* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1931), pp. 117–118; Walter Fulghum Bell, “American Embassies in Belligerent Europe, 1914–1918” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1983), pp. 90–91, 465–467; *New York Times*, June 26, 1913, p. 5, June 20, 1922, p. 16; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 9, 1913, p. 4, June 20, 1922, p. 2; *The Sun* (Baltimore), June 26, 1913, pp. 1–2, October 7, 1913, p. 1–2; *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 1913, p. 2; *Washington Post*, June 26, 1913, p. 6, September 7, 1913, p. 5, January 26, 1916, p. 2; House to Woodrow Wilson, February 3, 1916, Charles Seymour (ed.) *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Volume 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926); *Register of the Department of State* (Washington: GPO, 1916), p. 121 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112109782752;view=1up;seq=125>; Penfield to House, July 23, 1913, Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3063; Penfield to House, September 19, 1916, and October 25, 1916, Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3064.
- 8 Books: *Present Day Egypt* (New York: The Century Company, 1889); *East of Suez: Ceylon, India, China, and Japan* (New York: The Century Company, 1907); exemplars of Penfield’s *North American Review* articles include: “England’s Absorption of Egypt” Volume 165 (1897) pp. 687–694, “Japan’s Commercial Aspirations” Volume 181 (1905) pp. 665–675, “France and her Vanishing Population” Volume 188 (1908) pp. 682–688, “Spain’s Commercial Awakening” Volume 190 (1909) pp. 753–764; exemplars of opinion pieces published in the *New York Times* include: “The Rush for Consulships: Views of F. C. Penfield on Consular Reform” March 13, 1897, p. 9, “The Panama Canal Problem” November 30, 1902, p. 32, “The Isthmian Canal Delay” November 4, 1903, p. 8. During his posting to Cairo, Penfield also contributed notices about infectious disease conditions in his district to *Public Health Reports*.

- 9 The Department altered its interpretation of certain expatriation provisions in 1916. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Address of the President to Congress, December 5, 1916*, (Washington: GPO, 1925), p.10–11. For Austrian cases see USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.117 and for Hungarian cases 364.117. See also Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, pp.128–134; Gerald H. Davis, “The Diplomatic Relations Between Austria-Hungary, 1913–1917” (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1958), pp. 1–23.
- 10 See, for example, Acting Budapest Consul-General Frank Mallett to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, September 15, 1914, and Consular Service Director Wilbur Carr to Mallett, October 23, 1914, both in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/1317.
- 11 Some individuals made it all the way to Berlin before closer scrutiny of the paperwork yielded rejection of their claims. See, for example, Gerard telegram to Vienna, September 3, 1914, (“Why are these people sent here?”) and Gerard telegram via Vienna to Ford, September 5, 1914, both in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 371; Page (London) telegram to Berlin, forwarded by Gerard to Vienna, September 11, 1914, (complaining about a large influx of “a third class type of traveler obviously of continental origin”), USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364. Budapest Consul-General William Coffin promised to tighten up procedures to avoid letting through any more “glaring cases.” (Coffin to Vienna Consul-General Ulysses Grant-Smith, September 27, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387)
- 12 For the voluminous archival records documenting removal of U.S. citizens from Austro-Hungarian territory from August to October 1914 see USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, especially 840.48, and USNA, RG 84, Austria, especially Volumes 363–364, 371, 374, 387–389.
- 13 Although Penfield did not venture estimates for Austria-Hungary, Gerard counted 3006 U.S. citizens remaining in Germany in June 1915. Bryan to Woodrow Wilson, June 7, 1915, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, William Jennings Bryan Papers, Box 45, p. 531.
- 14 For example, see the Sannicolo family file, October–November 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 363; Grant-Smith to Young, December 19, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364.
- 15 See for example Bryan telegram via Rome to Penfield, November 28, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364.
- 16 For a typical case in which Department officials declared voluntary expatriation, see October 1914 correspondence concerning Bohuslav Santroch, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 363. For correspondence about declining relief funds, see, for example, Jones (Genoa) to Vienna Consulate-General, November 26, 1914, and Grant-Smith to Young, December 19, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364.
- 17 For example, see *passim* Embassy Rome to Penfield, November 18, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364; Genoa Consulate-General to Vienna Consulate-General, December 19, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364. The *Washington Post* of August 26, 1915, p. 1, pronounced “many Americans” still in resided in Austro-Hungarian territory.
- 18 Penfield to Lansing, February 24, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 138./268; Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, October 23, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 138./370. The Department sometimes publicized Penfield’s reports in hopes of influencing Vienna and Berlin to moderate exit restrictions. See for example “German Order Holds Americans in Austria: Consul at Vienna Refuses to Visé Passports without Birth Certificates,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1915, p. 1.
- 19 Penfield to Bryan, November 24, 1914, and Bryan to Penfield, December 3, 1914, both in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement*,



- The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 727–728; Embassy Vienna to Coffin, November 21, 1914, and Penfield to All Consular Posts, December 5, 1914, both in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364.
- 20 Multiple documents dated from February 9, 1915, to December 17, 1915, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), pp. 899–913; Executive Order 2362–A, April 17, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1929), pp. 787–794; Executive Order 2519A, January 24, 1917, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1931), pp. 573–579.
- 21 Penfield described “...refugees arriving at irregular intervals according to movements of armies.” Penfield telegram via Rome to Bryan, February 13, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/1279; Coffin to Lansing, September 17, 1915, and Phillips to Coffin, October 30, 1915, USNA, RG 59, Passport Office, Passport Decimal File, 1910–1949, 130./523; Halstead to Lansing, January 31, 1916, and attached memoranda dating from April through June 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.11/1182; Coffin to Lansing, February 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.0063/19; Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, pp. 134–139, 144.
- 22 See, for example, a September 1914 list of over 150 individuals for whom the Vienna Consulate-General held non-government relief funds but could not locate. USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364; queries to local Austro-Hungarian officials about Americans residing in their jurisdictions, Salzburg Buergermeister to Vienna Embassy, December 7, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 364, *passim*.
- 23 For the Aarenau case covering December 1914 –December 1915, see files under her name in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volumes 365 and 398.
- 24 See records dating between December 29, 1915, and October 17, 1916, in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.11, documents /1158, /1195, /1290, /1396, and /1539.
- 25 See, for example, Penfield’s missives to Lansing in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920*, Volume I, (Washington: GPO, 1939), pp. 639–664; reporting from Austro-Hungarian posts, “List of Papers by Countries” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. CLXXVII–CLXXX; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. CXXII–CXXXVII; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. CXLVI–CLIV; Penfield to Lansing and forwarded to President Wilson, August 1, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 29, 763.72/2834<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>. (Microfilm 367 materials are viewable online: see <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2017/04/04/world-war-i-foreign-policy-records-part-i-the-department-of-state/>.) For an overview of wartime political, economic, social, and military conditions in Austria-Hungary, see Arthur James May, *The Passing of the Hapsburg Monarchy, 1914–1918* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966).
- 26 Penfield to Lansing, July 30, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, quotes, respectively, from pages 47–48, 49, 50, and 52. See also Penfield’s description of Vienna as the “...most normal, yet tensest, of all the war capitals,” largely because 50,000 wounded, 150,000 refugees, and 1000 Russian prisoners crowded the city’s environs. Penfield to House, February 11, 1915, Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3063.
- 27 Penfield to House, June 5 and 24, 1916 Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3064.
- 28 Penfield to House, August 18, 1917, Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3064.



- 29 See especially Wilson's comments to Lansing: "This is a most interesting letter, and it seems to me many very significant inferences may be drawn from it as to the state of affairs in the Central Monarchies!" December 5, 1915, commenting on Penfield's report dated November 11, 1915, and "He always says something that is useful to keep in mind" July 27, 1916, commenting on Penfield's report dated July 3, 1916, both in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920*, Volume I, pages 648 and 659, respectively. See also Bell, "American Embassies in Belligerent Europe, 1914-1918", pp. 476-477, 485-486; Seymour (ed.) *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, Volume 2, House to Wilson, February 3, 1916, pp. 149-150, Penfield to House, June 5, 1916, pp. 253-254, House to Wilson, June 23, 1916, p. 268; House to Penfield, July 8, 1916, July 19, 1916, August 28, 1916, all in Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3064. As was common during this era, officials often retained copies of documents they designated "Confidential and Personal" among their own records. Frederic Penfield sent many of his reports to Lansing also to Anne Penfield's business headquarters in Philadelphia, usually addressed to Anne's niece, who was the wife of Anne's attorney Richard W. Meirs. In some of these packets Frederic indicated his permission for Mears to read the document and also share it with three associates: lawyer, academic, and former Pennsylvania State Attorney General Hampton L. Carson, General Electric Company corporate officer James McKee, whose wife was the daughter of President Benjamin Harrison and a close family friend, and Philadelphia priest Monsignor Fisher, co-celebrant at the Penfield's 1908 New York wedding. See covering note attached to Penfield to Lansing, January 3, 1916, Penfield Collection, Box 1, folder: Penfield, F.C. to Secretary of State, Robert Lansing.
- 30 Penfield to Bryan, September 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 146, 763.72111/427.
- 31 Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p. 140.
- 32 Penfield to Lansing, July 30, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 50. See also, for example, Coffin to Lansing, January 13, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/156.
- 33 In Austria-Hungary the U.S. represented France, the U.K., and Japan. In Germany the U.S. represented France, the U.K., Japan, and Serbia. In Serbia, Russia, France, and Japan the U.S. represented Germany and Austria-Hungary. In Belgium the U.S. represented Austria-Hungary, Germany, the U.K., Serbia, and Japan. The U.S. took on additional protecting power obligations when the Ottoman Empire, Italy, Bulgaria, and Rumania entered the war. Washington also represented neutrals such as Switzerland in the Ottoman Empire, Denmark in Belgium, and Nicaragua in France. Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p. 111 asserts "...a huge proportion of the world's consular work was being conducted by the U.S. Consular Service."
- 34 See, for example, Clementi to Penfield, August 11, 1914, Grant-Smith to Clementi, August 11, 1914, Grant-Smith to Budapest Consulate-General and Consulates at Prague, Carlsbad, Trieste, and Riechenberg, August 31, 1914, Mallett Despatch to Department, September 15, 1914, Coffin to Grant-Smith, September 22, 1914, Grant-Smith to Coffin, September 25, 1914, and Coffin to Grant-Smith, September 27, 1914, all in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, February 1, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.7263/1; multiple documents dated August-December 1914 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6163. For U.S. officials' assessments of Spanish efficiency and dedication, see Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, August 8, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 295, 763.72114/1811; Young to Penfield, August 30, 1916, enclosure in Penfield to Lansing, September 4, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 297, 763.72114/1990; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, April 4, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/21; Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p.145. For Penfield's general depiction concerning lack of timely response by interlocutor governments, see Penfield to Lansing, February 14, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 816-818.

- 35 “American Embassies and Legations which have taken charge of interests of belligerent countries” and “Countries and cities where American consular officers have taken charge of interests of belligerents” November 17, 1914; Department Circular to all Consulates in Austria-Hungary, December 17, 1914, and multiple replies from Consulates dated December 19, 1914, through January 4, 1915, all in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387. U.S. officials also dealt with special cases such as Lichtenstein: Penfield to Lansing, August 27, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6361/38 and multiple documents dated February–March 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.60b55; and San Marino: Beirut Consulate to Lansing, October 22, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.60a67; Penfield to Lansing, October 16, 1916 (with Busser to Penfield enclosure dated October 13, 1916), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.60a; *Washington Post*, March 12, 1916, p. 9.
- 36 Editorial note entitled “Representation of Belligerent Governments in Enemy Countries—Protection of their Interests,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, p. 731.
- 37 For instances perpetrated by U.K., French, German, Ottoman, and Russian authorities, see Penfield to Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 15, 1914, Berchtold to Bryan via Penfield, September 12, 1914, and Penfield to U.S. Embassy St. Petersburg (undated, but included among multiple documents dated August–September 1914), all in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 388; multiple documents dated February 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701.6361; multiple documents dated November 1914–August 1916 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6367; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 733–738, 746–750; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 815–816, 818–823; Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, January 11, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.0068/4.
- 38 Salonika Consul John E. Kehl to Lansing, January 27, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.0068/42; Athens Consul Garrett Droppers to Lansing, February 2, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.0068/45; Salonika Consulate to Lansing April 17, 1916, and Lansing to Salonika Consulate, April 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.0068/56; Sharp to Lansing, May 3, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.0068/62.
- 39 Penfield to Bryan, December 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701.6394/15.
- 40 Multiple documents in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701.63 and 704.6300. For an example of continuing difficulties in keeping properties secure, see the correspondence concerning the appearance and disappearance of furniture at the Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Petrograd, Petrograd Consul North Winship to Lansing and attached documents, October 31, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6361/24.
- 41 Imperial and Royal Foreign Ministry to U.S. Embassy Vienna, August 22, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387; Penfield to Bryan, December 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/19.
- 42 Penfield to Lansing, February 8, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.4163/10; Penfield to Bryan, December 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/19; Penfield to Bryan, October 19, 1914, Penfield to U.S. Embassy London, October 24, 1914 and October 29, 1914 with October 17 attachment, all in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387.
- 43 Documents dated January 6, 1916, to February 28, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.9463/3 through /7.
- 44 Imperial and Royal Foreign Ministry to U.S. Embassy Vienna, September 7, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 388. The dispute continued for six months. See USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701.6361, multiple documents dated February 1915.

- 45 Bryan telegram via London to Penfield, December 28, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 389.
- 46 See, for example, Penfield to Bryan, October 19, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 332, 763.72115/137; Penfield to Bryan, February 11, 1915, and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.94/5.
- 47 Penfield to Bryan, July 30, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 336, 763.72115/997; Penfield to Bryan, June 12, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 295, 763.72114/1709.
- 48 Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, June 30, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 336, 763.72115/858.
- 49 Department circular to all posts entitled “Instructions to diplomatic and consular officers of the United States of America entrusted with the interests of foreign governments at war,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 740–741.
- 50 U.K. Embassy Rome telegram via U.S. Embassy Rome to U.S. Embassy Austria, August 26, 1914, and subsequent documents, USNA, RG 84, Vienna, Volume 374.
- 51 Busser to Penfield, August 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.41/63.
- 52 Bryan to Embassy Vienna, September 15, 1914 and Penfield to Bryan, September 20, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.41/4a and 363.41/5.
- 53 U.S. Embassy Vienna to Imperial and Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, August 16, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Vienna, Volume 389; Consul Toronto Julius Dreher to Bryan, September, 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 342.62/10.
- 54 Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, December 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 349, 763.72115/2694; Penfield to Lansing, December 3, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 340, 763.72115/1489; Penfield to Lansing, December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 349, 763.72115/2682.
- 55 Germany acquired nearly a half-million POWs in only four months. Chandler Anderson report, December 3, 1914, enclosure in Walter Hines Page (London) to Bryan, December 11, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1001. Estimates of POWs captured by Russian forces vary widely, but all sources agree that the vast majority consisted of Austro-Hungarians, probably around 2 million. Alon Rachamimov, *POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, Oxford, 2002), pp. 34–44.
- 56 For an interim account of the state of affairs regarding civilian detainees and POWs, see Chandler Anderson’s report dealing with Austria-Hungary, Germany, and the U.K., December 3, 1914, enclosure in Walter Hines Page (London) to Bryan, December 11, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 997–1002. For additional documents see the sections entitled “Activities of the United States in regard to prisoners of war and interned civilians” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, p. 750–756 and *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 997–1023. For the voluminous archival records detailing these issues see especially USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, 763.72114 for POWs and 763.72115 for interned civilians.
- 57 Penfield to Lansing, February 14, 1916, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 816–818, quote from p. 818. This document generated significant comment among principal officers of the Department

in Washington. They appreciated Penfield's dilemma but could only compose a reply intended to "buck up" the Ambassador. See USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.636/24, attached comments by Lansing (no date), Adey (no date), and Phillips (March 15, 1916). For similar comments see Penfield to Lansing, September 15, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.0063; Penfield to Lansing, November 18, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.636/20; Young to Carr, February 7, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.02/715.

- 58 Bryan approved the first inspection in Austria-Hungary, for French detainees, on October 7, 1914. Penfield to Bryan, November 11, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 333, 763.72115/291. For a contrasting example where the Department exercised less effective communications, at least on POW camp inspection issues in autumn 1914, see Chapter 3, Germany.
- 59 Penfield via Berne to Lansing, November 10, 1915, and Lansing to U.S. Embassies in London, Paris, and Rome, November 12, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 289, 763.72114/931.
- 60 For typical Cardeza reports, see Penfield to Bryan, May 21, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, Roll 343, 763.72115/1879.
- 61 Penfield telegram via Berne to Bryan, June 8, 1915, and Lansing to Penfield, June 12, 1915, both in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 286, 763.72114/534 and /54; Bell, "American Embassies in Belligerent Europe, 1914-1918", pp. 485-486; Tibor Glant, *Through the prism of the Habsburg monarchy: Hungary in American diplomacy and public opinion during World War I* (East European Monographs, No. DII, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 119-120.
- 62 Penfield to Lansing, March 17, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1436.
- 63 Multiple reports of Cardeza and Vienna Embassy Second Secretary Sheldon Leavitt Crosby submitted simultaneously, Penfield to Lansing, April 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 343, 763.72115/1879 and /1882.
- 64 Penfield to Lansing via Berne, January 22, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1168.
- 65 Penfield telegram via Rome to Bryan, February 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 284, 763.72114/227.
- 66 Valetta Consul Wilbur Keblinger to Bryan, January 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 341, 763.72115/1657.
- 67 For a late report by Graham and Third Secretary Oliver Harriman on Rumanian POWs, see Penfield to Lansing, March 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 351, 763.72115/3081.
- 68 The Secretary of State to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, September 3, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 742-743.
- 69 *Wall Street Journal*, September 9, 1914, p. 4; *Atlanta Constitution*, September 10, 1914, p. 5.
- 70 For a typical example, see "Statement of Expenditures in behalf of foreign interests," Chase (Fiume Consulate) to Lansing, January 18, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.0063/1.
- 71 For examples of exchanges between France and Austria-Hungary, see *passim* USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 351.63 and 363.51; for exchanges between Austria-Hungary and the U.K., see *passim* USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 341.63 and 363.41.
- 72 For the replacement of Dr. Charles MacDonald and related personnel actions, see documents dated October 1914 to August 1915 in USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 591.4, Red Cross Medical Relief Units in Hungary; documents from USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142



- including: Penfield telegram via Rome to Bryan, December 12, 1914, 811.142/418; Davis (ANRC) to Bryan, December 16, 1914, 811.142/430; Coffin to Bryan, January 16, 1915, 811.142/482; Penfield telegram via Rome to Bryan, February 1, 1915, 811.142/508; Boardman (ANRC) to Bryan, February 6, 1915, 811.142/515; Coffin to Bryan, February 10, 1915, 811.142/524; Coffin to Bryan, March 2, 1915, 811.142/557; Boardman to Bryan, March 20, 1915, 811.142/660; Boardman to Bryan, April 26, 1915, 811.142/675.
- 73 See *passim* USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881–1916, 591.4, Medical and Relief Units, Austria and Hungary; USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881–1916, 900.2, Austrian Red Cross; USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881–1916, 900.02, Hungarian Red Cross; USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 811.142.
- 74 *Los Angeles Times*, September 16, 1914, p. 12; *Washington Post*, October 24, 1914, p. 2.
- 75 *New York Times*, November 26, 1914, p. 2.
- 76 *New York Times*, May 18, 1915, p. 3.
- 77 *Washington Post*, November 27, 1916, p. 1.
- 78 *Washington Post*, March 29, 1915, p. 7.
- 79 Some of the major archival collections that cover this region/issue include USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, decimal 811.142 and USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881–1916, decimal numbers (many of which include multiple sub-folders): 591.4 Medical Relief Units (multiple countries); 691.2 Prisoners of War; 900.02 Relief Committees, Distress Funds, Relief Clearinghouses, and foreign Red Cross Societies (multiple countries and organizations); 900.407 Europe and Near East, Blockade and Contraband; 962 Reports (multiple countries); 962.52 ARC Sanitary Commission to Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro.
- 80 Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p.143.
- 81 Penfield to Bryan, February 18, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 351.63/69.
- 82 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 45, 956–957, 976, 977; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1916. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 78–79, 829–832, 924–925, 937–940.
- 83 Lansing to Penfield, February 11, 1916, and Penfield to Lansing, June 20, 1916, both in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 363.41/83 and 363.41/88.
- 84 For example, on August 8, 1914 Penfield cabled Consul Wallace Young in Carlsbad “Unfortunately no funds for relief of French and Russians. Organize relief committees principal members of colonies. Request material assistance from local authorities. Use good offices generally and when necessary issue letters of identification or presentation proofs. Request volunteer clerical assistance from reliable person of each nationality” USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387. For additional examples of the Departmental and private response to the 1914 emergency in France, see “Views From the Embassy: The Role of the U.S. Diplomatic Community in France, 1914” <https://s3.amazonaws.com/static.history.state.gov/wwi/views-from-embassy-paris/Views%20from%20Embassy%20Paris%20WWI.pdf>.
- 85 Mr. Geller, a U.S. citizen who owned the Hotel Astoria in Budapest, donated its public rooms for meetings, provided food and lodging for indigent Americans, and cashed personal checks when local banks refused. Mallett to Bryan, September 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.2436/32. In addition to Professor John Silver of Hobart College, who volunteered for a few months in Vienna, Thomas D. M. Cardeza remained until 1917 to serve as Penfield’s private secretary. Penfield to Bryan,

- October 7, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/11; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, January 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/24.
- 86 Penfield to Bryan, October 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/1757; Penfield to Bryan, December 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/19.
- 87 Mallett to Bryan, September 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.2436/32; Coffin to Grant-Smith, September 27, 1914, and Coffin to Grant-Smith, November 6, 1914, both in USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 387.
- 88 Penfield to Bryan, October 7, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/11; see also Grew to Grant-Smith, August 28, 1914, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 389; Mallett to Bryan, September 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.2436/32.
- 89 Young to Bryan, September 17, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.3814/34.
- 90 Busser to Bryan, October 17, 1914, and October 19 copy to Penfield, USNA, RG 84, Austria, Volume 388.
- 91 Penfield via Rome to Bryan, January 21, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/14.
- 92 Penfield via Berne to Lansing, September 16, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/34.
- 93 Penfield to Lansing, September 15, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.0063.
- 94 Penfield via Berne to Lansing, November 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/58.
- 95 Warren Frederick Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779–1939: A Study in Administrative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 134–138.
- 96 Department to Penfield, January 20, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/13.
- 97 Lansing telegram via Berne to Penfield, July 26, 1915, and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/29; Bryan telegram via Rome to Penfield, January 18, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/14; Lansing via Berne to Penfield, September 7, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/2.
- 98 Department telegram via Berne to Penfield, June 3, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/47. The latter quote responded to one of Penfield's many requests for a career professional of the diplomatic service. Polk to Penfield, September 17, 1915, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/34.
- 99 Penfield to Lansing, March 15, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/82.
- 100 Despite staff shortages, Penfield rejected career diplomatic service professionals he judged incompetent. See, for example, Department to Penfield, February 12, 1916, and Penfield to Lansing, February 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/42 and /43; Penfield to Phillips, March 29, 1916, and Penfield to Lansing, June 5, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/45 and /50.
- 101 Penfield, "STATISTICAL Statement of CORRESPONDENCE" to Department, October 4, 1916, and April 11, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.636/28 and 124.636/30. For examples from other posts, see Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p. 140.
- 102 Penfield to Lansing, November 25, 1915, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920*, Volume I, pp. 645–648 (specific reference on p. 648).
- 103 See throughout USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 811.142, for example: Davis to Bryan, December 16, 1914, and related documents, 811.142/430 and Boardman to Bryan, February 6, 1915, and related documents, 811.142/515.



- 104 Iddings to ANRC, January 1916, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881–1916, 900.2, American Relief Clearinghouse—Rome, Italy.
- 105 Penfield to Bryan, October 23, 1914, and Lansing telegram via Rome to Penfield, October 28, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.636/6.
- 106 Penfield to Bryan, September 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.636/4.
- 107 Penfield to Lansing, November 18, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.636/20.
- 108 Penfield to Lansing, February 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/54 *passim*.
- 109 Multiple documents in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 051.54.
- 110 See multiple exchanges and Departmental instructions beginning in November 1914 and culminating with direct orders from Secretary Lansing in May 1918 to send any “clandestine correspondence” discovered upon opening official packets direct to Washington for investigation IN USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.0665. For the quote see Lansing to Diplomatic and Consular Officers of the United States, May 15, 1918, attached to documents filed under 124.0665/23a in box 1772. For insight into how department employees justified bending the rules, see Chase to Lansing, May 11, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123C38/64. The volume of personal correspondence sent through the regular mails (and thus open to inspection) quickly reached enormous proportions: already in December 1914, the Swiss postal stations in Berne and Geneva alone processed 100,000 letters, 4000 packages, and 6000 money orders daily. German Foreign Office note dated December 31, 1914, attached to Gerard to Bryan, January 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 199.1/85.
- 111 Penfield to Lansing, November 11, 1915, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920, Volume I*, pp. 642–645. Lansing forwarded this document to President Wilson on November 30, 1915 (USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 24, 763.72/2252).
- 112 Penfield to Lansing, December 9, 1915, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920, Volume I*, p. 648.
- 113 Quotes, respectively, from Penfield to House, August 1, 1916, and September 20, 1916, Yale University, Edward Mandell House Papers, Box 88, Folder 3064.
- 114 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 11, 1917, p. 2.
- 115 Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, November 15, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/39.
- 116 Penfield to Lansing, September 14, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.632/30. For the Ambassador’s continued interest in receiving newspapers from outside Central Powers states, see Penfield to Lansing, November 25, 1915, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920, Volume I*, pp. 645–648 (specific reference on pp. 647–648); Lansing to Penfield, January 13, 1916, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914–1920, Volume I*, p. 651.
- 117 In early 1916, other than Prague Consul Charles Hoover, at least some family members lived with all married consuls serving in Austria-Hungary. Halstead to Lansing, March 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.0063/20.
- 118 Penfield to Lansing, February 10, 1916, with attached letters from consuls, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 051.63/13.
- 119 Young to Carr, February 7, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/715.
- 120 Embassy London to Lansing, June 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.0665/38.

- 121 Lansing via Berne to Penfield, August 10, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/543a; Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, September 6, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/548; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, November 2, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/598 and subsequent documents through /602; Penfield to Lansing, November 6, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/622; Penfield to Lansing, November 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/618. Penfield ordered fifty barrels of flour and over two dozen other commodities in like proportion. Osborne to Roosa (United States Despatch Agent) and attached documents, September 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/548. The Department made sure to publicize the effort: see “Penfield Defies Great Britain’s Food Blockade,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, November 23, 1916, p. 2.
- 122 Penfield to Lansing, May 12, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.52/9; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, September 13, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/6.
- 123 Dulles to Lansing, September 24, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 29, 763.72/2933<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.
- 124 Joint letter to Phillips from Embassy Vienna Clerks Robert Boesel, B. Frank Davis, Charles Morgan, and Meredith O’Neill, September 15, 1916 (Phillips forwarded to Lansing on October 11, 1916), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.633/55. On memos attached to this document, both low and high officials in Washington expressed less than full sympathy for the Clerks’ plight, noting that prices had also increased significantly in the United States while their pay had not. For Penfield’s description of the plight of lower-paid workers and his appeal for an increase in their compensation as well, see Penfield to Phillips, November 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.633/133.
- 125 See for example Young to Carr, February 7, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.02/715; letter from Busser (Trieste), May 8, 1916, attached to Penfield to Lansing, May 11, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 051.63/14.
- 126 Reasons to return ordinarily granted in peacetime often failed to win approval; in 1916 the Department could not spare Embassy Vienna Second Secretary Frederic Dolebare for two months’ home leave to complete his Columbia University law degree. Osborne to Penfield, June 6, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123D68/5.
- 127 Carr to Halstead, January 26, 1916, and Halstead to Lansing, March 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.0063/19a and /20. See also Young (Carlsbad) January 28, 1916, letter attached to Penfield to Lansing, February 10, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 051.63/13; William Barnes and John Heath Morgan, *The Foreign Service of the United States: Origins, Development, and Functions* (Washington: Historical Office, Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State, 1961), pp. 194–195.
- 128 See *passim* USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123C651, and specifically Coffin to Bryan, August 13, 1914, /96; Coffin to Bryan, August 17, 1914, /93; Embassy London to Bryan, September 16, 1914, /92; Coffin to Bryan, September 21, 1914, /94.
- 129 Penfield telegram via Berne to Lansing, July 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.2433/86.
- 130 Coffin to Carr, August 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123C651/116.
- 131 See *passim* USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123Sm61, and specifically Grant-Smith to Bryan, July 8, 1914, /98; Penfield to Bryan, August 4, 1914, /99; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, July 3, 1915, /102; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, April 26, 1916, /105; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, August 3, 1916, /108.
- 132 Penfield via Berne to Lansing, December 15, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123Sm61/111; Grant-Smith to Phillips, December 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.
- 133 Grant-Smith to Phillips, December 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.

- 134 Bingham officially requested home leave for nervous exhaustion in April. Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 16, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123B511/31. A few weeks later he wrote Phillips, “I was under a severe strain at Vienna during the past two years, and was in a fair way (although I did not quite realize it myself) of following in Grant-Smith’s footsteps and collapsing completely.” Bingham to Phillips, June 29, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123B511/37. Penfield via Berne to Lansing, January 4, 1917, and February 6, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/8 and /15; Grew telegram via Berne to Lansing, March 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/18; Lansing to Rev. A. M. Dulles, January 8, 1917, and Lansing to Thomas Nelson Page (Embassy Rome), February 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123D88/5a and /6.
- 135 Penfield to Lansing, January 26, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/27. Stewart reported for duty on January 19, 1917. Penfield via Berne to Lansing, January 19, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123St421/24.
- 136 Lansing attributed Penfield’s refusal to increase the number of diplomatic postings at Vienna to a combination of (a) concern that adding more staff might reflect poorly on the Ambassador’s industry and management, and (b) that Penfield did not grasp the extent of work demands on his Secretaries. Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, January 30, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/61B; Woodrow Wilson to Lansing, January 31, 1917 and attached notes through February 7, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123P37/62. After Grew’s transfer from Berlin to Vienna in February 1917, he privately expressed reservations about Penfield’s leadership and personal character. See Waldo Heinrichs, *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Oxford: Osprey, 1966), p. 32, and Walter Johnson, ed., *Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, Joseph C. Grew*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Riverside Press, 1952) Volume 1, pp. 313–324. In March, anticipating that the U.S. might not break relations with Austria-Hungary, Phillips queried Joseph Grew independently about the effectiveness of personnel on hand and whether more staff was required to continue operations. Phillips to Grew, March 1917 and Grew telegram via Berne to Phillips, March 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.63/17a and /18. For varying assessments of Penfield’s management capabilities, see Mattox, *The Twilight of Amateur Diplomacy: The American Foreign Service and Its Senior Officers in the 1890s*, pp. 104–106; West, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War*, pp. 98–100; Bell, “American Embassies in Belligerent Europe, 1914–1918”, pp. 495–504; Gerald H. Davis, “The Diplomatic Relations Between Austria-Hungary, 1913–1917,” pp. 263–265; Kurt Bednar lecture “Frederic Courtland Penfield: Last and Undervalued US Minister to Habsburg Vienna in Crisis,” address at the Library of Congress, April 13, 2016, [https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=7359](https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=7359), especially his critique of Grew’s assessment at 37:00.
- 137 For Fiume Vice Consul James Burrell’s pro-German sympathies and his May 26, 1916 reassignment to a Swiss post, see documents dated April through June 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.3813/21 through /48; for an example of difficulty between a Chief of Mission and his subordinate Secretary, see documents dated June 1915 through June 1916 in the personnel file of Sheldon Whitehouse, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123W582/ 52 through /62; Vienna Consul General Charles Denby left post on November 18, 1914, and did not return, resigning on January 1, 1915 to accept a position with Hupmobile. See documents dated October 1914 through March 1915 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123D41/124 through /134; Diplomatic service member William Warfield resigned for reasons of health. See letter to Lansing, February 1, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 123W23/7. Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States*, p.133, calculates the annual rate of resignations and deaths between 1914 and 1917 ranged from 2.7% to 7%.
- 138 See, for example, Coffin to Lansing, January 13, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.2433/156.
- 139 See documents dated November 1915 through March 1917 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 125.3813/13 through /43.

- 140 See Mallett's extensive report on his activities to address the crisis of August-September 1914 and the Department's approval of his actions in Mallett to Bryan, September 14, 1914, and Carr to Coffin, November 21, 1914, both in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2436/32.
- 141 Coffin to Bryan, November 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/53.
- 142 Coffin to Bryan, November 29, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/46.
- 143 Penfield via Rome to Bryan, November 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/45.
- 144 Mallett from Petrograd to Bryan, December 2, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/47.
- 145 Mayre to Bryan, December 2, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/48; Winship to Bryan, December 5, 1914, Bryan to Vienna, December 8, 1914, Bryan and Petrograd, December 8, 1914, all in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/50; Mayre to Bryan, January 3, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/56.
- 146 Schmedeman (Christiana) to Bryan, February 18, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433/63. During 1913 the Department received reports of Mallett's dalliances with women and financial problems, but dismissed them. West, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War*, pp. 132-133.
- 147 See the extensive documentation regarding the Mallett affair in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 125.2433, beginning with Penfield via Rome to Bryan, November 24, 1914, 125.2433/45 through Carr to Mallett, April 8, 1920, 125.2433/197 and February 10, 1925, 125.2433/235. See also Coffin's preoccupation with the affair in his personal letter to Carr, August 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123C651/116.
- 148 Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p. 140. For example, upon arrival at post in 1915, Vienna Consul General Albert Halstead praised the efficiency of Vice Consul Robert Heingartner in organizing "much work of a new and difficult kind" while simultaneously complaining that work "included the relief of British subjects under instructions from the Embassy—a class of work that should really never have been assigned to the Consulate General and should be done by the Embassy itself, and for which the Consulate General receives no credit." Halstead to Bryan, March 26, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123H16/80.
- 149 Penfield to Lansing, November 10, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 127.21/8.
- 150 For the quote, see note from "RJT" (identity unclear) to Hengstler attached to *ibid.* For other posts' missives about diplomatic-consular coordination, relations, organization, and spheres of operation, see documents dated between November 1916 and October 1918 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 127.21/9 through /15. For additional references to how wartime experience accelerated the impetus for professionalization and reform, see Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States*, pp. 138-143; Phelps, *U.S.-Hapsburg Relations from 1815 to the Paris Peace Conference*, p. 140; West, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War*, pp. 137-138; Schultzinger, *The Making of the Diplomatic Mind*, pp. 46-51, 59-64; Richard Hume Werking, *The Master Architects: Building the United States Foreign Service, 1890-1913* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1977), pp. 248-249. For an example of the type of mid-war reform discussions that several of these works refer to, see "Observations and recommendations regarding the American Diplomatic Service," dated 1916, in Library of Congress, David R. Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 293.



# Chapter 5

## The U.S. Mission in Russia, 1914–1917: The Burden of the Protecting Power

*Charles Hawley*

Amid the excitement and concern of the July Crisis<sup>1</sup> (see Chapter 2), Charles Wilson, the *Chargé d’Affaires* at the U.S. Embassy in St. Petersburg,<sup>2</sup> reported to Washington a rumor he had heard from his contacts in the Russian capital. The Austro-Hungarian Government intended to ask the United States to act as its “protecting power,” looking after Hapsburg interests in Russia in case of war. Wilson hoped the Department would “discourage this,” describing relations between the United States and the Czar’s Government as already “none too cordial.”<sup>3</sup> Even though the U.S. remained neutral, Wilson conjectured the Russians would not welcome Washington representing the interests of those making war against the Czar. Despite Wilson’s reservations about the United States’ role as “protecting power,” Washington accepted not only responsibility for Austro-Hungarian interests, but those of Germany as well.<sup>4</sup> Department officials in Russia subsequently struggled to address the myriad challenges Washington’s commitment demanded of U.S. diplomacy.

Wilson’s assessment took account of multiple tensions that caused U.S.-Russian relations to deteriorate over the previous decade. During the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war, the United States represented Japan’s interests in Russia, which many Russian officials considered as evidence of a pro-Japanese bias. Wilson feared “it would have most unfortunate effect for us to again act for Russia’s enemy.”<sup>5</sup> In 1911, longstanding congressional and public outrage over Russian pogroms and other forms of discrimination against Jews (including U.S. passport holders who traveled to the Empire) caused the U.S. Government to abrogate a bilateral commercial treaty dating back to 1832. The Russian Government subsequently demanded the recall of U.S. Ambassador Curtis Guild.<sup>6</sup> Fourteen months later, after his first two choices foundered, the president succeeded with nominee George T. Marye, whom the Senate confirmed on July 9.<sup>7</sup> The delay in replacing Guild only exacerbated already chilled relations; St. Petersburg considered the extended absence of an official U.S. Ambassador as a slight. On August 1, 1914 Secretary Bryan cabled Marye with orders to travel to St. Petersburg

as soon as possible. By that time, however, Czar Nicholas II seemed in no hurry to have Marye in the Russian capital. After communicating with the Russian Government, the Department again cabled Marye on August 27 “the Emperor has informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs that your presence in St. Petersburg is not at all necessary if you prefer to delay coming.”<sup>8</sup>

By the time Marye eventually arrived in Russia’s capital city on October 24, the Czar had changed its name to the Russified Petrograd and the Empire was already several months into the war. From the outset of his tenure at the Embassy, Marye faced a steep learning curve. As Charles Wilson presciently warned the Department at the war’s outbreak, Russian Government officials did resent U.S. diplomatic activities on behalf of their German and Hapsburg opponents. Russian suspicions over Washington’s relationship with the Central Powers continued to complicate the United States’ ability to fulfill its representative responsibilities throughout the period of neutrality. The strains in U.S.-Russian relations as well as fulfilling protecting power duties required adroit diplomacy from the U.S. Government’s top emissary to the Czar’s court. Although well-traveled, the first-time Ambassador was new to both U.S. Government service and high-level international affairs.<sup>9</sup> Marye ultimately proved himself inadequate for the job, at least in the eyes of President Wilson, who demanded Marye’s resignation little over a year after he arrived in Petrograd.

In addition to a novice Ambassador and shaky relations with a distrustful Russian Government, Washington also contended with wildly disproportionate issues of mission size in relation to Russian demographics and geography: the Department deployed a very small number of officials across the vast, populous expanse of the Russian Empire. The U.S. mission in Russia appeared modest even in comparison to the understaffed posts in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. In addition to the Embassy, at the outbreak of war the U.S. Government accredited only seven constituent Consulates spread over a land mass far greater than that of the other major combatant powers combined, staffed by a mere 26 diplomatic and consular officers (see Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> This small complement of Department personnel in Russia proved inadequate to meet the mounting tasks it faced as the war progressed and the full scope of U.S. Government responsibility for German and Austro-Hungarian interests became clear.



**Figure 1: Comparison of Professional Department of State Officers Assigned to Major European Combatant Countries at the Outbreak of War**

	United Kingdom <sup>(a)</sup>	France <sup>(b)</sup>	Germany	Austria-Hungary	Russia
Territory (square miles)	120,000	207,000	209,000	240,000	8.5 million
Population	45 million	40 million	65 million	50 million	170 million
Consular posts <sup>(c)</sup>	24	16	23	6	7
Total Diplomatic and Consular officers <sup>(d)</sup>	85	56	76	21	26
Square miles per Department official	1,411	3,696	2,750	11,428	326,923
Population per Department official	529,411	714,285	855,263	2,380,952	6,538,461

Population and geographical statistics drawn from: Horace B. Woodward, *Stanford's Geological Atlas of Great Britain and Ireland*, 3rd ed., (London: Edward Stanford, 1914); Albert Bushnell Hart, "Why the Nations Fight" in *Europe at War*, a Red Book of the Greatest war of History (New York: Doubleday, 1914); Henry Wickham Steed, Walter Alston Phillips, and David Hannay, *A Short History of Austria-Hungary and Poland* (London: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1914); and John H. Snodgrass, *Russia: A Handbook on Commercial and Industrial Conditions* (Washington: GPO, 1913). Figures do not include the colonial territory or populations of the British, German, or Austro-Hungarian Empires, nor of the French Republic, except Algeria (see note b).

(a) Includes Ireland but excludes colonial territories; see Terms and Abbreviations.

(b) Includes consular personnel assigned to Algeria because the Third Republic Government considered that territory a metropolitan Department.

(c) Does not include posts in the colonial territory of the British, German, or Austro-Hungarian Empires, nor of the French Republic, except Algeria (see note b).

(d) Department staffing numbers drawn from: Register of the Department of State (Washington, D.C.: GPO, November 10, 1913) and includes Clerks of the Diplomatic Service assigned to Embassies as well as Consular Agents, but does not include military attachés.

### *Limited Demand for American Citizen Services*

As was the case with U.S. missions throughout Europe at the outbreak of war, Embassy officials in Russia prioritized the care of U.S. citizens, which largely entailed assisting with their evacuation and return to the United States. However, far fewer U.S. citizens resided in Russia than in the other belligerent countries. Moreover, those who sought to leave could do so easily by escaping into neutral Sweden and from there booking passage home. By August 12, *Chargé* Wilson reported that "Nearly all

Americans wishing to do so have left Russia or can do so via Sweden. The only ones left are those unable to pay their passage to Sweden.” He stressed that, “Outside of those in Riga...there are not many destitute Americans.”<sup>11</sup> Although Department personnel tended to the needs of their few fellow citizens remaining in Russia throughout the war, those efforts were overshadowed by the U.S. mission’s responsibility to look after the interests of Germany and the Dual Monarchy.

## **The Diplomatic Playing Field in Russia**

### *Complexities of Representation*

In the first weeks of the war, the fundamental dilemmas facing the United States as neutral representative of warring parties became apparent. On August 5, 1914 an enraged Russian mob attacked the German Embassy in St. Petersburg. In the ensuing violence, the crowd destroyed the building and murdered at least one employee. According to *Chargé* Wilson, the mob reacted to “unconfirmed” news reports about attacks on the Russian Embassy in Berlin. Despite Wilson’s demands to the Russian Foreign Office to protect the German Embassy and its staff, a Russian security force only arrived after the mob had done its damage.<sup>12</sup> Wilson lodged a formal protest, and secured an audience with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Sazonov the following day. A contrite Sazonov told Wilson that he “considered the Russian authorities fully responsible for criminal negligence” and that the U.S. Government had “liberty to request formal apology and complete satisfaction and reparation for loss of life and property.” However, the Czar’s Foreign Minister also drew Wilson’s attention to the attack on the Russian Embassy in Berlin.<sup>13</sup> Wilson replied that there was little the United States could do because the Czar selected the Spanish Government to represent Russian interests in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Wilson, therefore, could only convey the news of alleged attacks against Russian subjects to Washington and Madrid. The Russian Government subsequently threatened reprisals in response to reports alleging the poor treatment of Russian nationals residing in territory controlled by the Central Powers. Petrograd’s distrust coupled with Washington’s inability to communicate on their behalf directly with Berlin and Vienna proved a recurring impediment to the U.S. Government’s ability to protect German and Austro-Hungarian interests in Russia.

*“Such numbers of prisoners”*<sup>14</sup>

No one in the fall of 1914 anticipated the scale of the prisoner of war (POW) problem, nor the rapidity with which the issue came to dominate U.S.-Russian relations. “The number of prisoners now in Russia is so enormous,” the *New York Times* reported on September 13, “that it is becoming necessary to send large parties further afield than the home provinces.”<sup>15</sup> Russian forces captured approximately 100,000 Austro-Hungarian POWs during their initial military campaign in August-September 1914. By December, newspaper reports indicated that the Russians held over 750,000 German and Austro-Hungarian POWs and sent over 100,000 of them to various locales in Siberia.<sup>16</sup> With the successive offensives of 1915 and 1916 into Austro-Hungarian territory, POW captures increased significantly. By the time Russia withdrew from the war in November 1917, it held an estimated 167,000 German prisoners and an astonishing 2,111,000 Austro-Hungarian POWs.

In addition to military prisoners, the Russian Government also detained approximately 200,000 German and 100,000 Austro-Hungarian civilians, whom U.S. officials generally referred to as “civilian prisoners” or “civil prisoners.”<sup>17</sup> Montgomery Schuyler, a career U.S. diplomat serving as a special agent detailed to the Embassy to conduct POW camp inspections, reported in early 1915:

It should be kept clearly in mind that the two classes of ‘war prisoners’ in Russia, namely civil prisoners and military prisoners, are kept absolutely distinct. The former category comprises Austrians and Germans, women and children as well as men, who are civilians and who for the most part were found living in Russia at the outbreak of the war. The disposition of these prisoners is under the Ministry of the Interior through local governors and police authorities.... They were obliged to leave their homes, businesses and private affairs and to proceed at once to the localities in the interior which had been designated.<sup>18</sup>

These “civil” prisoners endured “very great hardships” because the Russian authorities at all levels of government made “no provision of any kind in the shape of money, tickets, trains or accommodation on arrival at the designated localities.” Civil prisoners suffered particularly acute privations early in the war before the U.S. mission and other relief organizations developed the capacity to offer assistance. Although

Schuyler acknowledged military POWs also had a difficult time, their treatment fell “entirely in the hands of the Ministry of War” and therefore “is very much more satisfactorily carried out.”<sup>19</sup> Russian authorities also detained approximately 10,000 German and Hapsburg subjects who resided in areas of East Prussia, Galicia, and Bukovina occupied by Russian military forces. U.S. officials considered this smaller group of detainees as a distinct category, which they characterized as “hostages.”<sup>20</sup>

### *Keeping Track of Civilian and Military Prisoners*

U.S. officials first needed to determine the category and location of military POWs and civilian prisoners. This endeavor quickly exposed the profound organizational inadequacies of the Russian Government’s wartime preparedness. In a September 9, 1914 letter to U.S. Minister to Sweden Ira Nelson Morris, *Chargé* Wilson commented:

Of course I have no doubt that conditions will improve, and that the suffering of the prisoners is by no means intentional on the part of the Russian authorities, but merely due to the unpreparedness in dealing with such a large number of prisoners in small towns where the conditions of life at best are primitive.<sup>21</sup>

On September 27, German officials forwarded to the Russian Government via Spain a list of Russian prisoners in Germany. Berlin expected to receive a similar accounting of their nationals from Petrograd in return. The Russian Government, however, announced that it delegated responsibility for fielding inquiries about German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners, including lists of names and locations, to an Information Bureau established in the Russian Red Cross.<sup>22</sup> Within a few days one of Wilson’s reports to Washington illustrated the result: he estimated that the United States already assumed responsibility for approximately 200,000 Germans and 30,000–40,000 Austro-Hungarians, but he was unable to distinguish between detained civilians and captured soldiers.<sup>23</sup> A month later, Moscow Consul General John Snodgrass reported similar difficulties identifying and contacting civilian prisoners:

...who have been transported to remote sections of the provinces, particularly when they have been sent away from the railway lines and are now dwelling in villages without postal facilities... [t]his office is endeavoring to keep track of all prisoners sent out from Moscow, but

as the lists are exceedingly incomplete, and as information is difficult to obtain, for various reasons, I regret that we many times fail to locate the parties.<sup>24</sup>

Five months later Schuyler described the similarly problematic logistics of moving military POWs to the interior parts of European Russia and Siberia, which did not include immediate processing of prisoners:

When Germans or Austrians are captured at the front they are loaded into trains and sent to central distributing points.... From there they are sent further to the final place of internment.... No lists of identification are taken until after arrival at their final destination where the lists are made out and forwarded to the Ministry of War and the Inquiry Bureau of the Russian Red Cross at Petrograd. It naturally follows that prisoners cannot in most cases be identified and letters or money forwarded to them until their whereabouts are known to the Red Cross...which may be for months after their capture.<sup>25</sup>

Despite procedures that severely hampered acquisition of accurate and timely information, U.S. officials worked through the Russian Red Cross as a practical matter as well as to accomplish other POW-related work. In the first year of the war, German and Austro-Hungarian Foreign Offices, as well as the U.S. missions in Berlin, Vienna, and Stockholm, all inundated Embassy Petrograd with POW inquiries. Ambassador Marye explained repeatedly that the Russian Red Cross constituted the sole source of information regarding civilian prisoners and military POWs. Because the Russian Red Cross transmitted this information to the Red Cross societies in Berlin and Vienna, Marye requested that all such inquiries be directed to the appropriate Red Cross societies. “I make these suggestions,” Marye stated, “as it seems to me that the work could be very much simplified and organized if all inquiries were made and could be referred to the same place.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Impediments to Aid Distribution*

Russian policies and bureaucratic procedures also complicated U.S. officials’ attempts to deliver relief aid supplied by German and Austro-Hungarian donors, which soon flowed into Embassy Petrograd and the Consulates. Russian authorities imposed

a convoluted process: Embassy or Consular officers sent general relief supplies and money intended for German or Austro-Hungarian POWs directly to Russian officials where the prisoners resided. Those local Russian officials then took responsibility for distributing relief. U.S. Consulates soon discovered, however, that local officials instead often routed the aid back to Petrograd. As a result, remittances arrived very late and sometimes not at all. Moreover, Russian authorities stipulated that supplies or funds designated for specific individuals must be routed through an “Inquiry Office concerning War Prisoners” in Petrograd, which greatly delayed delivery. Consulates also reported to Wilson “difficulty and annoyances which they have to suffer at the hands of local authorities in trying to send funds to destitute Germans in smaller places, and to prisoners of war.”<sup>27</sup> In early October 1914, *Chargé* Wilson complained to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs about this distribution process. Shortly after Ambassador Marye’s arrival, the Embassy sought from the Russian Government the same freedom that the German Government allowed the Spanish to distribute relief directly to Russian POWs rather than through a bureaucratic clearinghouse, but to no avail.<sup>28</sup>

### *Unique Staffing Problems*

The Department’s August 17, 1914, “Instructions to Diplomatic and Consular Officers of the United States of America Entrusted with the Interests of Foreign Governments at War,” (see Chapter 3, Germany) presented U.S. officials in Russia with multiple problems. Washington instructed diplomatic and consular officers to raise legitimate complaints to their host country about any ill-treatment of the foreign subjects or citizens they protected and to offer those foreign subjects all assistance as appropriate. The decree also enjoined upon U.S. officials the obligation to keep “accurate account of all additional expense incurred in behalf of such government... with such vouchers therefor as you may be able to obtain” so Washington could secure reimbursement from the country in whose interest the Department’s officers acted.<sup>29</sup> Accomplishing all those objectives in the Russian organizational-administrative environment could not be achieved by the extremely small number of Department employees scattered across the expanse of the world’s largest country in 1914.

Additionally, the U.S. mission also suffered from a limited ability to utilize key cadres of expertise available to U.S. officials in other belligerent countries. While waiting for the arrival of newly appointed Ambassador Marye, *Chargé* Wilson experienced more frustrations than his counterparts in attempting to secure local help. As early as



August 6, before Bryan informed him that the U.S. mission in Russia would assume the interests of Austria-Hungary as well as those of Germany, Wilson requested additional positions to meet the anticipated increase in work. The Department replied that it proved “impossible immediately to send clerical help,” but gave him authority to hire “employee assistance” from among those who resided in Petrograd, and only stressed a preference for “Americans in good standing.”<sup>30</sup> However, most U.S. citizens left Russia immediately, which severely limited Wilson’s capacity to comply with the Department’s preference. Two months later Embassy Petrograd had been able to hire only two American expatriates, putting them to work entirely on matters related German and Austro-Hungarian assistance and POW issues.<sup>31</sup>

Crucially, the Russian Government’s wartime policies restricted U.S. officials’ capacity to employ the foreign nationals who typically provided to the Department essential labor and expertise in other belligerent countries (see Chapter 4, Austria). In Petrograd, authorities arrested, presumably on suspicion of subversion, the local Russian staff who previously worked for the German and Austro-Hungarian Embassies. Wilson lamented his inability to utilize their experience and institutional memory, because they could “explain the situation to the Embassy.” Seeking assistance from the expatriate Austro-Hungarian and German communities in Petrograd and elsewhere in Russia also proved fruitless. The *Chargé* received no help from the Austro-Hungarians living in Petrograd. He did initially secure some assistance from the German Benevolent Society in the capital.<sup>32</sup> By mid-October, however, Wilson reported that Russian officials had grown wary of the German members of the Society, viewing them as likely spies or subversives. Consequently, the Russian Government ordered their arrest and either deported or interned them.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, Moscow Consul General Snodgrass welcomed the German Benevolent Society and many of the German pastors who resided in Moscow when they initially signaled their willingness to help.<sup>34</sup> However, the Consul General soon reported that local Russian authorities refused to permit Germans to assist in relief work “so that responsibility fell upon my shoulders.”<sup>35</sup> Wilson concluded that the Russian Government wanted to prevent any direct U.S. Government role in distributing relief, preferring instead to hand all funds and supplies over to Russian officials.<sup>36</sup>

As a consequence of having a nearly non-existent local applicant pool from which to hire staff, U.S. officials at the Embassy and Consulates pressed the Department for more help from the United States. Snodgrass reported to Petrograd, “I should be very much pleased to be relieved of this, if it were possible and if you think it advisable, for

we are besieged here every day by hundreds of Germans requesting assistance, and, at the same time, are obliged to carry on a large correspondence with the provinces.”<sup>37</sup> *Chargé* Wilson lamented to Bryan “all the work connected with the German and Austrian interests has had to be performed by the Embassy staff.” He asked that the Department increase personnel “as it appears to have been done in London, Paris, Vienna and Berlin,” by sending either officers from posts “where the amount of work is normal” or retired diplomatic and consular officers “accustomed to the work.” Wilson underscored his request by noting “the situation is probably as difficult here as in other posts where the Department has provided considerably larger staffs.”<sup>38</sup> Only four days after his October 24 arrival at post, Ambassador Marye echoed Wilson’s plea to Washington. He wrote Bryan:

The assumption by the Embassy of the representation of Germany and Austria-Hungary... and the relief work which these Powers are attempting to do among their subjects who are held in the country as prisoners of war... have added much to the work in every department of this Chancery, and an increase in the clerical force is absolutely necessary to the proper and reasonably speedy despatch of business.<sup>39</sup>

The complexities of operating in the Russian environment, however, also compelled U.S. officials to consider how best to marshal whatever human assets they could secure. Simply deploying additional bodies without an accompanying structure to leverage their effort would likely produce little improvement. At the outbreak of war, Moscow Consul General Snodgrass “established in this office a department through which all information will be received and money sent in connection with the German subjects requiring assistance in the Provinces.” He considered the representational work a “big undertaking, but I shall endeavor to fully organize so as to meet the necessities in an intelligent and thorough businesslike manner.”<sup>40</sup> Before the end of September 1914, Snodgrass recommended that if U.S. posts in Russia “continue to assume the responsibility of looking after these most unfortunate people, it occurs to me that a better organization should be perfected.”<sup>41</sup>

As the war ground on into its second year, the U.S. mission’s POW relief distribution process slowly evolved to meet the circumstances, but it still lacked the capacity to handle and account for the influx of POW relief money. In an October 6, 1915, cable to Washington, Marye requested accounting support specifically for the consulates in order to help the mission as a whole keep proper track of all the relief

money that the German Government, Austro-Hungarian Government, charitable organizations, and relatives of POWs were pouring into the Russian capital.<sup>42</sup> One month prior to sending this cable, Wilson wrote to Washington for Marye, admitting that the Embassy did not keep proper records of and receipts for the period of August 1 to December 31, 1914, “owing to the great volume of work which we had to contend with.”<sup>43</sup> Marye explained again to Washington in October that managing German and Austrian relief money “has now become a very large business in the Embassy and in the several consular districts and as it came upon us abruptly and has grown rapidly.” This situation, he continued, “developed without the system and organization... required in order to insure the safe and satisfactory handling of very large sums of money.”<sup>44</sup> He pointed out that the prior month the Embassy received 888,956.70 rubles and shipped to the consulates 665,535.42 rubles. Moscow requests for relief money jumped from 350,000 rubles in May 1915 to 1,219,400 in October 1915. Defensively, he stressed that the problem lay not with the Embassy, which he asserted was “satisfactory” and its accountant set up “a proper business organization for the receipt of relief money.”<sup>45</sup>

Marye’s concern was instead with accounting practices at the consulates about which, he confessed, he had “no means of knowing.”<sup>46</sup> The U.S. Consulate in Vladivostok, for example, suffered chronic problems accounting for relief funds, especially those from the *Hilfsaktion*, a benevolent organization composed of German expatriates residing in Tientsin (now Tianjin), China.<sup>47</sup> Instead of working through the Consulate’s relief fund distribution system, which John Caldwell, the Consul in Vladivostok, required to keep track of the sources of funds and who received them, the *Hilfsaktion* gave its funds directly to the POWs and civilian prisoners. This presented a problem for Caldwell and Embassy Petrograd because it produced accounting complications and uncertainties coupled with unequal distribution of funds. Some beneficiaries may have gotten funds from both the Consulate and the *Hilfsaktion*, and others received no funds at all. Caldwell claimed there was no sure way of knowing.<sup>48</sup> This situation grew particularly frustrating for Caldwell when the *Hilfsaktion* began to give funds directly to his POW camp inspectors, who in turn distributed the funds without informing the Consulate.<sup>49</sup> Relief funds management at the Vladivostok Consulate concerned the Embassy sufficiently that Marye’s successor, David R. Francis, directed Department and Embassy officials at the end of 1916 to investigate the situation.<sup>50</sup>

By early 1916, the U.S. mission refined its relief distribution procedures sufficiently to compensate for the most unwieldy aspects of the Czar’s erratic

bureaucracy. The Embassy stipulated that posts could receive relief funds from only the following sources: the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments; other Legations or Consulates in Petrograd; U.S. or foreign Embassies, Legations, or Consulates in other countries; and sources in the United States. “Embassy does not receive for transmission to prisoners the money from individuals or institutions (except American) either in Russia or abroad.”<sup>51</sup> For distribution of relief to German and Austro-Hungarian civilian prisoners, the U.S. mission established relief committees in the majority of civilian prisoner communities throughout the country to distribute relief funds and supplies. These committees had purview for whole provinces or for smaller collectives. In some locations, POWs elected their own committees. In other locales, U.S. officials from the Embassy or one of the Consulates selected committee members. In yet other places local authorities appointed committees. In locations where Russian authorities did not permit the formation of POW committees, the police took responsibility for relief distribution; POWs often did not receive aid owing to police corruption. The Consulates worked through Embassy Petrograd, which then contacted the U.S. Legation in Stockholm, which in turn communicated with the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments to notify them of POW relief needs.<sup>52</sup> The committee system functioned fairly well, but problems often arose when local officials blocked the “efforts of the Embassy to assist these persons with funds.” Local Russian officials frequently moved POWs around, which broke up the committee and distribution system. They also refused to recognize committees and insisted on distributing relief themselves. Despite a measure of success, Marye complained to the Foreign Ministry that, “The Embassy has tried in every possible way since the beginning of the war to build up a system for ameliorating the condition of civil prisoners,” but because of “opposition on the part of the Authorities conditions are generally worse.”<sup>53</sup> For the remainder of the period of U.S. neutrality, Department officials assigned to lead U.S. diplomatic efforts in Russia continually struggled to develop an effective, accountable organizational response to address the unprecedented problems presented by the Great War.

## **The Camps**

### *An Unprepared Russia*

The Russian Government’s complete lack of preparation for the enormous number of Germans and Austro-Hungarians it captured early in the war compounded

the U.S. Mission's inadequacy to fulfill its POW protecting powers responsibilities. The empire had little capacity to accommodate this human deluge. In a September 1914 telegram to Washington, Charles Wilson explained that the situation was so dismal for the POWs, "due to fact that authorities at beginning [of the war] provided for about 12,000 only[,] whereas whole number [was] probably well over 100,000" and because of this Russian authorities "were not able to provide food or shelter for such a crowd."<sup>54</sup> Marye explained to Washington on November 18, 1914, that in his opinion the Russians' lack of preparation was to blame for any POW or civilian prisoner suffering and that "they have in no case been intentionally badly or cruelly treated."<sup>55</sup> As a result, Russian officials stumbled at the start to provide timely identification lists and, more consequentially, adequate care for and suitable places to locate POWs and civilian prisoners.

As the POW numbers began to swell, so too did the number of reports of terrible camp conditions from both outside observers and the POWs themselves. The German and Austro-Hungarian Governments, as well as humanitarian organizations, increased pressure on the U.S. Government. They insisted Washington fulfill its responsibility to ensure that the Czar's Government treated POWs in accordance with international standards.

Conducting POW camp inspections best demonstrated the U.S. Government's commitment; officers sanctioned by Washington could verify conditions and assess the needs and health of POWs. Inspections proved easier to conduct for military POWs assigned to designated, fixed camps under the authority of the Ministry of War. Civilian prisoners were much more difficult to locate and monitor because the Russian Government dispersed them throughout the Empire. U.S. officials did not formally or routinely inspect the locations and living conditions of civilian prisoners, but did assess their circumstances whenever they delivered relief.

Ambassador Marye and the Embassy in Petrograd did not initiate the first efforts to assess the situation of POWs in Russia and to disburse aid. Rather, American inspections and relief originated out of China, coordinated by Paul Reinsch, the U.S. minister to Peking (now Beijing). He did so in response to repeated pleas by the German Legation, the German expatriate community, and American missionaries in China.<sup>56</sup> Reinsch's location made his post the logical choice to shepherd these initial efforts into Siberia because Peking was far closer to Siberia than Petrograd. Moreover, active German and Austro-Hungarian expatriate communities operated in Harbin



and Tientsin; despite residing in a neutral country, the war directly impacted them as well.<sup>57</sup> A German POW in Siberia wrote to the U.S. Consul in Harbin, Charles Moser, detailing his dire situation and seeking assistance. Moser, in turn, wrote to Reinsch. The POW claimed that Russian troops taken him and other German men residing in Harbin as prisoners, carried them out of China and shipped them off to various locations in Siberia.<sup>58</sup> Reinsch forwarded this information to the Department, which contacted the American Red Cross (ARC). At the ARC's request, the Department directed Reinsch to organize the relief effort out of China for the Red Cross. Reinsch appointed an ARC committee from among suitable and willing Americans residing in China.<sup>59</sup> He also coordinated with the U.S. mission in Russia to secure the committee permission to distribute aid to German and Austro-Hungarian POWs and civilian prisoners in Siberia.<sup>60</sup>

The inaugural interventions into Siberian camps proved only partially successful, but set important precedents for subsequent relief efforts. U.S. citizen Roger Ames Burr, a professor of German at the National Peiyang University in Tienstin and chairman of the ARC committee in China, conducted the first trip to Siberia in late December 1914.<sup>61</sup> Although the local military authorities did not permit him to enter the POW camps he visited, he did speak with POWs in Nikolsk, who were allowed by the Russian authorities to move freely about the town. Burr also met with numerous Russian officials, whom he described as well-intentioned and wanting “to do the right thing by its prisoners.”<sup>62</sup> Shortly after Burr's visit, Americans Charles Lewis and Charles L. Ogilvie conducted a second ARC-sponsored trip into Siberia during January–February 1915. They also were not able to inspect the military prison camps and relied on the reported testimony of prisoners and Russian authorities.<sup>63</sup> Although these initial ARC trips yielded incomplete results, they opened a door for U.S. Government POW assistance distribution and camp inspections. By working with the ARC and the U.S. mission in China, the U.S. Government utilized non-standard approaches to access and assist POWs in Russia at this early stage when the U.S. Embassy in Petrograd could get little traction with the Russian Government.

As POW relief efforts, even if limited, were underway in the far reaches of Siberia, matters proceeded more slowly in the Petrograd and the rest of Russia. The Department directed the Embassy to approach the Russian Government for permission to conduct POW camp inspections in October 1914.<sup>64</sup> However, the Embassy was slow to inaugurate any sort of inspection process. Marye explained to the Department in a November 18, 1914, telegram that the Embassy made an official request for permission



to conduct camp inspections, but the Russian Government had not responded.<sup>65</sup> The Russian Government's delay continued into the following year. After several months "of repeated written and verbal requests" and growing concern that conditions for POWs were "bad," especially in Siberia, Marye received a positive reply.<sup>66</sup> On February 1, 1915, Marye cabled Washington that the Russian Foreign Office stated verbally "in principle there is no objection to American official inspecting prison camps in Russia but is having difficulty with War Minister in arranging details and places to be visited."<sup>67</sup> Twenty days later, the Russian Government made the permission official, allowing one U.S. Government representative to conduct inspections at specific POW camps in Moscow, Kazan, Omsk, Preamur, Turkestan, Irkutsk, and Chita.<sup>68</sup>

The Department chose long-time diplomat and old Russia hand Montgomery Schuyler as its Special Agent to the Embassy to conduct these inspections.<sup>69</sup> Between March 5 and 29, Schuyler traveled over 6,000 miles and visited seven major military camps largely in Turkestan and Kazan. He made several observations regarding the situation of military POWs: Austro-Hungarians, most of whom their Russian captors considered "Slavs," were treated better than Germans, whom the wardens "systematically annoyed and humiliated." Poor sanitation presented a significant problem, particularly during the long journey from the front to the camps. A general lack of medical supplies hindered medical treatment, even in the relatively few cases when the POW contingents included captured doctors. Language differences impeded communication between the Russian military officials and many POWs.<sup>70</sup>

The Russian issuance of a permit for Schuyler represented the breakthrough the U.S. mission had long sought, but the ability of the U.S. mission subsequently to conduct comprehensive inspections of military POW camps and to secure permits remained chronic problems. Schuyler's trip marked an imperfect beginning because he visited camps that held only Austro-Hungarian POWs (except for one camp in Tashkent that held a smattering of German POWs).<sup>71</sup> The Russian Government subsequently issued very few permits, and only after lengthy delays. Marye's successor, David R. Francis, offered his thoughts on Russian hesitation to issue permits in a letter to the Department in 1916:

Germany and Austria think that the American Embassy should procure from the Foreign Office permits to send inspectors to all the military camps and administer to the needs of all military and civilian prisoners, and these countries continuously demand that reports be

made to them whenever our inspectors find the sanitary conditions of camps not up to standard, or when we hear of civilian prisoners being inconsiderately treated by Russian subjects among whom they live. You can readily see why such practices are looked upon by the Russian authorities as systematized espionage, the prosecution of which in time becomes not only annoying but exasperating and elicits warm expressions of disapproval.<sup>72</sup>

Although Francis understood the Russian position, it nevertheless frustrated him.<sup>73</sup> A month later, he wrote to Secretary of State Lansing to complain that the U.S. mission's POW inspection and relief efforts continued to be plagued by permit issues, "We have had great difficulty in procuring permits to visit military camps; in fact none have been granted us except the five procured by the Department through the Russian Embassy in Washington and of which the Embassy here was not advised until several weeks after."<sup>74</sup> In early September, Francis wrote to Ambassador Penfield in Vienna explaining the continuing difficulty in getting permits:

The greatest obstacle the Embassy has encountered has been the failure—I will not say the refusal—of the Russian Government to grant the permits requested. Such requests are always made through the Foreign Office and then referred to the War Department. After days, and in some cases weeks, had gone by without reply being received, the Embassy has written again and called by telephone and made effort in various ways to get definite reply from the Foreign Office, but has always been told that such requests had been referred to the War Department which was investigating and had not reported.<sup>75</sup>

In this instance, Francis could report to Penfield some success. Several meetings between the Embassy and Foreign Office "resulted more satisfactorily than any appeals made for three or four months previous," and he expected permits imminently.<sup>76</sup> Estimates of the total number of POW camps ranged between 300 and 900; hindered by severe access restrictions, the limited number of U.S. inspectors visited relatively few of them.<sup>77</sup>

When the Russian Government actually issued permits, the U.S. mission took full advantage. Between mid-1915 and April 1917, U.S. officers conducted some 110 military POW camp inspections from Archangel to Tashkent, Moscow to Irkutsk.<sup>78</sup>

After assessing conditions and interviewing POWs, U.S. mission inspectors generated detailed written reports.<sup>79</sup> Those reports served as the basis for judging the POWs' needs and raising concerns about their treatment with the Russian Government. The U.S. mission shared the reports with the Department, with the German or Austro-Hungarian Government depending on the nationality of the subject POWs in the report, and with the Russian Government. Because of the U.S. Government's delicate position as a neutral protecting power, the Department expected to review the reports before distribution in order to ensure they were properly edited. In at least one instance in early 1916, the authorities in Petrograd received an unedited camp report. Marye sent them an un-redacted copy of a January 20, 1916 inspection report by William Warfield of the camp in Stretensk, Siberia, which interned over 8800 POWs. At the time of Warfield's inspection, the camp was suffering an outbreak of typhus, which Warfield duly chronicled in his report, "Russian authorities were afraid of exposing themselves to the contagion and would not enter the camp." Such neglect, Warfield estimated, resulted in as many as 500 POW deaths from the disease. He also spared no details, no matter how graphic, in his description of Stretensk's conditions. "The dead," he mordantly observed, "were, and still are, piled in a separate building like sticks of wood... no record being kept of the exact number."<sup>80</sup> Outraged by the report's inflammatory language and accusatory tone, Russian officials objected to its "prejudiced character."<sup>81</sup> "As regards Dr. Warfield, in view of the tendenciousness [sic] of his reports, very different from the reliable information about these camps given by other Americans, who have visited the camps of the prisoners of war in Siberia,"<sup>82</sup> the Russian Government demanded his recall. More significantly, Petrograd also threatened to cease issuing inspection permits completely.

As the example of the Warfield report clearly demonstrated, the consequences of not following this inspection report vetting procedure resulted in serious diplomatic complications that hurt U.S. Government's position as a neutral protecting power. Because of his carelessness and failure to follow protocol, the Department reprimanded Marye.<sup>83</sup> No sooner had Marye submitted his report to the Department than the German Government contacted him about forming a "large organization of relief workers for war prisoners."<sup>84</sup> Marye used this German request to bolster his appeals to Washington for assistance with an "appreciable increase of personnel engaged in this service." He stated that "General relief can successfully be carried out by force of experienced Red Cross or other field workers" numbering at least 54 but, he stressed the need to downplay their ARC affiliation; they "should work as agents of and directly under" the Embassy.<sup>85</sup> The

Department reached out to the ARC to provide inspectors with relief administration experience to distribute relief and conduct camp inspections.<sup>86</sup> Although originally asking for 25 to 50 men, the Department eventually reduced that number. Finding Americans with both the language skills and relief experience proved nearly impossible, and the Russian Government's continued recalcitrance on the permit issue portended little additional access.<sup>87</sup> The Department and Embassy finally decided on an initial group of six. To avoid antagonizing Russian officials, the U.S. Government camouflaged this group of ARC inspectors by officially identifying them as a U.S. Government team; the inspectors held Department credentials and were attached to the Embassy in Petrograd.<sup>88</sup>

Throughout 1915 and into 1916, Marye lobbied the Russian authorities for increased POW camp access, as well as Washington for increased inspection staff. To press this point Marye sent a status memorandum of camp inspectors' observations to the Department on January 18.<sup>89</sup> Given that Marye had shared a similar memorandum on the status of civilian prisoners with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs earlier that month, it is likely that he also shared this memorandum on POWs with Russian officials.<sup>90</sup> Marye's memorandum highlighted the problems that inspectors from all neutral countries as well as international organization representatives thought the Russian Government should address: inadequate food; insufficient clothing; poor sanitation and living conditions that fostered disease; corruption-ridden distribution of relief funds and mail; and long, arduous transportation to camps.<sup>91</sup> Marye argued that the Embassy and U.S. Government could do much more for the POWs with sufficient staff to visit more camps more frequently, perhaps as many as 50 inspectors. Yet, he conceded to limited resources and would settle for a far smaller staff. He stressed the need for U.S. citizens because "Americans would probably inspire the Russian officers with greater confidence than other neutrals."<sup>92</sup>

Once designating a team, the Department contacted Russian Ambassador to the United States George Bakhméteff to press its case for Russian Government approval. Because the Department's "diplomatic service is not large enough" to accommodate the staff increases it wished to appoint "Assistants in the Embassy," selected from among retired diplomatic officers or from those with appropriate qualifications to conduct POW camp visits, distribute relief funds and supplies, and prepare reports about conditions in the camps. The Department reminded the Russians that the German Government allowed Spain, which represented Russia's interests in Germany, to increase its Embassy staff in Berlin. The Department requested approval for six additional staff and noted

that the Russian Government already approved two of them.<sup>93</sup> The Russian Embassy responded that it had no objection to a staff increase at the U.S. Embassy, but “the War Office has considered it expedient to limit considerably the number of permits... as it does not consider that these visits are called forth by absolute necessity.”<sup>94</sup> In the end, the U.S. mission had to make do with a far smaller inspection staff than the workload demanded.<sup>95</sup>

### *The Issue of Repatriating Civil Prisoners*

In addition to its general lack of preparedness, the Russian Government’s non-cooperation and resistance to POW camp access stemmed from strong anti-German and anti-Hapsburg sentiment, as well as suspicion of United States’ interventions on the Central Powers’ behalf. The Russian Government’s foot-dragging on the repatriation of German and Austro-Hungarian civilians exemplified those fears. On September 19, 1914, the U.S. Embassy in Petrograd informed the Russian Government that the German Government considered Russia’s action to take as POWs “all Germans liable to serve in the German army” as contrary to international law. Nevertheless, German officials assumed that Petrograd would at least allow women, children and elderly men to return home. In exchange, the German Government would assist repatriation of all Russians not of military service age.<sup>96</sup> However, the Russian Government failed to repatriate almost all Central Power subjects. As Lewis and Ogilvie observed in their early 1915 report about POWs and civilian prisoners, “the Russians claim that their own officers have been shot down by children, to whom they paid no attention in entering a German town” and that “women and old men have acted as spies and have done their best to hinder the progress of the Russians.”<sup>97</sup>

After much pressure from Berlin and Washington, the Russian Government signed a repatriation agreement with the German Government on February 11, 1915, but the agreement accomplished little.<sup>98</sup> The Embassy confirmed that that Russian officials refused to release men over 45 years of age, instead imprisoning them and shipping them to the interior.<sup>99</sup> Russian authorities argued that the Central Powers failed to uphold the agreement; Russia was “obliged to take corresponding measures.”<sup>100</sup> Throughout 1915, 1916 and early 1917, the Germans and the Austro-Hungarians repeatedly accused the Russians of willfully violating the agreement and preventing German and Austro-Hungarian men over the age of 45 and under the age of 17, as well as women, the freedom to leave Russia.<sup>101</sup> A defensive Russian Government claimed

that the Central Powers were referring to people who wanted to remain in Russia. The Russians also accused neutral governments, especially the United States, of exceeding their responsibility with such vigorous advocacy for the Central Powers' interests. Where, the Russians asked, was any concern for their POWs?<sup>102</sup>

When Russia did agree to abide by the repatriation agreement, those few individuals they granted permission to leave experienced problems getting the proper exit documentation, faced unreasonably short time periods in which to leave, or had to travel nearly impossible distances to reach approved border crossings.<sup>103</sup> Even if the civilian prisoners made it to the border, Russian border guards often stopped those considered "fit for military service and returned them to the interior" of the country.<sup>104</sup> In January 1916, the Russian Government claimed that Germany used men over 45 years of age in their military, based on information it had gathered from German POWs.<sup>105</sup> The Russian Government hardened its position and unilaterally raised the age of German and Austro-Hungarian civilian men it held prisoner to 55 years.<sup>106</sup>

By the end of 1916, the U.S. Government faced the prospect that Russia intended to renounce the repatriation agreements, which complicated Washington's role as protecting power. Francis wrote to the Department on December 28 that the Russian Government was "seriously contemplating the complete or partial abrogation" of the agreement due in part to the "reported measure to mobilize all civilians over fifteen."<sup>107</sup> On March 1, 1917, the Russian Government abrogated its agreement with Austria-Hungary.<sup>108</sup>

## **The American Red Cross**

Suspicion and anti-Central Powers sentiment also influenced how Russians viewed the American Red Cross. Russian authorities permitted the ARC to operate a hospital in Kiev, one of several the Red Cross established in Europe immediately after the war broke out. It began seeing patients on December 4, 1914, and closed on September 15, 1915, due to lack of ARC funds.<sup>109</sup> That the hospital treated Russian military wounded and civilians pleased the Russian Government.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, Russian authorities thought the ARC gave far more support to Germans and Austro-Hungarians in the treatment of POWs. In response to a personal appeal by President Wilson to permit the ARC and other U.S. relief organizations to operate in Russia, Czar Nicholas II consented to "the distribution of gifts" to German and Austro-Hungarian



POWs. However, he stipulated that the ARC be “guided by the principle of perfect mutuality” for Russian POWs.<sup>111</sup> Although President Wilson and Czar Nicholas had established this understanding, Russian authorities refused to permit the ARC to provide any medical care once it had shuttered the Kiev hospital in September 1915.<sup>112</sup> The Government strictly circumscribed how the ARC operated in Russia, limiting ARC doctors and nurses only to distribution of relief supplies.

The Russian Government’s ARC policy resulted in the denial of adequate medical care for many German and Austro-Hungarian POWs. Authorities in Berlin received alarming reports, particularly out of Siberia, about the terrible conditions POWs experienced. Over the summer of 1916, U.S. Ambassador to Germany James Gerard and the ARC assembled a team from ARC medical practitioners who had been working in Germany. Gerard took this action at the request of, and with financial support from, the German Government.<sup>113</sup> In addition to this team from Germany, the ARC also sought to create a second team of 10 ARC doctors from China to help cover the vast expanse of Siberia.<sup>114</sup> Gerard and the German Government further called for a “sanitary commission” of 10 doctors and 20 nurses to help stem the spread of typhus and cholera in the Siberian POW camps.<sup>115</sup> Anticipating the concerns of the Russian Government, Gerard also recommended an ARC medical team to remain in Germany to tend to Russian POWs.<sup>116</sup>

The ARC team from Germany traveled to Russia in September 1915, but ran afoul of the Russian Government’s policy prohibiting the ARC from practicing medicine in the POW camps. Marye attempted to explain the “Russian mind” to Washington.<sup>117</sup> To the Russians, an ARC team that originated in Germany with German Government approval, regardless of its composition, essentially comprised a team of “German emissaries whom Germany would not be allowed to send in her own name.” Unaware that Germany was financially supporting the team, Russian officials also questioned how the ARC had funds for this initiative to assist German POWs at the same time the Red Cross closed the hospital in Kiev that assisted Russians.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, the Russian Government interpreted literally the terms of the Czar’s agreement with the President: the ARC team was restricted to “distributing” relief. In his subsequent negotiations with the Russian Government, Marye also failed to stress that the primary function of the ARC was to provide medical care.<sup>119</sup> Department officials reacted to Marye’s careless negotiating by chastising him for his diplomatic incompetence: “The request of the German Government to the American Red Cross was not submitted to the Russian Government as perhaps it should have been” and “the Red Cross and the Department

assumed there was no objection on the part of the Russian authorities to the American Red Cross performing actual medical service.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, the Russian Government rejected the ARC offer to aid Russian POWs in Germany and refused to fund such a team. Petrograd argued that Russians spent a great deal on its POWs in Germany and the “medical department there seems to be only more or less satisfactory in its treatment of prisoners.”<sup>121</sup>

As 1915 drew to a close, the Russian Government remained unmoved, as Marye put it, “to extend field of usefulness of American Red Cross unit from Germany so as to include surgical and medical inspectors.”<sup>122</sup> The Russians reduced the ARC doctors and staff to couriers, preventing them from plying their proper trade and likely saving many POW lives. The release of Warfield’s Stretensk inspection report on POW conditions, especially the portion about rampant illness, only underscored for the ARC and Department officials the urgent need to get ARC medical staff into the POW camps in Siberia.<sup>123</sup> Although Marye, as the Department instructed, again approached the Russian Government, he reported, “Am not hopeful of favorable reply however.”<sup>124</sup>

Nearly a year after the ARC team arrived in Russia and following Marye’s resignation, the new Ambassador, David R. Francis, wrote the Department on July 13, 1916 to announce that he had released the ARC team members to return to the United States or serve elsewhere in Europe. The Russian Government insisted that they leave. Francis declined to protest as a neutral party because he did not want to do anything “objectionable to the Russian Government” and hoped to “avoid friction with the Russian authorities while discharging the trust we have assumed in representing the German and Austrian interests.”<sup>125</sup> Russian suspicion and anti-German and anti-Austro-Hungarian sentiment, as well as skepticism about U.S. neutrality, doomed the ill-fated ARC team that Ambassador Gerard dispatched from Germany.

## **The Issue of Neutrality and a Demand for a Change**

As evidenced by the crisis with the ARC team, U.S. officials constantly worked to dissuade Russians from thinking U.S. Government secretly harbored sympathies for the Central Powers. Russian concern persisted about U.S. Government neutrality while Washington simultaneously maintained protecting power responsibility. Russian authorities pointed to incidents like the release of the Warfield inspection report as

examples of U.S. bias. The Russian attitude complicated the U.S. mission's ability to properly carry out POW and civilian prisoner support as well as its overall relief mission.

An abrupt change in leadership at Embassy Petrograd only exacerbated Russian concerns. On January 21, 1916, Lansing cabled Ambassador Marye "after most careful consideration and with deep regret" President Wilson determined that the "interests of government" required the "immediate appointment" of a new Ambassador to replace Marye.<sup>126</sup> Lansing did not cite specific reasons for Wilson's demanding the resignation; the President acted because of "fundamental objections" that could not "be overcome," making it "impossible" for Marye to continue as Ambassador.<sup>127</sup>

Poor performance, both actual and perceived, no doubt comprised the principal factors for Marye's removal. Wilson's top diplomat in Russia demonstrated an inability to handle effectively the U.S. Government's protecting powers affairs, especially the POW issue. Marye's mismanagement of the Warfield inspection report release not only caused more harm to fragile U.S.-Russian relations and embarrassment to the Department, but it also resulted in the dismissal of a valued inspector. However unfairly, the President and Lansing held Marye responsible for the Russian position on the ARC team's access to German and Austro-Hungarian POWs, which further undermined the Department's confidence in his abilities. In addition to what Department officials observed of Marye's performance, they received numerous complaints from inside and outside the U.S. Government about Marye's abilities, as well as his lack of commitment to the POW issue.<sup>128</sup> Marye left Petrograd on March 29, 1916 citing poor health.<sup>129</sup> If Marye was angry or upset about his forced resignation, kept it to himself or shared those sentiments only in private. According to his memoir, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia*, he told Sazonov that he regretted leaving Russia, but "political combinations had arisen at home which affected me and that I felt impelled to withdraw."<sup>130</sup> He also denied he left for medical reasons: "no consideration of health would have induced me to resign during the war."<sup>131</sup> A February 16, 1916, *New York Times* article about Marye's resignation reported health as the official reason, but also noted in addition that he and his wife were dissatisfied with Petrograd society life.<sup>132</sup>

Only two weeks after Marye received his marching orders, the Department reassigned *Chargé* Wilson as well. On February 2, 1916, Washington transferred the second-in-command at Petrograd to the equivalent position in Madrid. He switched places with Fred M. Dearing, who had been serving as the First Secretary at the U.S. mission to Spain. Although not reflected in the documentation, in retrospect the transfer

appears a reasonable move. Wilson acquired extensive experience with the Russian Government and the responsibilities of a protecting power. Given that Spain served as Russia's protecting power in both Germany and the Dual Monarchy, Wilson could play a key role by advising the Spanish Government about promoting Russian POW issues with Berlin and Vienna.<sup>133</sup>

Yet despite their reservations about Marye and Wilson, Russian authorities expressed displeasure and worry at their replacement. Both U.S. officials had earned a certain amount of Russian trust. As Marye recounted in his memoir, the Russian Secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs confided to Wilson:

At the ministry we all regret your departure and personally and confidentially I will tell you that it is believed generally at the ministry that the State Department has received its orders to substitute for you someone with German leanings. Also confidentially I tell you that the work of your embassy will not be made easier by that belief.<sup>134</sup>

Upon his arrival at post on May 5, 1916, Francis found that Russian authorities indeed assumed he harbored pro-German inclinations. Only a week after settling into his position, Francis recounted to Washington that at their initial meeting Foreign Minister Sazonov told the Ambassador he “heard a rumor that my appointment was influenced by German sympathy.” During a June 19 meeting between an Embassy official and Assistant Foreign Minister Vladimir Artsimovich about repatriating civilian prisoners, Artsimovich questioned the U.S. Government's neutrality in its advocacy for the Central Powers' POWs and civilian prisoners. According to the Embassy official:

Mr. Artsimovitch [sic] went on to explain more generally his conception of the way in which a neutral power should represent the interests of a belligerent.... He says that if we merely comply with a request from the German or Austrian Government to forward a document, or deliver a message, the Russian Government accepts and approves such service. If we go further and advocate the cause, or in any active way urge this or that action, then they “get cross”.... [The U.S. government's] protection of the interests of German and Austrian subjects was merely incidental. The Embassy was not a humanitarian institution.<sup>135</sup>

Francis moved quickly to dispel Russian fears. He dismissed one of his chief officers in charge of POW and civilian prisoner relief, in part, because he advocated too ardently, to the annoyance of Russian officials.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, Russian Ambassador to the United States Bakhméteff assisted Francis by assuring Sazonov and the Russian Government that such rumors about the new American Ambassador were “groundless.”<sup>137</sup> Francis also sent back to the United States the ARC doctors and nurses from the team dispatched from Germany at the request of the Russian Foreign Office. He did so, he informed the Department in a July 24, 1916, letter, because, “The Embassy has taken the position that it would only impair its only usefulness to request to retain in its service in Russia anyone to whom the Russian Government objects.”<sup>138</sup> Yet, despite Francis’ efforts, the Russian Government’s worries about the sincerity of the United States neutrality, as well as Russian suspicion of anything or anyone associated with Germany or the Dual Monarchy, made the challenge of fulfilling the duties of a protecting power all the more difficult for Francis and the United States Government.

#### *Reorganization of the Effort*

By the time of Marye’s departure, the struggles the Department and the U.S. mission in Russia experienced in their attempts to manage German and Austro-Hungarian POW relief efforts became fodder for the U.S. media. According to an article in the June 4 edition of the *New York Times*:

[O]ur Embassy in Petrograd attempted to treat the problem [of German and Austro-Hungarian POWs], not as something which required system and the organization of a complicated network of agencies under the control of one central bureau, but as isolated cases each of which might be attended to separately and without coordination. The result was what might have been expected—hopeless confusion.<sup>139</sup>

But even as the *Times* was sending the article to the printers, U.S. officials knew they had a serious problem and needed to fix it with what Moscow Consul General Snodgrass suggested a year earlier: “a better organization” to address all that POW and civilian prisoner relief assistance required.<sup>140</sup> The U.S. mission created a “Second Division” to handle better the ever-increasing POW relief workload and to free up the overburdened “First Division” to do the regular work of the Embassy. During the

period of U.S. neutrality, and particularly between April 1916 (following Ambassador Marye's departure) and April 1917 (when the United States broke relations with the Dual Monarchy), the U.S. mission eventually developed a fully functional POW relief oversight structure.

When Francis succeeded Marye in spring 1916, the Embassy was in far better shape to handle its responsibilities to POWs and civilian prisoners, despite Marye's failings, than it had been at the outbreak of the war in 1914. As the burden of POW and civilian prisoner relief work intensified, Marye and the mission recognized the need for a far more robust staff and organization to handle the monstrous and ever-increasing POW issue. Between fall 1914 and early 1916, the Embassy staff as a whole accrued sufficient experience to propose more systematic measures and had a clearer sense of how relief work ought to be managed. Doing so enabled them to envision what tasks could be accomplished if they got more people on site. Marye already started the process, however ham-fistedly, by standing up an "American Embassy Relief Office" set apart from the everyday operations of the Embassy. The Embassy integrated that office into what became the Second Division. Marye also pressed Washington and the Russian Government for additional inspectors.<sup>141</sup>

## **The Second Division**

By the time Marye departed, new *Chargé* Fred Dearing had already set about reorganizing the U.S. Government's relief programs in Russia. Dearing's efforts resulted in the creation of an organization, the Second Division, dedicated exclusively to the POW and civilian prisoner relief enterprise. This organization grew some 24 initial staffers to over twice that number and spread across the entire expanse of Russia, including Siberia.

Dearing did not think much of the former Ambassador's management and the state in which he left relations with the Russian Government.<sup>142</sup> Marye had broken a great deal of diplomatic china before he left. According to Dearing:

It should not be hid from Department that work of caring for German and Austro-Hungarian prisoners under past Embassy administration had come to practical deadlock Russian Government having practically refused on account of damaging character of Embassy representatives'



reports to issue for the present permits to any more Embassy delegates for inspection work. I was compelled accordingly to begin at bottom and build up new system based on Russian good will.<sup>143</sup>

An April 22 message from the Department hammered home to Dearing the need to revamp the Embassy's relief organization. Officials in Washington were "somewhat disturbed" following an internal audit of the Embassy's relief fund accounting because of the apparent "unsatisfactory conditions... owing to lack of receipts, etcetera." The Department hoped the Embassy was taking vigorous steps to correct the problem. Washington wanted the relief records in good order "when a final accounting takes place" so that it can "satisfy the governments for which it has been acting."<sup>144</sup>

Dearing implemented an Embassy reorganization plan he thought would more adequately address the POW and civilian prisoner relief challenges. Dearing split the Embassy into two divisions. The First Division continued to carry out the usual tasks of the Embassy, "work such as was performed... before assuming charge of German and Austrian interests in Russia." The Second Division, which had an initial staff of approximately 24, was "charged with the despatch of all work arising in connection with the care of German and Austrian and any other foreign interests." The Ambassador supervised the Second Division, but it had its own designated director who exercised overall management control of the Division. Under that director, a director of field operations oversaw "the actual putting into operation and carrying out of the work decided upon," which included camp visits and inspections, relief distribution, and sanitary measures. The camp inspectors, or "Special Agents," reported to the director of field operations. Dearing submitted to the Department his "plan of Organization and a set of Regulations" and asked, "most respectfully but most pointedly" for support similar to the type of support that it gave to London, Paris and Berlin because conditions in Petrograd "are vastly more difficult... the work more voluminous and equally as delicate."<sup>145</sup>

To justify his re-organization, Dearing shared with the Department a status memorandum chronicling how Marye and the U.S. Embassy conducted "the work of caring for German and Austrian interests" from the start of the war until March 27, 1916.<sup>146</sup> He also sought to clearly demarcate the new Embassy regime he initiated from that of Marye. As Dearing stated, "if in the future it should be necessary to distinguish between what was formerly done by the Embassy and what it is now intended to do, the Department will have a basis for comparison." The U.S. mission's procedures and

practices up to the end of March 1916 proved ineffective in handling the relief for an already staggeringly large military POW and civilian prisoner population. Although the Russian Red Cross would not vouch for their own statistics, it informed the Embassy that as of the end of March Russia held in captivity approximately 1,080,000 Austro-Hungarian and 96,000 German military POWs. Because the Russian Government dispersed civilian prisoners all over the country and did not confine them in camps, the Embassy could only estimate the total for both nationalities at about 138,000.<sup>147</sup> Even if not entirely accurate, these statistics served as clear evidence that the U.S. mission needed a relief organization like the Second Division. The Department approved of Dearing's reorganization of the Embassy.<sup>148</sup> The new Ambassador, Francis, did as well.

In addition to Dearing's reorganization plan, Francis wanted to make a few of his own adjustments because "the work of caring of the interests of the Central Empires is in process of constant evolution."<sup>149</sup> Unlike his predecessor, Francis demonstrated an enthusiasm for the task at hand and endeavored to get up to speed as quickly as possible on the key issues. Only two months after his arrival, Francis submitted a frank assessment to Washington "concerning our representation here of German and Austrian interests."<sup>150</sup> German and Austro-Hungarian sources sent the U.S. mission 1,500,000 rubles per month for POW relief. Private sources provided another 250,000 per month. Disbursing such large sums of money, Francis assured his superiors in Washington, "is attended with great responsibility and is difficult indeed." Francis did not provide a number for military POWs, but he estimated the number of civilian prisoners at about 150,000. He added that these civilians suffered greatly because they received no support from Russians, who expected them to fend for themselves, "which is in many instances absolutely impossible."<sup>151</sup> Francis sent to the Department an "analytical statement" to be shared with the Germans and Austro-Hungarians that served as evidence of the U.S. mission's reorganization and new, robust operation going forward. The Ambassador also intended it to illustrate all that representing the Central Powers' POW interests entailed. According to Francis, this document detailed the U.S. mission's "care of German and Austro-Hungarian interests in the Russian Empire" and how "that work has been organized during the spring of 1916."<sup>152</sup>

To serve as the Second Division's Director, Francis appointed someone from outside the Department who had extensive experience and expertise in social programs and charity work.<sup>153</sup> Dr. Edward T. Devine was a sociology and social economy professor at Columbia University, who was also Director of the New York School of Philanthropy and General Secretary of the New York Charity Organization Society.<sup>154</sup> He had headed

up the group that the ARC assembled earlier that year in response to Marye's request for more POW camp inspectors.<sup>155</sup> Devine arrived in Petrograd shortly before Francis, and was already hard at work as an Embassy special assistant and the Second Division director of field operations under *Chargé* Dearing. He visited Consulate Moscow "to get a basis for formulating general plans for the better organization and development of our work in the field and military and civilian prisoners."<sup>156</sup> He visited Consulate Vladivostok as well for the "purpose of clarifying and making definite the relationship between the Embassy and its various agencies."<sup>157</sup> He then held meetings with Russian Foreign Office officials and the Russian Red Cross.<sup>158</sup> He also convened four days of meetings in Stockholm in July with representatives of the German and Austro-Hungarian Red Cross societies, the German and the Austro-Hungarian War Ministries, as well as the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Embassy in Petrograd. During this conference, he succeeded in persuading the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments that threats of reprisals against Russian POWs because of perceived poor treatment by Russia of their POWs were counterproductive.<sup>159</sup>

During his tenure, Devine kept up a hectic schedule, but his intensity and zeal rankled the Russian Government and ultimately led to his ouster. Despite all his effort and his commitment to POWs, the Department and Francis decided that Devine was ultimately not suited to carry out U.S. policy in Russia. Although Francis considered Devine "an excellent organizer," he also considered him "a professional philanthropist, and the methods of such men are sometimes exasperating." Francis shrugged off rumors about Devine's pro-German sympathies, instead considering him simply an overzealous advocate for the POWs' welfare. Nevertheless, this put Devine at odds with both the U.S. Ambassador and the Russians. Francis emphasized his duty to preserve the U.S.-Russia relationship and avoid allowing the task of protecting the Central Powers interests, including the POWs, strain that relationship.<sup>160</sup> Phillips and the Department concurred that it was of the "utmost importance" for Francis to "satisfy the Russian Government that you are acting with their approval and cooperation." It would "indeed be unfortunate if Dr. Devine's enthusiasm for the cause should embarrass you in the important work before you."<sup>161</sup> The Department "advised that [Devine's] services would not be required beyond September first," and Francis ultimately agreed. Devine left Petrograd and the Second Division permanently on August 15.<sup>162</sup> Although he fell out of favor with both the Department and with Francis, he appears to have improved the organization and management of POW and civilian prisoner relief in standing up the Second Division. Despite concurring with Washington's decision to terminate Devine's

work at the Embassy, Francis thought that he was “an excellent organizer,” “experienced in the work” of relief and assistance, and considered it “very difficult to fill his place.”<sup>163</sup>

While waiting for the Department to select a suitable replacement, Francis directed Second Division operations with advice from Dearing. They concluded the Second Division would function more efficiently if it were independent from the main Embassy operation.<sup>164</sup> Francis responded by relocating it to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy building. As a practical matter, the move also served to accommodate the Second Division’s increasing staff; “[R]elief work,” wrote Francis to a former Embassy Secretary, “was growing so fast we could not find room in the Embassy proper for the men required.” New delegates arrived to conduct POW camp inspections, and, more important, the Russian Government resumed issuing permits.<sup>165</sup>

In November 1916, Dearing left Russia because both he and his wife developed serious health issues. Before departing, however, he assessed the state of Embassy operations with an emphasis on the Second Division.<sup>166</sup> Still not satisfied with the U.S. mission’s relief program, he presented the Ambassador with a final set of recommendations for improving an Embassy he considered “still imperfectly and incompletely organized.” Among his many recommendations, he emphasized a few as critical. First, the U.S. mission had to constantly remind the Department “of the dimensions of the task confronting the Embassy” and the need for more staff and resources.<sup>167</sup> Another recommendation involved the establishment of a Central Administrative Office in Petrograd so that “the expanding work of the Embassy’s agents, the Consuls and Field Delegates... can be adequately directed.” His exhaustive list of lesser recommendations ranged from the Embassy’s “division of authority” to duties for stenographers and translators. He covered seemingly every aspect involved in running the Embassy in wartime Russia. Dearing recommended the Second Division build up its own organization, expand its personnel, and develop a plan for regular inspections of the military POW camps and civilian prisoner communities.<sup>168</sup>

To replace Devine the Department selected veteran diplomat Basil Miles, who introduced his own initiatives to improve Second Division operations that built upon institutional learning that took place under his predecessors.<sup>169</sup> Miles was a retired diplomatic officer who had most recently worked as the division chief of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He was also no stranger to Russia, having served at Embassy Petrograd from 1905 to 1907, first as private secretary to the U.S. Ambassador, George von Lengerke Meyer, and then as Third Secretary.<sup>170</sup> That Miles served in Russia

when the U.S. Government had previously acted as the protecting power for Japan's interests during the Russo-Japanese War was likely not lost on Department officials when they appointed him. Prior to Miles' arrival, Phillips wrote to Francis on October 16 and urged him to ensure Miles "be given as free a hand as possible, reporting to you rather than subordinating himself to one of the secretaries of the Embassy."<sup>171</sup> Francis replied that he would "turn over the work of the Second Division to [Miles] almost without reservation."<sup>172</sup> With the full confidence of the Department and Francis, Miles immediately set to work and, in Francis' words, took "hold [of the Second Division] with a will."<sup>173</sup>

To improve Second Division efficiency, Miles immediately overhauled the relief operation in the vast eastern part of the country to remedy what he called the "Confusion in Siberia."<sup>174</sup> The "confusion" stemmed from the way the Consulate in Vladivostok handled the accounting and distribution of POW and civilian prisoner relief funds. Miles soon learned that much more was "confusing" about the dynamics between the Consulate and its relief and inspection Delegates. Consul John Caldwell complained to the Embassy about the conduct of the Delegates he supervised, specifically Joseph Kerrigan and William Webster, who the Consulate detailed to Irkutsk to conduct POW camp inspections in central Siberia. Caldwell claimed Kerrigan in particular failed to observe proper chain of command or to follow Embassy-directed protocol. For example, he made two trips to China in August and October 1916 to secure POW relief funds and supplies without notifying Consulate Vladivostok or Embassy Petrograd.<sup>175</sup> Miles also observed that Caldwell and Kerrigan clashed on a personal level, which further complicated the relief effort in Siberia.<sup>176</sup> To solve the problem, the new Second Division director divided Siberia into three districts: Eastern Siberia under the immediate direction of Consulate Vladivostok; Central Siberia, including Delegates Kerrigan and Webster, under the direct control of the Embassy; and Western Siberia, also under direct Embassy control.<sup>177</sup> By moving Central Siberia (and thus Kerrigan and Webster) directly under the authority of the Embassy, Miles eliminated continued friction between Caldwell and those free-wheeling inspectors. This reorganization also brought more of the POW camp inspection process under the Embassy's direct purview. By January 1917, after only a few months under Miles' direction, the Second Division not only sorted out the problems in Siberia, but also expanded its general operations significantly. The Second Division's initial staff of about 24 nearly doubled by the close of 2016. Miles oversaw a staff in Petrograd of some 35 employees, plus an additional 40 employees located at the constituent Consulates or at offices in Siberia specifically



created for Embassy delegates, like Kerrigan and Webster, who carried out POW camp inspections and aid distribution.<sup>178</sup>

Just as Francis and Miles ramped up Second Division relief operations, however, the U.S. Government's protecting power responsibilities wound down. On February 3, 1917, President Wilson announced before a joint session of Congress that the United States Government terminated its relations with Germany and ceased representing its interests.<sup>179</sup> The following day Francis received a telegram from the Department directing him to turn over its responsibility for German interests in Russia to Sweden.<sup>180</sup> The Second Division carried on the relief and POW work on behalf of the Dual Monarchy for another two months until Austria-Hungary severed relations with the United States on April 9. At that point, all U.S. Government protecting powers responsibilities and its POW relief operation in Russia came to a close.<sup>181</sup>

## Conclusion

Through what became a significant enterprise, and despite only grudging cooperation from the Czar's officials, the U.S. Government managed, in so far as possible, to fulfill its responsibility to look after the interests of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Ensuring the welfare of the Central Powers' POWs and civilian prisoners, which became the primary U.S. protecting power duty, necessitated the creation of an entirely new "Second Division," and appropriate staff in the Embassy as well as support from the U.S. mission in China and international charitable organizations to help cover the vast expanse of Siberia. According to Miles, "in spite of improper organization in the beginning, the Embassy on the whole nevertheless accomplished many tangible and helpful results," including the disbursement of 2 million rubles a month in relief aid, and the purchase and distribution of life-sustaining clothing and medical supplies.<sup>182</sup> All of these issues, large and small, required the U.S. mission's constant effort, intervention, and communication with the Russian Government and with benevolent organizations working on behalf of POWs, like the Swedish Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, and the Y.M.C.A. The overwhelming numbers of Germans and Austro-Hungarians in Russia for whom the U.S. Government took responsibility necessitated such a large effort. As Miles noted in his final report to Francis in June 1917, the management of "something like two million prisoners the number of smaller issues involved was almost endless."<sup>183</sup> By the spring of 1917, the Second Division of Embassy relief staff grew to approximately



225 members. This staff included diplomatic and consular officers, as well as non-Department employees such as the Delegates hired specifically to work in the Second Division or on the POW and relief enterprise.<sup>184</sup> Miles concluded that the U.S. mission and all those who contributed to the POW and civilian prisoner relief effort worked under difficult circumstances and received minimal compensation for their efforts, “[I]t is questionable whether any other country could have taken up the work with men of such definite character and ability for anything like the amount of compensation fixed by the Department of State... their work was done very well indeed.”<sup>185</sup> After great diplomatic effort with the Russian authorities, the U.S. Government established a functional POW camp inspection and civilian prisoner assistance regime.

That protecting power regime, however, did not fully succeed. U.S. officials could not visit the number of camps and locations they thought necessary. Nor could they assess the ones to which they had access with the desired frequency. The burden of acting as the principal officer in charge of implementing the protecting power function also cost the U.S. mission one Ambassador, who proved inadequate to the tasks the war demanded, and pushed the operations of the mission and its staff to their limits. Additionally, both the Embassy and the Department had to constantly adjust and often improvise to meet rapidly expanding responsibilities, as well as to counter Russian Government obstacles. This resulted in concerns about the proper disbursement of relief supplies and funds and personnel issues like the “confusion” in Siberia.

Nevertheless, it is likely that the circumstances of POWs in Russia would have been far worse had the United States and the Department not taken on the burden of representing the belligerents’ interests. For example, U.S. diplomacy succeeded in mitigating the possibility of reprisals by the Central Powers and the Russians against each other’s POWs and civilian prisoners. As Francis noted in a September 5, 1916, communication to Ambassador Penfield in Vienna, “Many threats, from Berlin and Vienna, of reprisals to be practiced unless conditions in specific camps should be improved promptly or within a limited fixed time have not been transmitted to the Foreign Office because no good could result therefrom—only increased human suffering.”<sup>186</sup> Francis was convinced that poor conditions and POW treatment in the camps in Russia were not due to malice but to a broken camp system and external circumstances. Therefore, he sought to circumvent reprisals based on false assumptions. Without such mediation on the part of U.S. officials like Francis, reprisals against POWs on all sides were likely greatly limited.

Ultimately, the experience in Russia demonstrated the limits of pre-war U.S. diplomatic capacity and exposed the need to reconfigure how the Department did business. A 1916 internal Department memorandum foreshadowed Miles' concluding point about proper compensation for "definite character and ability":

The events of the present European conflict, in addition to the constantly increasing services rendered by American diplomatic officers abroad to legitimate American interests, emphasize more clearly than ever the necessity of the appointment of trained, experienced men, speaking the language of the country to which they are accredited.<sup>187</sup>

The Department needed both *more* and *better* men. More important, the trials the mission faced, particularly in addressing POW and civilian prisoner relief support, revealed general deficiencies in the Department's structure and administration. Senior U.S. officials had to face the sobering reality that the challenges emanating from a monstrous and immense war irrevocably changed the world. The new aspects and demands of diplomatic work required major organizational change as well.

## Notes

- 1 While the United States and most other governments adopted the Gregorian calendar in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, the Russian Empire and subsequent Russian governments continued to use the Julian calendar until February 1918. The Gregorian calendar during this time period was 13 days ahead of the Julian calendar. When both the Julian date and the Gregorian date appear on documents, I use the Gregorian date. If only one date appears on a Department of State produced document, I presume the date is Gregorian. However, if only one date appears on a document produced by the Embassy or one of the Consulates, it is uncertain which type of date the document's drafter used. In the case of a Russian Government-produced document, I presume the date is Julian.
- 2 In keeping with the country's war fever, Czar Nicholas II issued a decree on September 1, 1914 changing the name of the capital from the German-sounding St. Petersburg to the Russianized Petrograd. "St. Petersburg Name Changed to Petrograd," *New York Times*, September 2, 1914, p. 3.
- 3 Wilson to Bryan, July 31, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 12, 763.72/44. (Microfilm 367 materials are viewable online: see <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2017/04/04/world-war-i-foreign-policy-records-part-i-the-department-of-state/>.)
- 4 Bryan to Wilson, August 1, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), p. 732; Bryan to Wilson, August 8, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 736-737.
- 5 Telegram from Wilson to Bryan, July 31, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 12, 763.72/44.
- 6 "Ask our Envoy's Recall," *New York Times*, April 15, 1913, p. 1; "Russia gives nothing," *The Washington Post*, December 19, 1911, p. 1; David Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 57-59. <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/guild-curtis>; President Woodrow Wilson officially terminated Guild's appointment in April 1913.
- 7 George T. Marye, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia* (Philadelphia, PA: Dorrance & Company Inc., 1929), p. 15.
- 8 Bryan to Marye, August 1, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-29, 123 M 361/5a; William Phillips to Marye, August 27, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-29, 123 M 361/8. Marye's memoir recounts a conversation he had with the Russian Ambassador to the United States George Bakhméteff in New York prior to his departure for Russia. Bakhméteff chided Marye: "The embassy was allowed to remain vacant... when only American interests were involved, but now that German and Austrian interests were also to be represented, an ambassador is hurried to St. Petersburg over great difficulties." Marye, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia*, p. 18.
- 9 Marye, a retired California business executive and attorney, was originally from Virginia and scion of a wealthy family. Although he studied in the U.K., France, Germany and Spain, he had no formal experience as a diplomat and had never served in U.S. Federal office. He was President Woodrow Wilson's third choice for top diplomat in Russia. Wilson originally nominated him as Ambassador to France, but the French Government and wine growers opposed him because of his advocacy for the California wine industry. Wilson's interest in Marye appears to have been primarily because Marye was a Democrat and a generous campaign contributor. "Marye for Russian Post," *The Washington Post*, June 20, 1914, p. 3; "Marye for St. Petersburg," *The New York Times*, June 21, 1914, p. 2; "In Doubt as to Marye," *The Washington Post*, June 30, 1914, p. 4; "Marye Envoy to Russia," *The Washington Post*, July 2, 1914, p. 2; Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, p. 66-

- 68; Norman E. Saul, *War and Revolution: The United States & Russia, 1914-1921* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), p. 9.
- 10 Batum, Moscow, Odessa, Petrograd, Riga, Vladivostok, and Warsaw.
- 11 Wilson to Bryan, August 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/204.
- 12 Wilson to Bryan, August 5, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 733-734.
- 13 Wilson to Bryan, August 5, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, p. 734. In a cable to the Department that he sent on August 18, Ambassador to Germany James W. Gerard noted that on August 3 the Russian Ambassador and his staff left Berlin "...in the midst of a threatening crowd gathered about the Embassy, who shouted 'murderers' and tried to beat them with sticks as they passed out in automobiles." Gerard to Bryan, August 18, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, p. 92.
- 14 "Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917," USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898. In an early ARC camp inspection report dated March 4, 1915, the authors speculated that there might be as many as 300,000 POWs in Siberia and that POWs arrived in various Siberian locations at a rate of 3000 per day. Charles Lewis and Charles L. Ogilvie (ANRC), "Report of the American Red Cross Relief Expedition to Siberia," March 4, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/52, Siberia, German and Austrian P.O.W. in American Medical Mission.
- 15 "Prisoners Bother Russia," *New York Times*, September 13, 1914, p. 3.
- 16 "750,000 Captive in Russia," *New York Times*, December 10, 1914, p. 3.
- 17 Gerald H. Davis, "National Red Cross Societies and Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-18," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 28, No. 1 (January 1993), p. 33.
- 18 "To Tour Prison Camps," *New York Times*, March 8, 1915, p. 3; "Schuyler Named Minister," *New York Times*, April 30, 1921, p. 9; quote from Schuyler to Marye, April 5, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Chargé d'Affaires* Dearing to Lansing, April 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 294, 763.72114/1603.
- 21 Wilson to Morris (U.S. Legation in Stockholm), September 9, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 447. The U.S. Legation in Stockholm served as an intermediary to pass messages between the U.S. Embassy in Petrograd and the German Legation in Stockholm, which would, in turn contact the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 22 Wilson to Morris, September 30, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459; "Order No. 697 of the War Department, Petrograd, October 31, 1914, Regulations Re Prisoners of War," USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 23 Given the large number of Germans he reported, it is likely the figures consisted largely or entirely of civilians. Wilson to Bryan, September 30, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 282.
- 24 Snodgrass to Wilson, October 23, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461.
- 25 Schuyler to Marye, April 5, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.

- 26 Wilson for Marye to Morris, November 22, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 27 Wilson to Morris, October 22, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 28 U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 5, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 29 Bryan to American Diplomatic and consular officers, August 17, 1914, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 740-41.
- 30 Bryan to Wilson, August 7, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 12, 763.72/221.
- 31 Wilson to Bryan, September 30, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 282.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 Wilson to Morris, October 22, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 34 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 4, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460.
- 35 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 23, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 36 Wilson to Morris, October 22, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 258.
- 37 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 23, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 38 Wilson to Bryan, September 30, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 282.
- 39 Marye to Bryan, October 28, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 282.
- 40 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 4, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460.
- 41 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 23, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 42 Marye to Lansing, October 6, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1675. Although the Dual Monarchy provided relief support for its POWs, the amount paled in comparison to that the German Government and German individuals provided German POWs. Alon Rachamimov, *The POWs and the Great War: Captivity on the Eastern Front* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), p. 166. For example, in July 1916, the Embassy informed the Consulate in Vladivostok when asked for additional funds to assist sick and elderly Austrian civilian prisoners that “It is with regret that the Embassy is obliged to state that definite instructions from the Austrian Government do not allow an increase of the amount paid. They state that Rs. 10.—should be the maximum amount paid.” Assistant—American Embassy, Second Division (unsigned) to Caldwell, July 21, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458. The Embassy expressed the same sentiment to Morris in November: “The Austro-Hungarian Government at present has furnished us with sums which are only sufficient to distribute to the Austrian civilians with whom we are in contact.” Francis to Morris, November 23, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 43 Wilson for Marye to Lansing, September 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 361.11/942.
- 44 Marye to Lansing, October 6, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1675.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 Davis, “National Red Cross Societies and Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-1918,” p. 33, fn. 7.



- 48 Caldwell to Lansing, August 23, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 C 12/50; Caldwell to Dearing, April 20, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458; Devine to Francis, May 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441; Dearing to Francis, December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461.
- 49 Francis to Lansing, November 9, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1801, Volume 857; Francis to Lansing, November 23, 1916, USNA, CDF 1910-1929, RG 59, 811.142/1815, Volume 858.
- 50 Francis requested that the Department send out Consul General at Large Stuart J. Fuller. Fuller was shortly afterwards followed by Basil Miles, who was sent out to the U.S. mission to manage the entire relief operation. Francis to Lansing, November 8, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1801, Volume 857; Consul General at Large Stuart J. Fuller to Francis, December 28, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461; Memorandum from Miles to Francis, received December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 51 Wilson to Snodgrass, January 18, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456. Even after receiving such clarification, the Moscow Consulate continued to experience problems accounting for relief funds. On May 20 the Embassy cautioned the Consulate after receiving a package of incorrectly recorded vouchers pertaining to the German and Austro-Hungarian general relief funds: “importance of obtaining receipts and clearly showing the disposition of all funds is therefore again impressed upon the Consul-General at Moscow.” U.S. Embassy to Consul General, May 20, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 52 Dearing to Lansing, April 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 294, 763.72114/1603.
- 53 U.S. Embassy memorandum to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Condition of Civilian Prisoners in Russia,” January 5, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 446.
- 54 Wilson to Lansing, undated (received September 17, 1914), USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/8.
- 55 Marye to Lansing, November 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/113.
- 56 U.S. Embassy in Petrograd to the Russian Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 7, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 447; Reinsch to Lansing, November 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/74; U.S. Embassy to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 20, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 446; Reinsch to Bryan, April 25, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/52, Siberia, German and Austrian P.O.W. in American Medical Mission; Davis, “National Red Cross Societies and Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-18,” pp. 33-34; Dearing to Francis, November 29, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461.
- 57 Paul S. Reinsch, *An American Diplomat in China* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1922), pp. 162-63. China did not join the war until 1917.
- 58 Moser to Reinsch, November 21, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/137.
- 59 Davis (ARC) to Bryan, December 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/138; Bryan to Reinsch, December 30, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/138; Reinsch to Bryan, January 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/150; Lansing to Reinsch, January 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/150.
- 60 Bryan to Reinsch, November 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/74; Lansing to Reinsch, January 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/150; Devine to Francis, May 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.
- 61 Burr set off for Siberia in early January 1915. Having no official status or credentials beyond his ARC affiliation, he endeavored to “do what I could on my own initiative.” Burr (ANRC), “Report of



- the Condition of the German and Austrian Prisoners in Siberia,” January 30, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/08, Siberia, Report By The American Consulate Roger Amos Burr; Davis, “National Red Cross Societies and Prisoners of War in Russia, 1914-18,” p. 33; Devine to Francis, May 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.
- 62 Burr (ANRC), “Report of the Condition of the German and Austrian Prisoners in Siberia,” January 30, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/08, Siberia: Report By The American Consulate Roger Amos Burr.
- 63 Lewis and Ogilvie, “Report of the American Red Cross Relief Expedition to Siberia,” March 4, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/52, Siberia, German and Austrian P.O.W. in American Medical Mission.
- 64 Lansing to Marye, October 17, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/42.
- 65 According to Marye, Russian officials were likely delaying a response so that they could conduct their own camp inspections: “No reply has yet been received... and probably the Russian Government hopes that the German and Austrian as well as the American Governments will be satisfied by the reports made by the Russian officials.” Marye to Lansing, November 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/113.
- 66 Marye to Bryan, December 28, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 446.
- 67 Marye to Bryan, February 1, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 333, 763.72115/464.
- 68 Second Department, Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. I645/4 II, February 20, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.
- 69 Schuyler was a career diplomat who started out as the Second Secretary at the Embassy in Russia in 1902. He subsequently served in Thailand and Romania before returning to Russia in 1907 as First Secretary at the Embassy. He moved on to Japan, Mexico, and Ecuador before returning to Russia for a third time as a Special Agent in 1914. “To Tour Prison Camps,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1915, p. 3; “Schuyler Named Minister,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1921, p. 9
- 70 Schuyler to Marye, April 5, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441 (attachment to Wilson [for Marye] to Lansing, April 5, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441). Schuyler subsequently left his position with the Department and work at the Embassy because he could not get along with Marye. He soon returned to Russia as a journalist for the *New York Times*. Francis to Lansing, May 7, 1916, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920*, Volume II, (Washington: GPO, 1940), p. 313-14.
- 71 Gerard to Lansing, August 10, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 287, 763.72114/711.
- 72 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, David Rowland Francis Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, Missouri (papers related to Francis’ Ambassadorship in Russia microfilmed by University Publications of America under the title “Russia in Transition: The Diplomatic Papers of David R. Francis, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, 1916-1918”), Reel 1, beginning frame 691. Hereafter cited as “Francis Papers.”
- 73 Marye resigned and left Petrograd on March 29, 1916. Francis arrived on April 28. Francis, a Democrat from Missouri, served as St. Louis mayor, Missouri governor, and Secretary of the Interior for President Grover Cleveland. He was also commissioner of the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair. Wilson nominated him for Ambassador to Russia on February 19, 1916, but he did not accept until March 7. The Senate confirmed him the day of his acceptance. “Post Offered to Francis,” *The New York Times*, February 19, 1916, p. 9; “Francis Now Ambassador,” *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1916, p. 5; “David R. Francis, 76, Former Envoy is Dead,” *The Washington Post*, January 16, 1927, p. 1; Saul, *War and Revolution*, pp. 63-64; Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America’s Soviet Policy*, pp. 71-75.

- 74 Francis to Lansing, July 18, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 920.
- 75 Francis to Penfield, September 5, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 358.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 The Russians created about 300 “ideal typical camps.” POWs were “likely to have lived for extended periods of time in an environment other than a POW camp.” For example, “Austro-Hungarian POWs in Russia were held in no fewer than ‘891 different internment places’... only 317 were viewed as ‘important concentration places’ and only sixty-eight were underlined as major or medium-sized POW camps.” Rachamimov, *The POWs and the Great War*, pp. 87-97 (quotes from pp. 88-89, which draw from contemporaneous Austro-Hungarian reports cited by Rachamimov). One U.S. inspector in his final report to the Department in June 1916 wanted to call attention to “a large group of camps south of Novo-Nikolaevsk, in the Omsk district [of Siberia] centering around Semipalstinsk, on the newly opened Altai railway, which have never been visited by an American.” Warfield to Lansing, June 22, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 295, 763.72114/1702.
- 78 Section 3(a), Exhibit “E,” “List of Military Camps Visited by Representatives of the American Embassy,” “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898.
- 79 The Embassy and the Department often referred to the camp inspectors variously as “officers,” “agents,” “assistants” and “delegates” because of Russian Government sensitivities and discomfort concerning inspections and those who conducted them. In November 1916 Francis explained to Polk that the Russian Government insisted that he and the mission refer to camp inspectors as “visiting delegates.” Francis to Polk, November 26, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 734.
- 80 Warfield, “Report on Camp for Military Prisoners at Stretensk, Irkutsk Military District: Siberia,” January 20, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 442.
- 81 Phillips to Bakhméteff March 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1352.
- 82 Russian Imperial Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Military Division to Marye, February 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1448; Phillips to Bakhméteff March 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1352.
- 83 In a March 20 communication, Department Counselor and Acting Secretary of State Frank L. Polk criticized Marye and reminded him that “the Department regards the report in its original form as unsuitable for transmission to the Russian or German Government and regrets exceedingly that it was so transmitted.” He continued that the Department “can not but believe that the transmission of such reports to the Government authorities has merely added to the difficulties of continuing this work.” Polk concluded with the humiliating inclusion of “two reports from the Embassy at Paris,” which the Department “desires that your Embassy use them as models in the future as far as possible.” Polk to Marye, March 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1278. The Department sent the Embassy follow-up guidance shortly after requesting Marye’s resignation on March 29, likely due at least in part to this debacle. Polk instructed that reports about military and civilian prisoners in Russia “should be accurate in every particular and should be couched in clear and appropriate language free from all personal expressions of opinion” and carefully edited “to eliminate any statement which might be offensive to the government.” Polk to Dearing, April 7, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 445. This type of critical reporting was not new to Warfield. In one of his initial reports about a POW camp in Irkutsk, Siberia, dated October 22, 1915, he described the “serious evils” he had observed at the camp. Marye sent that report directly to Washington and the Department sent a copy to the Russian Foreign Office, presumably after editing it. Osborne for Lansing to Marye, January 12, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 442.

- 84 Marye to Lansing, January 22, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1169.
- 85 Marye to Lansing, January 31, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1200.
- 86 Phillips to the American Red Cross, January 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1172.
- 87 Lansing to Marye, January 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1172. In a March 9 telegram to Lansing, Marye conceded the limited number of inspectors and thought that the Swedish and Danish Red Cross organizations in Siberia were providing adequate relief support. He noted “At present Embassy needs people but prefers not having more than six until developments warrant Embassy telegraphing for more.” Marye to Lansing, March 9, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1321.
- 88 Bicknell (ANRC) to Draper (ANRC), February 29, 1916, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 619.2 Prisoners of War, 619.2/717.
- 89 Marye to Lansing, January 18, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1261.
- 90 Marye sent the memorandum on civilian prisoners to Lansing on January 11, *ibid*. See also note 53.
- 91 Marye to Lansing, January 18, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1261.
- 92 *Ibid*.
- 93 Phillips to Bakhméteff, March 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929; Polk to Marye, March 20, 1916, *ibid*; Polk to Marye, March 24, 1916, all in 763.72114/1352. It is unclear from the documents reviewed how many “assistants” the Russian Government finally approved. The number appears to be five or six.
- 94 Russian Embassy in the United States to the Department received March 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1365. On that same day, Marye informed the Department stating the same news and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs notified him that the Russian Government “considered that there was no necessity to add to the existing number of inspectors to visit the camps” because it thought the number already sufficient. Marye regretted this decision because he thought the inspection in at least certain camps resulted in improvements to the care of the POWs and even at camps with obdurate wardens, “the inspectors have been able to relieve suffering by distributing much needed clothing or small sums of money.” While the Russians limited the U.S. mission’s permits and inspections, they allowed the Swedish Red Cross, Danish Red Cross, and even German and Austrian “sisters” (nurses) and the American Y.M.C.A. access to do relief works at camps. Marye assumed the Russian decision was based on the highly critical Warfield Stretensk report. Marye considered this a hindrance on the U.S. relief effort and “disadvantageous and even embarrassing” because Petrograd allowed other organizations to be much more active. He concluded by noting that the civilian prisoners were better off because permits were not required to assist them and requested that the Department send six additional inspectors (including Devine). Marye to Lansing, March 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1448; Section 3(a), “A Resume of the war Prisoner Camp Section,” “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898.
- 95 The Russian Government’s recalcitrance persisted despite possible harm it might cause Russian POWs. The U.S. Government warned Russian officials that Germany and Austria-Hungary might retaliate by refusing to let U.S. inspectors visit Russian POWs. For example, see Polk to Marye, March 24, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1352. Francis also tried to shame the Russian Government. In a September 29 message to the Foreign Office, Francis cautioned that “failure” for Russian Government to support the U.S. mission’s work by issuing permits “would not only justify a charge of neglect, but if not a crime, would certainly be a disgrace to those responsible

- for such failure.” However, such veiled threats also had only minimal impact. Section 3(a), “A Resume of the War Prisoner Camp Section,” Page 6, “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898.
- 96 U.S. Embassy to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 19, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 452.
- 97 Lewis and Ogilvie, “Report of the American Red Cross Relief Expedition to Siberia,” March 4, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2/52, Siberia, Germans and Austrian P.O.W. in American Medical Mission.
- 98 According to this agreement, “the diplomatic and consular officers in charge of the protection of the subjects of either country shall see to this agreement being thoroughly carried out.” Lansing to Marye, February 26, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 452; and U.S. Embassy to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454. No actual copy or language of an agreement between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Governments was found, but several extant documents refer to such an agreement. See, for example, “Translation of the agreement arrived at as to the departure of German civilians detained in Russia and Russian civilians who are still in Germany,” February 11, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454; Marye to Bryan, April 23, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; and U.S. Embassy to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454. That same month the two nations negotiated a second agreement that pertained specifically to “hostages.” Francis to Lansing, December 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 350, 763.72115/2840.
- 99 In addition to Orenberg, the Germans and Austro-Hungarians complained about restrictions in Viatka and Vologda. U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 22 and 23, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453.
- 100 Marye to Bryan, April 23, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453.
- 101 See, for example, U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, May 7, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; German Legation (Sweden) to Morris, June 8, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; Caldwell to Marye, September 9, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; German Legation (Sweden) to Morris, November 12, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 17, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454; U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, June 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Germany) to U.S. Embassy (Russia), August 5, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454; U.S. Embassy to American Consuls in Russia, September 11, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454; German Legation (Sweden) to Morris, November 1, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; and U.S. Embassy to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, January 12, 1917, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454.
- 102 Ministry of Foreign Affairs to U.S. Embassy, November 12, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453; Interview between Artsimovich (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Devine, June 17, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459.
- 103 German Legation (Sweden) to Morris, June 8, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453. In August 1916, Francis complained to the Russian Government that it required German and Austro-Hungarian civilian prisoners residing the Caucasus to cross the entire Asian Continent to depart from Vladivostok. Francis considered this “tantamount to nullification of the Russian-German agreement.” Francis to Lansing, August 30, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 457.
- 104 U.S. Embassy memorandum “Condition of Civilian Prisoners in Russia,” January 5, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 446.



- 105 Ministry of Foreign Affairs to U.S. Embassy, January 13, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454. A few months earlier, Marye stressed that Germany was not helping its cause by failing to respond to the U.S. mission's inquiries about the age range for military service. He considered it "useless for the Embassy to claim right of Germans over forty-five to leave Russia unless the German Government will give clear reply to Embassy's previous inquiries." Marye to Lansing, October 21, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453. Ten days later the German Government confirmed the maximum military age at 45. German Ministry of Foreign Affairs to U.S. Embassy Berlin, October 31, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 453.
- 106 Wilson to Petrograd Consul North Winship, February 7, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454.
- 107 Francis to Lansing, December 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 350, 763.72115/2840. In a February 28, 1917 message to Washington, Francis also reported on meetings recently held by representatives of the Foreign Office, the General Staff, and the Police Division. All those parties "generally agreed that the German mobilization law had created conditions not contemplated when the repatriation agreements were originally signed, and consequently offered valid ground for considering the agreements null and void." Despite the opinion among some in these meetings that Russia should honor the agreement, the Police Department and Ministry of the Interior ordered all its officers to refuse all petitions from German civilians to repatriate. Francis detailed all this information "as it appears to offer an illustration of the great inertia which must be overcome when different departments of the Russian Government undertake to agree upon concerted action." Francis to Lansing, February 28, 1917, Francis Papers, Reel 3, beginning frame 295.
- 108 Francis to American Consuls, March 30, 1917, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 454. At the time the United States Government broke off relations with Germany on February 4, 1917, and ceased acting as Germany's protecting power in Russia, the treaty between the German and Russian Governments regarding civilian repatriation remained in force.
- 109 Murray (ANRC) to Lansing, July 24, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1684, Volume 857.
- 110 Marye to Lansing, October 23, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1143, Volume 855.
- 111 President Wilson to Czar Nicholas II, March 18, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), p. 1013; Sazonov to Marye, May 1, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1021; Czar Nicholas II to President Wilson, April 15, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1021. Marye met with Sazonov on July 17 to confirm this understanding. In his report back to the Department about discussion with the Foreign Minister, Marye stated that both countries agreed upon "(A) the distribution of supplies among prisoners of war, (B) that such distribution should be on a reciprocal basis, and (C) that charitable organizations may be employed under proper restrictions." Marye to Lansing, July 17, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142, Volume 854.
- 112 Wilson did have to point out to the Czar that pressing the Germans and Austro-Hungarians would not be an easy task because the United States did not represent Russia's interests in Germany and the Dual Monarchy. President Wilson to Czar Nicholas II, March 18, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1013.
- 113 Bicknell (ANRC) to Boardman (ANRC), January 11, 1915, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 591.4, 591.4 Medical Relief Units, General; Gerard to Lansing, August 16, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 287, 763.72114/703.
- 114 Lansing to Gerard, August 28, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/914, Volume 854.

- 115 Gerard to Lansing, September 7, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/943, Volume 854.
- 116 Gerard to Lansing, August 21, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/908, Volume 854.  
; Marye to Lansing, September 20, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/983, Volume 854.
- 117 Marye to Lansing, October 23, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1143, Volume 855.
- 118 Marye to Lansing, October 23, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.142/1143, Volume 855.
- 119 Marye to Lansing, October 28, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 289, 763.72114/894.
- 120 In its November 5 reply to Marye's October 28 telegram, the Department stated, "The request of the German Government to the American Red Cross was not submitted to the Russian Government as perhaps it should have been in as much as a part of the American Unit sent to Russia is still at work in the Russian hospitals, and the Red Cross and the Department assumed there was no objection on the part of the Russian authorities to the American Red Cross performing actual medical service." Lansing to Marye, November 5, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 289, 763.72114/894.
- 121 Marye to Lansing, November 23, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1046.
- 122 Marye to Lansing, December 21, 1915, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, p. 1049.
- 123 Bicknell to Lansing, January 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1175. In a follow-up letter dated the same day, the ARC expressed frustration and confusion about Marye's actions in light of his request for more ARC staff and the stated Russian opinion about the ARC and access:  
In communicating with the American Ambassador at Petrograd, it is therefore further suggested... that the  
Ambassador be instructed to present this matter to the proper Russian authorities. This seems the more important  
in view of the more recent request from the Ambassador... that the Red Cross shall send a party of from 20 to 50  
men to Russia to participate in relief distribution in the prison camps. This request does not seem consistent with  
the reported discrimination against the American Red Cross.  
Bicknell to Lansing, January 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1177.
- 124 Marye to Lansing, January 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 291, 763.72114/1180.
- 125 Francis to Lansing, July 13, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 870.
- 126 Lansing to Marye, January 21, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 M 361/14c. Marye sent to Washington a handwritten letter on January 25 that stated "reasons of health" as the cause. Marye to Lansing, January 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, Application Records 1901-1924, Box 156, "Marye, George T." The Department received an undated telegram from Marye on February 7. Marye to Lansing, undated, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 M 361/16.
- 127 *Ibid.*
- 128 For example, on February 23, the Department received a letter from the Reverend E. F. Bachmann of the Mary J. Drexel Home and Philadelphia Motherhouse of Deaconesses reporting complaints from an ARC nurse who recently returned from Russia that "Ambassador Marye seemed quite indifferent to Americans in Russia, and utterly unwilling to do anything whatever to alleviate the suffering of military and civilian prisoners of the Central Powers, whose interests were intrusted to



our Government's representatives abroad." Reverend Bachmann hoped that "Perhaps the matter will solve itself if the 'illness' of the Ambassador reported in the press last week, will prove sufficiently serious to lead to his resignation." Bachmann to Lansing, February 23, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 M 361/18. The Department responded on March 11, simply stating that Marye resigned and that Francis would succeed him. Phillips to Bachmann, March 11, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123 M 361/18.

- 129 Marye to Lansing, January 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, Applications & Records, 1909-1924, Box 156, "Marye, George T."
- 130 Marye, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia*, p. 460.
- 131 *Ibid.*
- 132 "Marye has Resigned as Envoy to Russia," *New York Times*, February 16, 1916, p. 1.
- 133 Marye, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia*, p. 459; *Register of the Department of State* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, December 15, 1916), pp. 84, 142-43.
- 134 Marye, *Nearing the End in Imperial Russia*, pp. 459-79 (quote from page 463); Mayers, *The Ambassadors and America's Soviet Policy*, p. 71.
- 135 "Interview between Mr. Artsimovich and Dr. E. T. Devine at Foreign Office," June 17, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459.
- 136 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 691.
- 137 Francis to Lansing, May 2, 1916, 8:15am, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, The Lansing Papers, 1914-1920*, Volume II, pp. 309-310; Francis to Gerard, May 23, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 478.
- 138 Francis to Lansing, July 24, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 296, 763.72114/1864.
- 139 "Prisoner Problem in Russia Serious," *New York Times*, June 4, 1916, p. 20.
- 140 Snodgrass to Wilson, September 23, 1914, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 458.
- 141 Marye to Lansing, October 6, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 840.48/1675; 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary of the Embassy to Winship, September 25, 1915, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 450; Dearing to Lansing, April 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 763.72114/1603, Sec. 2, p. 3. In a January 31 telegram to the Department a few days after he tendered his resignation, Marye proposed his organization plan, which the Department shared with the ARC. Phillips to ANRC, February 18, 1916 and *passim*, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1917-1934, 619.2, Russia – Enemy Prisoners in Inspection of Prison Camps by Delegation from the U.S.
- 142 Francis to Penfield, September 5, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 358.
- 143 Dearing to Lansing, April 19, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 293, 763.72114/1470.
- 144 Polk to Dearing, April 22, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 145 Dearing to Lansing, April 12, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.616/20.
- 146 Shortly after submitting his reorganization plan, Dearing sent the Department an April 15 memorandum drafted by Second Secretary, J.C. White, on the subject of "Care of German and Austro-Hungarian interests in Russia." Dearing to Lansing, April 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 294, 763.72114/1603.
- 147 *Ibid.*

- 148 Dearing to Lansing, April 23, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 293, 763.72114/1552; Lansing to Francis, May 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.616/20.
- 149 Francis to Lansing, May 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 294, 763.72114/1651.
- 150 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 691.
- 151 Quotes from *ibid*; Saul, *War and Revolution*, pp. 44-45.
- 152 Francis to Lansing, June 27, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459.
- 153 Marye to Lansing, March 16, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 292, 763.72114/1448; Bicknell (ANRC) to Draper (ANRC), February 29, 1916, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 619.2 Prisoners of War, 619.2/717.
- 154 Francis to U.S. Ambassador to the U.K., Walter Hines Page, July 26, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 981.
- 155 Bicknell to Draper, February 29, 1916, USNA, ANRC (collection 783), Central File 1881-1916, 691.2 Prisoners of War.
- 156 Devine to Dearing, April 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 441.
- 157 Francis to Lansing, May 20, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 294, 763.72114/1651.
- 158 Interview between Mr. Artsimovich and Dr. E. T. Devine at Foreign Office,” June 17, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459; Interview between Russian Red Cross President Alexis Alexieivitch Ilyin and Devine, June 24, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 159 Devine to Francis, July 16, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 459.
- 160 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 691.
- 161 Phillips to Francis, July 11, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 854; Francis to Polk and Phillips, July 18, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 920.
- 162 Francis to Lansing, August 14, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.613/49<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.
- 163 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 691.
- 164 According to Francis’ correspondence with the Department, Miles was expected to arrive in Petrograd on October 16 or 17; Miles was in Petrograd on October 24, as Francis noted in letter sent to the ARC on that day. Francis to Phillips, October 16, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 604; Francis to Wadsworth, October 24, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 621.
- 165 Francis to Sterling, September 5, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 367.
- 166 Francis to Polk and Phillips, June 20, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 691; Francis to Phillips, August 30, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 270. Dearing left Petrograd for the United States on November 7, 1916. Francis to Polk, October 25, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 632.
- 167 Dearing to Francis, October 7, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460. As had his predecessor, Francis advocated to Washington to beef up his staff. He argued that the Department gave London and Paris more than ample support for relief work, whereas Petrograd had not nearly enough staff, even though “the relief work overshadows the other work because of its magnitude” and urgency. Francis to Polk and Phillips, July 24, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 1, beginning frame 945.
- 168 Dearing to Francis, October 7, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460.

- 169 The Department first named Philip M. Lydig to head the Second Division, but ultimately considered him inappropriate for the position and replaced him with Miles. Lydig remained on the Embassy staff as a POW camp inspector. Francis to Polk, November 26, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2 beginning frame 734; Saul, *War and Revolution*, p. 45; Joshua E. Segal, “American Humanitarian Volunteerism in Russia’s Military 1914–1917” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2018), 234.
- 170 *Register of the Department of State* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, December 19, 1917), p. 121; “Chosen War Relief Agent,” *The Washington Post*, August 26, 1916, p. 5.
- 171 Phillips to Francis, September 22, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2 beginning frame 473.
- 172 Francis to Phillips, October 16, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 604.
- 173 Francis to Polk, October 26, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 632.
- 174 In a memorandum dated on or about December 2, Miles explained to Francis that the confusion was due to an apparent misunderstanding of Embassy instructions to the Consulate in Vladivostok, to the Delegates, and to the Embassy in Peking as to how to account for funds and supplies provided by German and Austro-Hungarian entities in China for POW relief in Siberia:
- In Mr. Reinsch’s dispatch of October 30, he very properly states that he is acting under the original agreement made direct with the Embassy, and does not understand the new arrangement of which he has been informed by the Consul in Vladivostok. This confusion of accounting is due temporarily to the fact that the Embassy, without notifying the Minister at Peking direct, as should have been done, issued instructions to the Consul in Vladivostok reversing an arrangement which the Embassy had made with the Legation at Peking previously.
- Memorandum from Miles to Francis, received December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456.
- 175 U.S. Minister to China Reinsch to Francis, October 30, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461; Kerrigan to Francis, November 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461; Reinsch to American Consul-General at Large Stuart J. Fuller, November 28, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461; Memorandum from Miles to Francis, received December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456; “Reorganization of Relief Work in Siberia,” December 12, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461.
- 176 When describing the situation in Siberia to the Department in a February 19, 1917 letter, Miles noted: “As a matter of fact, the Ambassador was [concerned about Kerrigan’s activities], but he was very much more worried about Caldwell and had agreed with me that the best thing to do was to pull Caldwell and Kerrigan apart before they could come to blows, and put Kerrigan directly under the Embassy.” Miles to Wilbur J. Carr, the Director of the Consular Service of the Department of State, February 19, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–29, 123 M 59/9.
- 177 Memorandum from Miles to Francis, received December 2, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 456; “Reorganization of Relief Work in Siberia,” December 12, 1916, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 461; Francis to Lansing, January 19, 1917, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460.
- 178 Dearing to Lansing, April 12, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.616/20; “Organization of American Embassy Relief Work in Russia,” undated with no drafting information, USNA, RG 84, USSR, Volume 460 [This document was drafted sometime after January 21, 1917, as it references Special Assistant to the Ambassador, J.L. Houghtaling, who arrived at post on January 20, 1917. Francis to Sterling, January 21, 1917, Francis Papers, Reel 3, beginning frame 022.
- 179 Address of the President of the United States to Congress, February 3, 1917, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1931), pp. 109–112.
- 180 Francis to Lansing, February 4, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 31, 763.72/3205; Francis to Morris, February 6, 1917, Francis Papers, Reel 3, beginning frame 190; Lansing to Walter

Hines Page, February 7, 1917, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War*, p. 623.

- 181 Telegram from Lansing to Francis, April 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300/26a.
- 182 “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898. In a February 6 letter to U.S. Minister in Sweden Ira Morris, Francis cites approximately 1,125,000 Austro-Hungarian and 350,000 German military POWs, and approximately 350,000 Austro-Hungarian and German civilian prisoners. Francis to Morris, February 6, 1917, Francis Papers, Reel 3, beginning frame 190.
- 183 “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898.
- 184 This figure is an approximation because the outline does not provide a final total, only lists positions titles, and does not make clear if any overlapping positions existed between the Central Office, Civilian Relief and Military Relief. Additionally, certain personnel at the Embassy and the Consulates, such as the Consul General in Moscow and the Consuls around the country, as well as their support staff, appear to have been listed as part of the Second Division. “Outline of Relief Organization for German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War, American Embassy, Petrograd, February 1917,” USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 310, 763.72114/3898.
- 185 *Ibid.*
- 186 Francis to Penfield, September 5, 1916, Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 358.
- 187 “Observations and Recommendations Regarding the American Diplomatic Service,” undated [“?1916” handwritten on first page], Francis Papers, Reel 2, beginning frame 923.

# Chapter 6

## The United Kingdom, 1914–1917: Washington’s Nerve Center in Europe

*Thomas Faith*

### U.S. Embassy London Before the Start of WWI

U.S. officials serving at Embassy London during the period of neutrality faced extraordinary challenges because of the post’s unique status as a central hub of Department activities in Europe. An endless number of varied responsibilities that included providing assistance to Americans abroad, facilitating good relations between the United States and the United Kingdom, representing the interests of foreign nationals, and acting as the interchange between Washington and U.S. missions on the Continent dwarfed the post’s limited resources and undersized staff. Communication difficulties across the Atlantic prevented Washington from making well-informed reactions to events in Europe with optimal speed, and the Embassy’s central location within the transportation and communication hub of London made it a veritable headquarters of Department activities in Europe. Embassy London assumed Department functions that spanned the Continent, and the globe, through the dozens of U.S. consulates spread throughout the far-flung British Empire. President Woodrow Wilson’s diplomacy at Versailles, to say nothing of the Anglo-American alliance that formed as a result of World War II, all lay in the future in the era before a “special relationship” existed. The Embassy’s strained staff found themselves at the center of many of the major events of 1914–1917, a period of serious diplomatic tension between the United States and the United Kingdom.

President Wilson appointed Walter Hines Page, a strong supporter of Wilson’s presidential campaign whose intellect and writing ability the President admired, as U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s.<sup>1</sup> Like so many diplomats of his era, the 57-year-old Page had no previous diplomatic training or experience before becoming an Ambassador. He was a native of North Carolina, a longtime friend of Wilson, and one of the most influential publication editors in New York City at the time of his appointment. Page edited several periodicals including *World’s Work* and *Atlantic Monthly*, and he was a partner in the book publishing firm Doubleday, Page & Company. Page was



not well-traveled outside of the United States, and he had likely never set foot inside a U.S. Embassy prior to being named an Ambassador, but as a friend and supporter of Wilson, he was an obvious choice to join the administration in some capacity once Wilson was elected in 1912.<sup>2</sup> Page was probably something of an Anglophile prior to his appointment, a trait that would grow to define his career as an Ambassador, but any pro-British sentiments he may have harbored at the outset do not seem to have been overt and likely did not enter the administration’s appraisal of him at the time.<sup>3</sup>

Upon arrival in May 1913, Page concluded his post suffered from benign neglect. He described the chancery at 123 Victoria Street as a converted apartment building on “a cheap shopping street,” which Page judged unbefitting of U.S. status in British foreign affairs.<sup>4</sup> Page expressed disappointment that his Government did not provide U.S. Ambassadors with a residence. After spending a few months house-hunting, Page rented a home he described as “a splendid, big old house—not in any way pretentious—a commonplace house in fact for fashionable London and the least showy and costly of the Embassies,” at 6 Grosvenor Square for \$10,000 a year.<sup>5</sup> Page considered it a fitting place for the U.S. Ambassador in London to receive guests and conduct business.

Page soon realized, however, that his official salary would not cover his living expenses. A year after arrival the Ambassador complained to President Wilson about his financial obligations. He described a constant stream of visiting officials, rulers, and U.S. citizens on official business:

Every Thursday afternoon from one hundred to two hundred and fifty people call, besides large numbers on other days... Then there are invitations to dinner, to luncheon, to country houses, palace functions; and every member of the diplomatic corps accepts them in the regular pursuit of his business.<sup>6</sup>

Ambassador Page’s annual \$17,500 salary proved inadequate to afford even his London home rent and housekeeping staff wages. He estimated that the formal social obligations of the post and his other expenses would cost him an additional \$30,000 to \$35,000 per year. Page admitted to the President that “if I had known what the real task is and that the obligatory cost is so great, of course I should not have dared to come.”<sup>7</sup> When Page indicated that his personal finances would not long allow him to continue at the post, President Wilson and his advisor Colonel Edward M. House obtained an agreement from a millionaire friend, Cleveland Dodge, to supplement Ambassador



Page’s salary with an additional \$25,000 per year. Page was not informed about the specifics of the arrangement for fear that it might hurt his pride.

By his own account, Page actively managed the Embassy, organizing daily staff meetings and encouraging teamwork.<sup>8</sup> Page reorganized the staff on arrival, requesting new Second and Third Secretaries. The Department assigned Edward Bell, a seasoned foreign staff person, and Eugene Shoecraft, for whom this was his first foreign assignment. Page maintained Irwin Laughlin, who served as *Chargé d’affaires ad interim*, as Embassy First Secretary. All three men remained in those positions at the post through 1917.

A unique element of Page’s Ambassadorship was his personal relationship with President Wilson. Because the men knew each other before Page’s appointment to London, Page frequently corresponded with the President and his advisor Colonel House. In his letters, Ambassador Page freely discussed his thoughts on international relations and happenings at post, and he expressed his frustrations concerning policies with which he disagreed. “It’s come to be a joke in my household,” Page wrote Wilson in October 1914, “—that when I’m writing anything I’m writing to you.”<sup>9</sup> This direct line of communication between the President and Embassy London, outside of usual Department channels and the Secretary of State, offered Page the opportunity to influence Wilson’s views about U.S. foreign policy.<sup>10</sup>

Despite some significant disagreements, the United States and the United Kingdom enjoyed generally good relations in the months prior to the July Crisis. At the time that Ambassador Page assumed his duties, Embassy London was working to manage both the Panama tolls controversy and the Lionel Cardin affair, two diplomatic conflicts that reflected competing U.S.-U.K. interests in Central America.<sup>11</sup> Ambassador Page and Embassy London worked closely with the Foreign Office to resolve their differences. Ambassador Page proposed to President Wilson in August 1913, that he make an unprecedented state visit to England late the following year for the centennial anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which marked peace between the United Kingdom and the United States after the War of 1812. The U.K. Government planned to commemorate the occasion with the restoration of Sulgrave Manor (the ancestral home of the family of George Washington), and Page thought it would give a great deal of international significance to the event if the U.S. President personally attended.<sup>12</sup> Wilson rejected the proposal in a letter to Page, saying that the responsibilities of the presidency would not allow him to travel out of the country.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, Wilson feared that if he were to make the trip, “it might be the beginning of a practice of visiting foreign countries which would lead Presidents rather far afield.”<sup>14</sup> Wilson’s response is ironic, of course, in light of the extensive travel throughout Europe he undertook later in his administration during negotiations over the Treaty of Versailles but, even if Wilson had agreed, Page’s plan would most likely not have come to fruition. The outbreak of the war and events of the latter half of 1914 would seriously challenge relations between the United States and the United Kingdom, and Embassy London would be seriously challenged as well.

## **The Relief of Stranded Americans at the Outbreak of War**

As the July Crisis devolved into open hostilities on the Continent, Embassy London took some anticipatory steps in advance of the British Empire’s August 4 declaration of war. On July 30, the Embassy requested permission to issue emergency passports to any U.S. travelers lacking such documentation who passed through the United Kingdom on their way to Europe.<sup>15</sup> Two days later on August 1, the Embassy expressed concern about the deteriorating political and humanitarian situation. “Increasing crowds of Americans are flocking from the continent,” read an Embassy telegram to the Department, “The canceling of all German Trans-Atlantic ships causes the detention here of many travelers.”<sup>16</sup> The Embassy also predicted “there will be many cases of want presented to the Embassy forthwith,” and asked, “have you instructions for their assistance?”<sup>17</sup> The Department, of course, was also reeling from the rapid pace of events, and inundated with requests for assistance both from Americans at home and from posts around the world.

Restrictions on international travel tightened almost immediately, stranding travelers who sought to move from one country to another, or who sought to voyage to the United States. The outbreak of war also precipitated a collapse of the international banking system in the United Kingdom and across Europe. London responded to the crisis, in part, by closing banks across the country for a week. During that time, most U.S. travelers lacked access to financial services. Even after the banks reopened, banks and businesses could not accept drafts or letters of credit from accounts in the United States without dependable methods of international exchange. As a result, most U.S. travelers in the United Kingdom, irrespective of affluence or social standing, could

not retrieve funds when they were needed for longer hotel stays, additional food and clothing, emergency travel expenses, or any other expenditures they were likely to encounter because of the war.

On Sunday August 2, Ambassador Page was on vacation with his family, at a home called Bachelor’s Farm at Ockham in Surrey, outside London. He communicated with his staff at the chancery by telephone every few hours, and Embassy London’s military attaché, George Owen Squire, met with Page in person over lunch. Ambassador Page also penned a letter to President Wilson, as he usually did, though he admitted that “It seems useless and almost silly to write by mail about this quickly changing drama, for whatever one might write will become obsolete before you get it.”<sup>18</sup> “The imagination simply balks at what may happen—at what *is* happening,” Page wrote, “The Embassy is already besieged by people who wish to go to the United States and can’t, who have travelers’ checks for which they cannot get money, and who have other unexpected troubles.”<sup>19</sup>

Page left his vacation home and arrived at work on Monday morning, August 3, “earlier than I think I had ever been there,” and found the entire staff already at work attempting to deal with the crowd.<sup>20</sup> “Before breakfast time the place was filled—packed like sardines,” Page remarked.<sup>21</sup> He stood on a chair and announced to the gathering that he had telegraphed the Department to send money and ships for transportation and begged their patience. Page and his Secretaries continued making that announcement at the Embassy throughout the day and evening. “More than 2,000 Americans crowded into those offices...We were kept there till two o’clock in the morning.”<sup>22</sup> The Embassy’s telegram to the Department read:

URGENT... The Embassy is filled with a crowd of Americans who clamor to know whether our Government will enable them in any way to get cash for their traveler’s checks and letters of credit which they cannot get cashed in London and they ask if our Government will charter ships here or send transports to get them home. Crowd after crowd presses in.<sup>23</sup>

The Department’s reply did not come until several hours later: “You may say that the government will render such assistance as is needed,” it read in part, “but cannot determine the needs until we know to what extent ordinary banking and transportation facilities are interrupted.”<sup>24</sup>

The situation demonstrated a clear need for more staff at Embassy London to deal with the increased demand for services. Page telegraphed the Department asking for “four or five experienced assistants from the Department or elsewhere,” permission to summon additional staff from U.S. Consulates in-country, and the ability to employ two more Clerks.<sup>25</sup> His telegram also mentioned that it “now seems almost certain” U.S. Embassy London would be asked to assume responsibility for “Austrian and possibly other interests,” with the additional demands on the staff that those new responsibilities would entail.<sup>26</sup> The Department agreed to Page’s plan to obtain temporary assistance from nearby Consulates, but professed their inability to send more staff from the United States, replying “can you not employ some of the American students in London? Difficult to spare any of the Department’s office force, we too are overcrowded. You may call in Consular assistants where they can be spared from their posts.”<sup>27</sup> Embassy London struggled with staffing issues through the duration of WWI, as it developed into an administrative stepping-stone between Washington and Europe, the post’s responsibilities continued to multiply, and the demands of the work contributed to higher personnel turnover.

An additional, labor-intensive responsibility for the already overworked staff arose on the day the United Kingdom declared war on Germany. The Department began to request welfare checks on U.S. citizens abroad in unprecedented volume. “Cable welfare Marie Nickell and Bernice Sanborn, arriving London from Paris. Mrs. Ralph E. Gallinger, Bertha D. King, Care Mrs. Johnston, four Buckleigh Road, Streatham, London W,” began one Department telegram to Embassy London.<sup>28</sup> In some cases Embassy staff were asked to do more than simply confirm that an individual was all right. The Department cabled on August 5 that the wife of the executive clerk to the president, Emma Forster, their son Warren, and her three sisters were stranded in Hampstead and sought “assistance in securing return passage to United States.”<sup>29</sup> The Department of State also cabled when family and associates of Americans in the U.K. were entrusting money to the Department for the use of specified individuals, but no method of transferring the money was available. The Embassy found it could not negotiate the transfer of funds without a source of cash for the drafts to draw upon. “Thousands of perfectly solvent Americans possess letters of credit but can not cash them,” the Embassy telegraphed on August 5, adding that London’s banks had been closed by the Government since August 1, and that there was “no means of judging what conditions will govern when they reopen.”<sup>30</sup>

The deluge of additional duties increased as the U.S. assumed responsibility for belligerent interests across the British Empire beginning with Germany and Austria-Hungary in August 1914. On August 5, Ambassador Page formally assumed responsibility for German interests in the United Kingdom and he remained in communication with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador regarding their national interests.<sup>31</sup> Page temporarily assigned naval officer Rufus F. Zogbaum, Jr., to oversee the German Embassy at 9 Carlton House Terrace. Page provided him with an assistant, a stenographer, a messenger, and the German Ambassador’s chauffeur and car, and placed the Seal of the United States on the door of the building.<sup>32</sup> Austrian interests across the British Empire were assumed by the United States on August 14, after London declared war on Vienna.<sup>33</sup> E.G. Lowry (en-route to the Embassy from the United States at the time) and retired Third Assistant Secretary of State Chandler Hale were placed in charge of German and Austrian Embassy interests, respectively, but U.S. responsibilities for foreign Embassies continued to grow throughout the period of neutrality.<sup>34</sup> Over two years later, following a request from the Department for updated information about which belligerent countries Embassy London currently represented, the Embassy simply stated that “the only national interests which are not placed in charge of our Government are those of Bulgaria which are in the hands of Sweden.”<sup>35</sup> These added responsibilities, on top of the increased demand for services from U.S. travelers, created greater staffing challenges for Embassy London.

Although Embassy London knew USS *Tennessee* would soon arrive with relief funds (see “Launching the American Relief Commission” in chapter 2), Page and his staff nevertheless moved immediately to secure advances from London banks to help stranded Americans. Embassy London was informed about the planned voyage of the American Relief Commission via telegram on August 4, and the staff promptly began making arrangements for the Commission’s ships to arrive at Falmouth.<sup>36</sup> The Commission was expected to disburse \$300,000 for the relief of Americans in the U.K. so Embassy London began contacting U.S. banks in England to secure the funds in advance. Page wired the Department on August 6 for authorization to negotiate for \$300,000 on 30-day-credit, and he received the Department’s one-word reply on August 7: “Yes.”<sup>37</sup> Embassy London obtained the credit from the London branch of the Guaranty Trust Company of New York, and immediately began disbursing the funds through an ad-hoc relief advisory committee that Ambassador Page formed. The advisory committee included Chandler P. Anderson, former Counselor of the Department of State and a U.S. representative at the American-British Pecuniary Claims

Tribunal temporarily serving as the Embassy’s legal advisor, as well as Fred I. Kent of the Bankers Trust Company of New York, U.S. Consul-General in London Robert P. Skinner, and Naval Attaché Frank R. McCrary.<sup>38</sup>

Anderson and Page developed plans to transport Americans on the Continent to the United Kingdom, believing travelers could wait there more safely for westbound Atlantic passage. Anderson prepared a memorandum outlining the situation for Americans in the United Kingdom in advance of the Relief Commission’s arrival. “The three most important features of the work of the Commission,” he wrote, “are to get money into the hands of the United States representatives in the countries where Americans are stranded, and to get the Americans out of those countries, and to insure their safe transportation home.”<sup>39</sup> Anderson and Ambassador Page drew up a series of proposals for transporting Americans in Germany and across Europe to the United Kingdom, where shortages had not yet occurred, hostile armies were unlikely to venture, and rescued Americans could wait for passage across the Atlantic as transportation became available.

Meanwhile, U.S. travelers in the United Kingdom organized themselves to share information and resources, and the Embassy, as Washington’s bridgehead in Europe, coordinated with their efforts. On August 3 Kent and several other U.S. bankers in London organized a gathering of “perhaps two thousand” Americans at the Hotel Waldorf, where they recorded names and contact information of U.S. travelers and organized committees to attempt to make arrangements for bank funds.<sup>40</sup> They also assisted Embassy London with the creation of a card catalogue of U.S. citizens in the United Kingdom and on the Continent that was ready by the time the American Relief Commission arrived.

*Tennessee* and the American Relief Commission berthed at Falmouth in the evening on August 16. The commissioners, led by Assistant Secretary of War Henry Breckenridge, found things at the Embassy in incredibly good shape. The \$300,000 line of credit Page secured enabled Embassy London to provide financial assistance to those who needed it. Page and his relief committee provided the Commission with the information they collected on Americans stranded in Europe, and they presented plans for the use of Commission ships to ferry U.S. refugees from ports on the Continent to the United Kingdom, where they would await transport to the United States. Breckenridge telegraphed the Secretary of War that “Ambassador Page and citizen committees have



done splendid work,” adding that Americans in England were “perfectly safe and comfortable.”<sup>41</sup>

Embassy London’s relief work was only beginning, however, because the arrival of the American Relief Commission precipitated a flood of U.S. travelers crossing the English Channel into the United Kingdom. This steady stream of Americans from the Continent required continuous relief efforts from Embassy staff in the weeks that ensued, as the chancery became a kind of Grand Central Station for Americans in Europe. Page reported to the Department on September 12 that during that week alone approximately 5,000 people arrived in the United Kingdom headed for the United States and that only 1,600 Americans had managed to depart. The Embassy relief committee provided financial assistance to 2,300 people during that week, raising the total number of Americans who received assistance from the Embassy to 7,680.<sup>42</sup> The American Relief Commission dropped-off three staff members at Embassy London: E.G. Lowry, Harry Walker, and Ambassador Page’s youngest son Frank, before quickly departing to assist Americans on the Continent, but those additions were not enough to solve the Embassy’s chronic manpower shortage.<sup>43</sup>

Despite Ambassador Page’s improvisations, significant help from volunteers, and limited assistance from the Department, Embassy London remained woefully understaffed to fulfill the many new responsibilities thrust upon the Embassy. On August 14, 1914, Ambassador Page drafted a detailed estimate of the additional resources he believed necessary to put the Embassy “on war footing” for one year in a telegram he addressed “TO THE PRESIDENT.”<sup>44</sup> Page asked for six Embassy Secretaries in addition to the three currently employed, writing that he had 15 people doing the work on voluntary and temporary bases. He also asked for six stenographers, a bookkeeping clerk, a code and filing clerk (Page added “quickly, our code man is badly overworked”), a clerk and messenger each for the German and Austrian Embassies, as well as “three times the office space we now have and furniture for the additional space with a corresponding increase in incidental expenses.”<sup>45</sup> The Department replied that President Wilson had made a request to Congress for legislation authorizing the resources that Page requested, a refrain they would repeat several times over the course of the war.<sup>46</sup>

By October, however, the Embassy seemed to be making do with the resources at hand, at least for the moment. The Department sent two additional Secretaries, F.M. Gunther and Jordan Herbert Stabler.<sup>47</sup> The Embassy’s volunteer legal advisor,

Anderson, accepted an offer from the Department of \$1,000 per month plus traveling expenses to continue his work at Embassy London indefinitely.<sup>48</sup> Embassy London’s need for stenographers was met temporarily by a U.S. businessman, Leyland H. Littlefield, who volunteered himself and the services of nine professional stenographers employed at his office.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. Embassy in London and its locally originated relief committee nevertheless remained heavily dependent on volunteers and long work hours after the first few weeks of war, including the voluntary labor of almost a dozen Boy Scouts who assisted the relief committee.<sup>50</sup>

The steady influx of new arrivals to the United Kingdom worried Ambassador Page that destitute German and Austrian refugees were claiming U.S. residence in order to be transported away from the fighting and depravations on the Continent. This, Page maintained, would drain Embassy resources intended to relieve U.S. travelers, aggravate the U.K. Government, and force immigration officials in the United States to deny entry to any who made the transatlantic trip without reliable proof of citizenship. Page believed the fault lay with U.S. Embassies and Consulates on the Continent that, he alleged, supplied Germans and Austrians with certificates “loosely vouching for their American citizenship or often merely residence in the United States.”<sup>51</sup> The Department allowed Page to circulate a message to the U.S. Embassies in Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, The Hague Legation, and the Le Havre Consulate, instructing them that Americans wishing to travel to the United Kingdom “should be in possession of regular passports to ensure their passing without difficulty.”<sup>52</sup> On September 12, four days after Page cabled those instructions to the Continent, the U.K. Government announced that it would refuse admittance to any German or Austrian refugees claiming U.S. citizenship.<sup>53</sup> This incident was exacerbated by the lack of clarity from the U.S. Government about citizenship requirements, a complex issue that remained unresolved for the duration of the war.

Despite Embassy London’s assessment that U.S. citizens in Europe would be safer if brought to the United Kingdom, a severe lack of shipping to return them to the United States presented a major, ongoing challenge. After the war broke out, all German transatlantic passenger ships were either captured or ceased operation and many British ships canceled service because of concerns that the trip could not be made safely. “There is practically no actual privation among Americans in Great Britain,” as Ambassador Page explained to the Department on August 8, “Their chief difficulty is transportation home.”<sup>54</sup> U.S. Embassy London telegraphed the Department about this problem daily, and sometimes several times a day, beginning the first week of August.

The Embassy at first expected that the United States Government would somehow arrange for ships to pick up stranded Americans, rather than make them wait for space on the few passenger liners departing from U.K. ports. For the first two weeks of the war, telegrams sent by Embassy London to the Department of State on the subject of transporting U.S. travelers home were urgent, sometimes desperate, in tone. “We could quiet many hundreds of inquirers if you could send us the approximate date of the sailing of transports” the Embassy telegraphed on August 11.<sup>55</sup> “What more can I say to insure the quick sending of boats,” Page asked the Department in a separate telegram also on August 11.<sup>56</sup> On August 12, Embassy London reported that “it was with the greatest difficulty that the [relief] committee prevented the calling of a mass meeting of stranded Americans tonight to pass resolutions of censure and anger at the Government for not sending ships to take them home. All fresh arrivals from the Continent add fuel to this flame.”<sup>57</sup> Despite Embassy hopes that the Department would find a means of chartering a large number of U.S.-flagged passenger ships or send military transports, all such schemes proved impractical.

Recognized international law prevented the United States from chartering German passenger liners that remained harbored in U.S. ports since the outbreak of war, but Ambassador Page attempted to circumvent those restrictions. He secured permission from the Foreign Office for the U.S. Government to use those ships to transport stranded Americans, provided the ships were returned “to the place and condition in which they now are” after the trip.<sup>58</sup> Excited about this window opened by the United Kingdom, the Department telegraphed the U.S. Ambassadors in France, Germany, and Austria-Hungary to see if those Governments would agree to the proposal as well. The French Government, however, objected under the provisions governing neutral-flagged vessels in The Hague Convention, and the proposal died.<sup>59</sup>

The transport situation nevertheless gradually improved as transatlantic travel became more regular, and Embassy London focused increasingly on issues related to easing the repatriation of U.S. residents. On August 14, the Embassy reported that the large Cunard Line passenger ships *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* had returned to transatlantic service, giving far more Americans the opportunity to travel home.<sup>60</sup> On August 15, Embassy London instructed the Department that “many returning American citizens have lost baggage and have been obliged to replenish wardrobes here,” and requested that the Treasury Department be asked to allow the “free entry of such personal effects.”<sup>61</sup> The Department forwarded the Embassy’s telegram to the Secretary of the Treasury.<sup>62</sup> On August 22, U.S. Embassy London warned the Department of

State that once big naval battles occur, it might become difficult to leave Europe again and that “every American in Europe who means to go home at all ought to be advised to go as quickly as possible.”<sup>63</sup> The Department forwarded the recommendation to all European Embassies and Consulates.<sup>64</sup> Embassy London also notified the Department whenever large numbers of U.S. travelers were making the journey on ships in steerage-class berths, so that the Department could ask the Secretary of Labor and Bureau of Immigration not to detain them at their port of entry. The Department granted Embassy London special permission, at Ambassador Page’s request, to record the details of travelers requiring financial relief on the backs of their passports, in order to speed their assistance and limit fraud.<sup>65</sup>

Amidst all the immediate emergencies at the outbreak of war, Ambassador Page continued efforts initiated when he arrived at post to secure facilities more suitable to the Embassy’s vastly expanded responsibilities. The chancery of the U.S. Embassy in London through most of 1914 had been a converted apartment building at 123 Victoria Street that was overcrowded and unkempt. After WWI broke out, Embassy London spread into additional office suites around the corner from the building, and the relief committee operated out of two rooms at the Savoy Hotel.<sup>66</sup> The situation was less than ideal, but the owner of the building on Victoria Street notified the Embassy that the rent would be raised once the lease expired in September 1914, so Ambassador Page welcomed the opportunity to search for a new space. Page obtained a lease for a large, well-appointed building at 4 Grosvenor Gardens that he was very pleased with. But it meant, however, that in the midst of all the wartime activity the Embassy had to completely vacate the building on Victoria Street (which had been the chancery for three decades) and prepare to occupy the new chancery by October.

## **The Embassy and U.S.-U.K. Relations, August 1914–December 1914**

Among the many issues that troubled relations between neutral Washington and belligerent London, those surrounding neutral trade most spectacularly highlighted the combination of ambassadorial independence, lack of coordination between Department and White House officials, and poor communications that plagued U.S. diplomacy. On August 20, 1914, the U.K. Cabinet approved an Order in Council that authorized the Admiralty to detain neutral merchant vessels carrying goods suspected of having

Germany as their final destination, even if traveling by way of a neutral country such as The Netherlands. The U.K. codified contraband lists of goods they claimed subject to seizure, including not only arms and ammunition, but also food and raw materials, whether destined for delivery to an enemy or neutral country. The U.K. Government considered the decision a necessary war measure, intended as a means of economic warfare against Germany, but the Order in Council violated a variety of established laws and maritime traditions that directly affected the United States. As citizens of a neutral nation, U.S. merchants expected to be able to trade with any country. In the past, military blockades of enemy ports were recognized as legal in international law, subject to various conditions, but no such consensus existed about blockades of neutral ports. U.S. merchants alleged that the Order in Council enabled the Royal Navy to stifle legitimate U.S. trade—an act of war.

Ambassador Page sympathized with the U.K. Government, which affected Embassy responses and degraded Department message control. He believed U.K. officials only reluctantly detained merchant ships, inspected them, and seized cargo, and he believed that the United States would adopt similar policies in the same situation. Page personally felt it important that the Entente Powers defeat Germany, and he urged the Department and the Wilson administration to support policies that he believed would empower the British Empire. The day of the August 20 Order in Council, the Department telegraphed Embassy London about the status of U.S. cargo that U.K. officials had seized aboard three captured German steamers. Page replied that the recourse should be for the cargo owners to challenge the seizure in U.K. Prize Courts where the fate of their commodities would be decided. “I have taken up this and similar questions several times with the Foreign Office,” Page told the Department, “and I conclude that they do not become Diplomatic questions unless the American plaintiffs have cause to find fault with the judgement of the Prize Courts.”<sup>67</sup> Notwithstanding Page’s position that seized U.S. goods did not constitute a diplomatic issue, U.S. merchants continually protested to the Wilson administration and the Department that U.K. officials delayed shipments and in some cases seized cargoes, even on the high seas. The Department repeatedly urged Embassy London to present these complaints to the Foreign Office.

As the Department continued to communicate Washington’s displeasure through the Embassy, Page grew increasingly concerned that pressing this issue would alienate the United Kingdom from the United States. On October 15, Page sent President Wilson a telegram through Department channels admonishing the administration’s shipping



policy. “I cannot help fearing we are getting into deep water needlessly,” Page began, explaining that the U.K. Government considered seizure of neutral shipping a necessity to defeat Germany and that the assertion of U.S. rights regarding neutral shipping might drive a wedge between the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>68</sup> “The question seems wholly different here from what it probably seems in Washington,” Page continued, “There it is a more or less academic discussion. Here it is a matter of life and death for English speaking civilization.”<sup>69</sup> Page recommended U.S. acceptance of the U.K. Order in Council of August 20, “or our acquiescence with a reservation of whatever rights we may have,” and he asked permission to so inform the Foreign Office.<sup>70</sup> Page closed by asserting that he delayed sending this telegram to Wilson “for fear I might possibly seem influenced by sympathy with England and by the atmosphere here,” however, he reiterated that he based his judgment solely on U.S. interests and added that his experienced subordinates Anderson and Laughlin at U.S. Embassy London agreed with him “*emphatically*.”<sup>71</sup>

When Page’s message arrived, President Wilson and Counselor for the Department of State Robert Lansing were already working on a proposal that they hoped would settle the issue between the United States and the United Kingdom. Wilson composed a brief message in reply to Ambassador Page the next day. Couched in the language of a private reprimand, Wilson began by instructing Page “*beg that you will not consider the position of this government as merely academic.*”<sup>72</sup> Wilson suggested that Page would have different view of the situation if he had “*contact with opinion on this side of the water,*” and urged him to follow Counselor Lansing’s guidance.<sup>73</sup> Lansing, as the Department’s chief legal expert, had been working with Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and President Wilson toward a diplomatic solution that involved a plan to get all the warring nations to agree to treat neutral shipping according to a legal code known as the Declaration of London. Although negotiated in 1909, no state had ratified the Declaration of London, which limited the ability to seize contraband in wartime. Lansing telegraphed his plan to Embassy London the same day as Wilson’s reply to Page, providing the Ambassador with a convoluted set of instructions and directing Page to present the scheme to the Foreign Office as his own personal suggestion. Lansing informed Page that if the United Kingdom proclaimed to act in accordance with the Declaration of London, the U.S. Government would not object to modifications or interpretations of the Declaration the United Kingdom could undertake to prevent contraband from being shipped to Germany.<sup>74</sup>



While the plan portended allowing the United Kingdom to continue to enforce the Order in Council, Page felt that the proposal asked too much of both the United Kingdom and of himself. He nevertheless presented the plan to Sir Edward Grey at the Foreign Office, but he ignored the instruction to describe it as his own idea and withdrew the suggestion after Grey questioned the purpose of accepting the Declaration of London with the intention of violating it. Page panned Lansing and his plan on October 22 in a frank letter to Wilson’s advisor Colonel House. He referred sarcastically to Lansing’s “fine-spun legal arguments,” adding parenthetically that they were “not at all sound by any means.”<sup>75</sup> Page wrote that he continued to believe the United Kingdom, as a friend of the United States, should be granted freedom of action in this matter, and he bemoaned Lansing’s insistence that the United Kingdom accede to compulsory legal limits. “Instead of trusting her,” Page said of Lansing, “he assumes that she means to do wrong and proceeds to try to bind her in advance.”<sup>76</sup> “Lansing’s method is the trouble,” Page reiterated, “he treats Great Britain, to start with, as if she were a criminal and an opponent.”<sup>77</sup> Page added that if Lansing asked him to raise the Declaration of London with the Foreign Office again that he would resign as Ambassador. Wilson and the Department were concerned about Page’s attitude and the administration continued to grapple with merchant shipping policy but, for the time being, the Department continued to forward individual complaints about detained U.S. merchant cargo to Embassy London and they did not press the issue of the Declaration of London with Page further.

Embassy London soon inadvertently became the center of a related diplomatic incident that demonstrated the complexities of its new wartime responsibilities. On October 18, a Royal Navy warship seized the German liner *Ophelia* and the case went to Prize Court to determine its legal prize status. Nine days later, Embassy London received a telegram from the Department listing *Ophelia* as a German hospital ship, and thus protected from seizure under The Hague Convention.<sup>78</sup> As representatives of a neutral power, the Embassy London staff regularly relayed information regarding U.K. and German hospital ships between those two Governments, so they notified the Foreign Office. Embassy London also requested clarification from the Department as to when Berlin first notified Washington of *Ophelia*’s hospital ship status. An investigation determined that the Department received notification of *Ophelia*’s status as a hospital ship on September 5, but through a clerical oversight failed to inform Embassy London.<sup>79</sup> The Embassy expressed regret to the Foreign Office, but the omission caused little upset; the Prize Court determined *Ophelia* acted as an enemy scout illegally under

The Hague Convention. With relief, Embassy London notified the Department that *Ophelia*’s omission from the list of hospital ships was not mentioned at trial “as it did not appear to be pertinent to the case.”<sup>80</sup>

Embassy London more successfully navigated considerable international bureaucratic and logistical hurdles to support one of the most significant humanitarian efforts of the war, the relief of Belgium. On October 6, 1914, the Embassy obtained permission to consign food to the Brussels Legation to avert famine.<sup>81</sup> Over the next few weeks, Embassy London relayed information from Belgium about the dire situation there. “The condition of actual want in Belgium cannot be exaggerated,” one telegram read, “The people face starvation.”<sup>82</sup> By November, the Embassy reported the organization of the International Commission for the Relief of Belgium, with U.S., Spanish, and Belgian representatives under the chairmanship of Herbert Hoover, which directed an effort to raise food and money to sustain the country’s 4 million inhabitants.<sup>83</sup> Writing about Hoover and the international logistical problems he solved, Ambassador Page argued in January 1915 that “But for him Belgium would now be starved, however generously people may have given food.”<sup>84</sup> According to Page, Hoover gathered and transported \$5 million worth of food per month with a fleet of 35 ships. “He’s a simple, modest, energetic man,” Page added, “who began his career in California and will end it in heaven.”<sup>85</sup>

Throughout the war, Embassy London struggled to communicate with the world outside Great Britain, which frequently caused conflict with the U.K. Government. Regular communication between the Embassy and the Continent ceased practically the moment that war broke out, and the Royal Navy cut all German undersea cables so that telegraphic messages between Europe and the United States had to be re-transmitted through the United Kingdom. Washington prioritized establishing reliable communication with U.S. Ambassador to Germany James Gerard, so the Department brokered an arrangement for Embassy London and Embassy Berlin to communicate through the U.S. Minister to Copenhagen.<sup>86</sup> Telegraphic communication with Germany could be managed in that fashion, and in practice through the U.S. Mission to The Hague, but Embassy London discovered that mail delivery had to follow a circuitous route through Bergen and Christiania to reach Copenhagen, and that no regular mail service existed between there and Berlin.<sup>87</sup> As a result, Embassies London and Berlin developed a diplomatic courier service between London, The Hague, Berlin, and Vienna in October.<sup>88</sup>

The U.K. Government rapidly instituted wartime censorship measures for mail and telegraph communication designed to prevent enemy spies from transmitting information. U.S. businesses quickly complained. On September 26, Lansing notified Embassy London, “The Department has received a great many protests from commercial houses and boards of trade and transportation throughout the United States.”<sup>89</sup> He asked Page to suggest to the Foreign Office “that the Department deems it very desirable to discontinue suppressing harmless commercial cables.”<sup>90</sup> Censorship measures in the United Kingdom inevitably affected communications at Embassy London as well. While U.S. Embassy messages were, in theory, not subject to U.K. censorship regulations, mistakes made by officials on both sides led to several diplomatic confrontations. The use of U.S. diplomatic communication for personal or commercial purposes constituted a frequent point of contention with the U.K. Government. In October 1914, for example, U.K. mail censors learned that the U.S. Consul in Rotterdam, Soren Listoe, might be acting as a conduit for personal and commercial communications into and out of Germany.<sup>91</sup> That same month, the U.K. Government made a similar complaint about the U.S. Mission to The Hague.<sup>92</sup> Embarrassingly, on one occasion, U.K. censors halted telegrams from the Department signed by Secretary Bryan that contained information about commercial transactions.<sup>93</sup>

Consular and other diplomatic communications sent by regular mail presented additional challenges. In August, a U.K. mail censor in Sierra Leone opened an official despatch from the U.S. Legation in Monrovia addressed to the Department.<sup>94</sup> The U.K. Government apologized, but reports of similar incidents recurred from other U.S. posts including The Hague and Rotterdam. Minister at The Hague Henry van Dyke complained to Embassy London on September 18, “That this should occur once can be understood,” he wrote, “but as the number of official communications which have been opened seems to be multiplying I feel obliged to record the matter.”<sup>95</sup> The Department brought the issue to President Wilson’s attention on October 10, and he concurred with Lansing’s decision that while it was important to maintain the privacy of official diplomatic communications, the United Kingdom had a right to read and censor regular mail—even if the letters were sent by U.S. representatives abroad.<sup>96</sup>

The courier service established between Embassy London and the Continent for diplomatic communication also proved problematic. Ambassador Page wanted to employ individuals in U.S. military service for the task, but the Navy Department rejected the idea as unwise.<sup>97</sup> Embassy London struggled to find reliable people willing to take on the difficult, dangerous work of serving as a courier across war-torn Europe.

In November, the U.K. Government asked the Department to dismiss a courier named A.C. Woodman because he used the job to further his substantial business interests in Germany.<sup>98</sup> On December 16, Page wrote that a courier’s journey “involves much discomfort and delay, the round trip takes a full almost sleepless week and German military authorities at frontier give much trouble.”<sup>99</sup> The Department received letters from concerned family members asking for information on the welfare of diplomatic couriers.<sup>100</sup> In 1916 a Swiss diplomatic courier travelling on the English Channel ferry SS *Sussex* died when a German U-boat torpedo severely damaged the ship.<sup>101</sup> Despite such dangers, the critical necessity to send documents and other items between posts required the Department to maintain and staff courier routes. In October 1915, Ambassador Gerard asked the Department for permission to use the couriers from London to transport “parcels, clothes, shoes, tobacco, etc.” to Embassy Berlin where wartime shortages made it difficult for personnel to obtain necessities.<sup>102</sup> The Department had no objection, but Ambassador Page attempted to halt the practice after a few weeks. He complained that Berlin had asked couriers from London to carry “ammunition, and tires, articles of household furniture, food, or the like” and that “on one occasion courier left this Embassy with three taxicabs full of such parcels weighing hundreds of pounds.”<sup>103</sup> Page appealed to the Department to put a stop to this “abuse” of the official courier service, suggesting that Embassy Berlin have large items shipped to them by American Express instead.<sup>104</sup>

As the first difficult months of the war in 1914 ended, U.S. Embassy London remained in good relations with its U.K. counterparts. This allowed them to organize an important undertaking in November and December when Colonel Squire, military attaché at Embassy London, received special permission from U.K. military authorities to visit the Western Front with the British Army for five weeks. Ambassador Page purported to both the Department and President Wilson that “no military officer of any other country has yet been allowed to go to the front except Colonel Squire.”<sup>105</sup> According to Page, Squire “remained at the front five weeks, visited generals of every corps of the British Army, saw every sort of military operations in progress, from front trenches a few yards from the enemy back to bases.”<sup>106</sup> Squire’s experience and reporting proved valuable for the U.S. Army in 1914, and also in 1917–1918, when he served as Chief Signal Officer of the American Expeditionary Forces after U.S. entry into the war.

## **Representing Belligerent Powers**

Meeting the U.S. Government’s responsibilities in the U.K. while simultaneously running multiple foreign Embassies at once placed an enormous strain on the resources of Embassy London. Protests from the Department over the United Kingdom’s blockade and censorship policies continued to arrive by letter and telegram, as did offers from the Wilson administration to mediate peace between the belligerents. Embassy London also continued to serve the interests of German and Austrian subjects across the British Empire, though those responsibilities became more complicated over time. After the Embassy took charge of German and Austro-Hungarian Embassy functions in August 1914, the staff worked to serve the immediate needs of those populations. For Austrians and Germans who could not find work and could not access money through their banks on the Continent, Embassy London converted the Austrian Chancery into a soup kitchen and began a dialogue with the belligerent Governments about methods of long-term support. On September 19, 1914, the U.K. Government requested that former German and Austrian Consuls not be employed at U.S. posts in any British dominion, limiting the number of qualified individuals who could potentially aid overworked U.S. diplomats.<sup>107</sup> As time passed, German and Austrian needs became more varied. U.S. Embassy London was asked to protect valuables for German and Austrian subjects who feared they might be confiscated or stolen. In October 1914, the Austrian Government asked for U.S. Embassy London’s assistance in obtaining legal services for Austrian shippers in every Prize Court throughout the British Empire.

Embassy London also established a legal framework and developed processes to monitor the detention of German and Austrian subjects in the United Kingdom at the request of the belligerent Governments. At the outset of the fighting, the U.K. Government interned some German and Austrian civilians along with soldiers captured as prisoners of war. By December 1914, the British Empire held over 20,000 Austrian and German prisoners in approximately 20 camps, and belligerent Governments were asking the U.S. Government to verify that they were being well-treated. Anderson, Embassy London’s legal advisor, authored a detailed memorandum on the subject on December 1, 1914, in which he outlined a strategy for U.S. missions to inspect and report on conditions in internment camps and to facilitate the international transfer of funds for governments that needed to provide detained subjects with clothes and other necessities.<sup>108</sup> The Department instructed Embassies London and Berlin to follow the plan outlined by Anderson on January 16, 1915.<sup>109</sup> Anderson’s memorandum came at a



critical moment from Embassy London, after a riot at the Douglas Aliens Camp on the Isle of Man on November 19, 1914, resulted in the deaths of four German prisoners, one Austrian, and 19 others wounded.<sup>110</sup> Hale, who oversaw Austrian interests for U.S. Embassy London, performed an inspection at Douglas a few days later and reported that conditions were good overall. He confirmed, however, that detained civilians were having a more difficult time adjusting to internment than prisoners of war. Embassy London periodically argued for the release of enemy subjects who were unfit for military service, but the number of individuals interned in the U.K. would increase substantially over the course of the war as more soldiers, sailors, and airmen were captured, and after wholesale enemy civilian internment began in May 1915.

Embassy London became a focal point for several international squabbles after the Ottoman Empire joined the war and Ottoman Ambassador Tewfik Pasha turned over Turkish interests in the United Kingdom to the United States on November 5, 1914. The next month, U.S. Consul-General in London Skinner informed the Department that Constantinople had not paid rent and utilities for the Ottoman Consulate and official residence, however the Sublime Porte maintained that the rent had already been paid through March 25, 1915.<sup>111</sup> Skinner met with the landlords after receiving the initial reply from the Ottoman Empire, and informed the Department that the Ottoman Government was in error.<sup>112</sup> The Department sent a second and then a third round of telegrams to Embassy Constantinople, warning the Sublime Porte that the “Landlord has served final notice,” at which point the Ottomans deposited the rent that was owed with the U.S. Ambassador in Constantinople.<sup>113</sup> On April 21, 1916, Embassy Constantinople asked the Department to notify Embassy London that the Ottoman Government planned to rent the official residence of the U.K. Consul-General to a private tenant unless the Government could produce a deed for the property.<sup>114</sup> Embassy London replied that the Consular residence had been erected and occupied by the U.K. Government since 1859, and that “the original Turkish deeds are in London but need not be forwarded as the Turkish authorities are fully cognizant of ownership and past user of the premises.”<sup>115</sup> In June, Embassy London had to inform the U.K. Government that Ottoman authorities had constructed a road through the property of their Consulate in Bagdad.<sup>116</sup> In July the Ottoman Government asked U.S. Embassy London to secure the property of the Ottoman Consulate in Singapore against the threat of U.K. seizure.<sup>117</sup> That same month, the Foreign Office asked Embassy London to obtain details from Constantinople about furniture and personal effects seized by the Sublime Porte from the U.K. Consul in



Beirut.<sup>118</sup> There was little that Embassy London or the Department could do to mitigate the amount of time and resources that the mediation of these disputes cost them.

Through it all, Embassy staff continued much of their usual, pre-war, tasks, even as the war made the most mundane of diplomatic activities more difficult. Throughout the summer of 1915 Embassy London had to stay in frequent contact with United Kingdom authorities and the Department over issues arising from U.S. travelers who failed to heed new U.K. passport regulations requiring all arriving U.S. passengers over the age of 14 to possess a passport with a photograph. Much of the social activity Ambassador Page complained about upon his arrival in the United Kingdom ceased, but formal affairs still occurred. On June 7, Ambassador Page attended an audience with King George V to formally present him with a New Orleans Peace Centenary celebration medal from the United States.<sup>119</sup> On June 22, the Embassy informed the Department that the American artist John Singer Sargent, who lived in London, had approached the Embassy about possibly arranging the return of a decoration he had been awarded by the German Emperor and his resignation from two German art societies “because he is no longer in sympathy with German aims.”<sup>120</sup> “The return of such honors has become quite common between Englishmen and Germans,” the Embassy added.<sup>121</sup>

## **Protecting U.S. Travelers During Total War**

The German war against commercial shipping in the seas around the U.K. put Embassy London in the center of the most significant dilemma the U.S. Government faced during the war. As Americans began returning to the United States in crowded ships across the Atlantic during the early weeks of the war, Embassy London foresaw the potential for diplomatic crisis and humanitarian distress. Embassy legal advisor Anderson cabled the Department on August 12, 1914, recommending the United States “announce that it will resent any interference with passenger ships of any nationality carrying American citizens home and if necessary will use its war vessels to convoy them safely.”<sup>122</sup> Anderson’s recommendation carried important implications—he determined that international law offered insufficient protections to merchant vessels in war, and that Washington must consider extending diplomatic and military protection to ships of any nationality that ferried U.S. passengers.

This first U.S. casualty of the war, which occurred on March 28, 1915, when a German submarine torpedo sank the British passenger ship *Falaba* south of Ireland,

initiated a high-stakes debate within the Department and the Wilson administration about the appropriate U.S. response. Among the 104 dead was a single U.S. citizen, Leon C. Thrasher, a resident of Massachusetts who worked as an engineer on the Gold Coast of Africa. “The great importance of the Thrasher case, to my mind,” Counselor Lansing wrote to Secretary Bryan in the aftermath of the sinking, “lies in the fact that a course of action must be adopted, which can be consistently applied to similar cases, if they should arise in the future.”<sup>123</sup> Over several days, the Department asked Embassy London to collect survivor statements and provide a great deal of information to help the administration craft a response. Lansing believed that Germany had violated international law and should be held strictly accountable, Secretary Bryan, however, argued that “contributory negligence” placed some of the blame on U.S. citizens who accepted the risks of wartime travel.<sup>124</sup> Bryan framed the issue to President Wilson as a hypothetical question about a U.S. citizen who, “after being warned of the dangers involved, takes passage on a British ship and loses his life with other passengers as a result of an attack by a submarine.”<sup>125</sup> If the attacking government had no intention or expectation of harming a U.S. citizen, Bryan asked, “what claim can this government rightfully make” for the person’s unintended death?<sup>126</sup> “I do not like this case” Wilson replied to Bryan, “it is full of disturbing possibilities.”<sup>127</sup>

While the administration continued to debate this issue, an apparent attack on a U.S. flagged merchant vessel occurred when a U.S. tanker, *Gulflight*, was torpedoed near the Scilly Isles on May 1. The ship did not sink and was able to return to port with all but three of the crew safe, but the incident put additional pressure on the Wilson administration to act. As had happened after the *Falaba* sinking, the Department peppered Embassy London with requests for eyewitness accounts and questions regarding the specifics of the incident. Several questions surrounded the proximity of *Gulflight* to the nearest British vessels, and the relative visibility of the U.S. flag on the ship’s mast. If the German U-boat noted *Gulflight* was a U.S. ship and attacked regardless, a profound crisis between the United States and Germany would ensue. Embassy London responded to the Department’s requests, including sending *Gulflight*’s flag by diplomatic pouch on May 12 so that the Department could see its dimensions firsthand. The nascent crisis was mitigated because the U.S. ship was under escort by two British patrol ships at the time of the attack, and the Wilson administration believed the situation caused understandable confusion for the U-boat.<sup>128</sup>

The sinking of the British passenger liner *Lusitania* caused the first major loss of life for U.S. citizens abroad, and it resolved the Wilson administration to act regarding

the attacks of the previous five weeks. At 3:06 p.m. on May 7, the Department received Embassy London’s telegram stating that the *Lusitania* had been torpedoed and sunk, with the fate of the passengers not yet established.<sup>129</sup> Officials later estimated 128 U.S. citizens among the dead. The Embassy and Consulate staff spent the next several days working in coordination with Consul Wesley Frost in Queenstown (now Cobh, Ireland), to identify the dead, care for U.S. survivors, and keep the Department informed.<sup>130</sup> Two officers on Colonel Squire’s staff were ordered to Queenstown to assist, while other members of Embassy London remained at post to gather information and relay it between the Department and the U.K. Government, as well as greet survivors as they arrived in London by train. As that work occurred, on May 8, Ambassador Page sent a two-page telegram to Bryan and the President ostensibly reporting on British public opinion. However, Page seemed to be reading his own opinions into his report. The Ambassador wrote that in light of Germany’s “complete abandonment of war regulations and of humanity,” the “unofficial feeling” in London “is that the United States must declare war or forfeit European respect.”<sup>131</sup> While the Wilson administration declined to declare war, it began to take a firmer stance against Germany.

The *Lusitania* incident led the Wilson administration to demand more respect for neutral rights from the German Government, a decision that caused Secretary Bryan to resign, as he feared U.S. demands could lead to war, which he opposed. But it did not immediately end the sinking of commercial ships or lead to a break in diplomatic relations. Wilson sent a message to the German Government strongly protesting the attacks on *Falaba*, *Gulflight*, and *Lusitania* on May 13, followed by a second note on June 9 demanding that Germany act to safeguard U.S. lives on ships at sea.<sup>132</sup> Having argued unsuccessfully for the administration to take a more neutral approach, Secretary Bryan resigned following Wilson’s decision to send the second note. Commercial ships continued to be torpedoed by German U-boats in the waters around the United Kingdom, and Embassy London continued to render assistance to survivors and provide information to the Department. Dejected that the administration would not draw a harder line with Germany, Ambassador Page wrote to House on July 21 (the date of Wilson’s third note) that the President was the object of disappointment and ridicule in the U.K. “There is much feeling about the slowness with which he acts” Page complained, “One hundred and twenty people (Americans) were drowned on the *Lusitania* and we are still writing notes about it.”<sup>133</sup>

## **The Strain of Neutrality, 1916–February 1917**

Though situated far from the trench warfare of the Western Front, the war remained a constant presence at Embassy London. Ambassador Page said that wounded soldiers could be seen on every London street and that his neighbor’s home was being used as a hospital. A major Zeppelin attack on London in September 1915 broke the windows of the U.S. Consulate in New Broad Street.<sup>134</sup> Another air raid in November 1916 dropped five bombs a few hundred yards from the Embassy building and one bomb “on property adjacent to the house of the Counsellor of the Embassy.”<sup>135</sup> In October 1914, Page wrote a letter to House asking whether to insure the U.S. Chancery against Zeppelins, and he joked that he was going to ask the German Government whether they wanted to insure their Embassy property as well.<sup>136</sup> By 1916 air raids were no longer a laughing matter.

Embassy staff confronted a sudden international crisis with serious political ramifications after several individuals claiming U.S. citizenship were arrested by U.K. authorities in connection with the April 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland. The individuals included Éamon de Valera, a commander of the Irish Volunteers and future Irish statesman born in New York City. People in the United States bombarded the Department and the Embassy with overtures urging clemency for the detained U.S. citizens, some of whom faced execution for their participation in the armed uprising against U.K. civil and military authority. Embassy London remained constantly apprised of the status of imprisoned Americans, provided information to U.K. officials regarding their citizenship claims, and negotiated for leniency in sentencing.<sup>137</sup> For example, U.K. forces captured U.S. citizen Jeremiah Lynch, two years resident in Ireland, “in rebel uniform while actively participating in the revolt near Dublin post-office.”<sup>138</sup> A court martial sentenced him to death, but commuted the sentence to 10 years penal servitude.<sup>139</sup> U.S. diplomats’ intervention in multiple cases of this type resulted in reduced penalties or commuted sentences.

Throughout 1916, U.S. Embassy London confronted difficult questions surrounding what rights and protections should be afforded to people of the United States in foreign and volunteer military service. Page’s private secretary, Harold Fowler, resigned to join the British Army after war broke out in 1914, which made this a personal subject for Ambassador Page and his staff.<sup>140</sup> Embassy London concurred in the Department’s assessment that U.S. citizens who enlisted in the British Army “should not rely upon the government of the United States for protection” or be furnished with a

U.S. passport during their period of enlistment, but some in the Department disagreed about whether foreign military service should turn a U.S. citizen into a stateless person in all situations.<sup>141</sup> In July 1916 the Embassy handled the case of Granville Pollock, a U.S. citizen who joined the British Army to be a Pierce-Arrow car mechanic and who wanted to return to the United States after his enlistment ended. Richard Flournoy of the Department of State’s Bureau of Citizenship summarized Pollock’s legal situation at that time, stating that “Mr. Pollock is not a British subject and therefore cannot obtain a British passport.”<sup>142</sup> “Although technically he is not an American citizen,” Flournoy continued, “he is still in a broad sense an American,” and “evidently he had no intention or desire to give up his American citizenship.”<sup>143</sup> The Department decided to refuse Pollock’s request for a passport and Embassy London had to work with the U.K. Government to get him back to the United States without the document, but the citizenship status of Americans who joined the British Army would not be fully resolved until the United States entered the war in 1917.<sup>144</sup>

The Embassy’s responsibilities as Washington’s bridgehead in Europe continued to tax the staff and their physical office space, until Embassy London received a special allowance of \$9,000 for an extensive renovation of the chancery in August 1916.<sup>145</sup> The electrical system was overhauled, and the interior throughout the building was redecorated with new furnishings and “a plain buff wall covering and white enamel paint on the woodwork.”<sup>146</sup> Most significantly, the five-story building had an elevator installed, opening the upper floors of the chancery for office use. After two years of war, Embassy personnel finally had use of the entire chancery, adequate electrical power and furnishings to carry out their work.

It was during the start of the renovation that Ambassador Page left the post for his only set of formal consultations in the United States, through August and September 1916. The Wilson administration hoped that the extended trip home might bring Page’s opinions on the United Kingdom back into line with U.S. public opinion, but instead the trip highlighted the divide between Page and the administration. Page expected to travel to Washington immediately after his arrival in New York. The family members who greeted the Ambassador and his wife Alice at the dock, however, brought news that their youngest son’s wife of two months, Katherine Sefton Page, had suddenly taken seriously ill. The Pages rushed to their home in Garden City, New York, instead. Katherine died the next day, and the Pages remained through her funeral. Once the Ambassador made it to Washington, meetings at the Department of State and the White House demonstrated fundamental differences between Page and members of the



administration, and Ambassador Page’s attitude became frustrated. Far-removed from the fighting in Europe, the United States seemed to Page to be unsettlingly indifferent to events in London, so he worked to convey the situation in the United Kingdom to the administration in his consultations.<sup>147</sup> Secretary Lansing wrote in his memoirs that the visit convinced him of Page’s “manifest unwillingness to protect the rights of Americans, if the exercise of those rights interfered with the British war policies,” and he concluded that protests against the Government of the United Kingdom should be made through London Consul-General Skinner instead.<sup>148</sup>

In October 1916, after his return to the Embassy from the United States, Page again confronted the problem of staffing attrition, which had affected Embassy operations since the first weeks of 1914. Years of long hours and meager pay at the Embassy contributed to high turnover among the staff. “Administrative work,” as Page wrote to President Wilson on New Year’s Eve in 1915, “has its casualties.”<sup>149</sup> On October 13, 1916, Page telegraphed the Department that he found “on my return great stress and much discouragement in the Embassy.”<sup>150</sup> “As I have frequently reported,” Page continued, “the staff has been undermanned and overworked ever since the war began.”<sup>151</sup> The Ambassador cited several examples of work he considered time consuming for the staff, which included fulfilling requests from the Department to protest seized cargo, handling inquiries about U.S. telegrams blocked by U.K. censors, conferring with Government officials, and managing the interests of other belligerent nations.<sup>152</sup> Hugh Gibson, who the Director of the Consular Service Wilbur J. Carr called “one of the best men in the service,” had recently joined the Embassy as chief of staff, but several other members of the Embassy’s staff were reportedly on the verge of resigning.<sup>153</sup> Carr made the trip from the United States to London with Ambassador Page to observe conditions personally. He spent several days speaking with Embassy personnel who expressed a host of grievances against the Department, including overwork and lack of career advancement. Carr convinced several staff members not to depart, though he agreed “unquestionably the work and responsibility here are too heavy for the present staff.”<sup>154</sup> Ambassador Page summed up well Embassy London’s experience, mirrored at other U.S. posts across the globe: “the volume of work here approximates the volume in the whole Department before the war and it steadily increases.”<sup>155</sup>

Embassy London’s last substantive acts as the representative of a neutral power in the war involved two significant diplomatic developments. The Embassy received the text of Wilson’s January 22, 1917, address to the Senate, in which he called on



belligerents to cease fighting and work toward “a peace without victory,” from the Department a few days before Wilson delivered it. Knowing that the speech would be poorly received in the United Kingdom, on January 20 Ambassador Page suggested to Wilson that he use the phrase “peace without conquest” instead, but the suggestion was ignored.<sup>156</sup>

A few weeks later, Embassy London sent what came to be known as the “Zimmerman Telegram,” one of the most consequential messages of the war because it provided impetus for U.S. entry into the conflict. The Embassy maintained a good working relationship with British Naval Intelligence, and its Director, Sir William Reginald Hall, periodically shared information of importance to the United States with the Embassy. In a famous example, in 1915 Hall provided Embassy London with documents proving that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the United States, Konstantin Dumba, had committed acts of espionage and sabotage in the United States, and as a result the Department demanded his recall. On February 19, 1917, Hall met with Bell, the Embassy Secretary who served as liaison to British Intelligence, and presented him with a copy of what came to be known as the Zimmerman Telegram—the decrypted German message that suggested a military alliance between Germany and Mexico against the United States. Embassy London deliberated for some time about how to present the information so that the find would not be greeted with incredulity, ultimately transmitting the message to the Department with authenticating information on February 24.<sup>157</sup>

## **The End of Neutrality and the Kernel of the Foreign Service**

The responsibilities assumed by Embassy London made it the center of Department activity in Europe through the period of U.S. neutrality. From 1914 to 1917, Embassy London assisted thousands of U.S. travelers heading back home from the Continent through the United Kingdom. Embassy London facilitated communication between the Department and its posts throughout Europe when there was no other means of passing instructions to or receiving information from U.S. missions in war-torn countries. Embassy London managed the interests of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire, not only in London but across the globe through U.S. Consulates throughout the British Empire. Additionally, Embassy staff also weathered

several critical diplomatic crises, which included attacks on commercial passenger ships that resulted in the deaths of U.S. civilians.

While the head of the Embassy, Ambassador Page, welcomed the end of U.S. neutrality, since he long hoped his Government would provide more support to the U.K. war effort, belligerency did not shrink the workload at his post. Page’s mood improved with the U.S. declaration of war, but his health began to decline through 1918 until he was forced to announce his resignation. Page returned to the United States in October, before the war concluded. He passed away at his North Carolina home on December 21. Admirers in the United Kingdom erected a stone tablet at Westminster Abbey in Page’s memory that memorialized him as “the friend of Britain in her sorest need,” a problematic postscript for a U.S. Ambassador to say the least, and emblematic of the controversy surrounding his legacy.<sup>158</sup> Page’s frequent disagreements with the Wilson administration over neutrality policies made him a poor representative of U.S. Government interests. He managed one of the most unprecedentedly difficult postings in foreign service, however, proving to be an exceptionally capable Chief of Mission.

A thoughtful and accomplished writer, Page’s time at Embassy London provided him with considerable perspective on the Department of State and the conduct of U.S. diplomacy. On September 22, 1914, Ambassador Page presciently wrote President Wilson about a thought that “grows on me the more I ponder this world-changing series of events—that, when the war is ended, nothing will be precisely as it was before, not even in England.”<sup>159</sup> With considerable foresight he posited that after the war, the United States “shall need a new sort of diplomatic force in most parts of the world; we shall need somehow to wake up the American public to realize that our isolation is gone and that our perfunctory diplomatic work, which has done well enough in many places in the past, will not do anywhere in the future.”<sup>160</sup> Facing the weighty responsibilities of neutrality at Embassy London, Ambassador Page discerned what others would also come to realize, that systemic reform was needed to meet the challenges of diplomacy in the modern era. During the period of neutrality, by the tasks that they performed and the manner in which they performed them, posts like Embassy London shaped the future of the Department of State and what would become the Foreign Service.

## Notes

- 1 Biographies of Ambassador Page include Ross Gregory, *Walter Hines Page: Ambassador to the Court of St. James’s* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970); and John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American, 1855–1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).
- 2 Prior to the Ambassadorship, Page was considered for several jobs in Washington by the administration, including Secretary of Agriculture, and Wilson had offered the post at Embassy London to two other individuals before offering it to Page: see Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*, pp. 242–247.
- 3 Gregory, *Walter Hines Page*, p. 15.
- 4 Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3 (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925), p. 82.
- 5 Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1 (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), p. 153; To calculate First World War-era dollars into today’s equivalent, see U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index inflation calculator [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).
- 6 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 80.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- 8 Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*, pp. 258–259. See Figure 1 in the chapter on the U.S. Mission in Russia for a snapshot of U.S. Diplomatic and Consular presence in the United Kingdom in 1914. In 1918, after the U.S. entered the war, there were 77 U.S. Diplomatic and Consular officials in the British Isles.
- 9 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, pp. 166–167.
- 10 For varying assessments of Page’s relationship with President Wilson during the period of his Ambassadorship see: Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, especially volumes 2 & 3; Gregory, *Walter Hines Page*; Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*; and John W. Coogan, *The End of Neutrality: The United States, Britain, and Maritime Rights 1899–1915* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981).
- 11 In the summer of 1912, while the Panama Canal continued to be constructed, the William H. Taft administration passed a law that exempted most U.S. shipping from the tolls they would otherwise have to pay once the canal opened for use. Specifically, the law exempted any ship traveling through the Panama Canal from a port on one U.S. coast to another from having to pay the toll. This move angered the U.K. Government, which saw it as a violation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 that contained a U.S. promise to grant all nations equal access to the canal. The Panama tolls controversy remained unresolved when, in February 1913, Victoriano Huerta overthrew Francisco Madero as President of Mexico. While the United States declined to recognize Huerta’s government, the United Kingdom forged ahead with recognition and appointed Sir Lionel Cardin to represent their interests in Mexico. The decision was extremely unpopular in the United States. Cardin was believed to be hostile to U.S. interests, and he further soured U.S. opinion by voicing strong public support for Huerta. In the end, President Wilson motivated Congress to eliminate the offending provision of the Panama Canal Act, and the U.K. Foreign Office transferred Cardin out of Mexico.
- 12 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 275.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 276.
- 14 *Ibid.*

- 15 Walter Hines Page to William Jennings Bryan, July 30, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 138.4/12.
- 16 Page to Bryan, August 1, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 12, 763.72/52. (Microfilm 367 materials are viewable online: see <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2017/04/04/world-war-i-foreign-policy-records-part-i-the-department-of-state/>.)
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 128.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 20 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 303.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 304.
- 23 Page to Bryan, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/1.
- 24 Bryan to Page, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/1.
- 25 Page to Bryan, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/6.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Bryan to Page, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/6.
- 28 Bryan to Robert Skinner, August 4, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/2a.
- 29 Bryan to Page, August 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/7b.
- 30 Page to Bryan, August 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/6.
- 31 Page to Bryan, August 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6241/3.
- 32 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 306.
- 33 Page to Bryan, August 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6341/2.
- 34 Page to Bryan, October 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/14.
- 35 Page to Robert Lansing, January 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701/32.
- 36 Bryan to Page, August 4, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48.
- 37 Page to Bryan, August 6, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/47; Bryan to Page, August 7, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/47.
- 38 Page to Bryan, August 11, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/183.
- 39 Chandler P. Anderson, “Memorandum of what has been done in preparation for the work of the Government Relief Commission,” August 15, 1914, p. 2, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/478.
- 40 Page to Bryan, August 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 12, 763.72/95 (quote); see also Memoirs of Fred I. Kent (1955), pp. 20–24, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Papers of Fred I. Kent, 1869–1954, Entry 169, Box 1, Folder 1, Committee on the History of the Federal Reserve System: <https://fraser.stlouisfed.org/archival/1342/item/457443>.

- 41 Page to Bryan, August 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/323.
- 42 Page to Bryan, September 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/566. The \$300,000 relief fund lasted until August 23, 1916, when Irwin Laughlin notified the Department that all but \$3300 had been spent; Laughlin to Lansing, August 23, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/1851.
- 43 Bryan to Page, August 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/6.
- 44 Page to Bryan, August 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/8.
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 Bryan to Page, August 21, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.41/4.
- 47 Page to Bryan, October 3, 1914, p. 2, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/14.
- 48 Bryan to Page, September 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/10a; Page to Bryan, September 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/11.
- 49 Page to Bryan, October 3, 1914, p. 3, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/14.
- 50 Page to Bryan, October 3, 1914, p. 5, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/14.
- 51 Page to Bryan, September 7, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/522.
- 52 Page to Bryan, September 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/533.
- 53 Page to Bryan, September 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/565.
- 54 Page to Bryan, August 8, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/98.
- 55 Page to Bryan, August 11, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/184.
- 56 Page to Bryan, August 11, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/186.
- 57 Page to Bryan, August 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/220.
- 58 Page to Bryan, August 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/334.
- 59 Myron Herrick to Bryan, August 20, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/360.
- 60 Page to Bryan, August 14, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/276.
- 61 Page to Bryan, August 15, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/283.
- 62 Lansing to William McAdoo, August 17, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/283.
- 63 Page to Bryan, August 22, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/388.
- 64 Bryan to All Missions and Consulates in Europe, Including Russia, Turkey, and the Balkan States, August 24, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/388.
- 65 Page to Bryan, September 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/515; Bryan to Page, September 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/515.
- 66 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 329.
- 67 Page to Bryan, August 20, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 300.115/7.
- 68 Page to Woodrow Wilson, October 15, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 188, 763.72112/164.

- 69 *Ibid.*
- 70 *Ibid.*
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 Wilson to Page, October 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 188, 763.72112/164.
- 73 *Ibid.*
- 74 Lansing to Page, October 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 188, 763.72112/164.
- 75 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 382.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 Page to Bryan, November 2, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 366, 763.72117/48.
- 79 Lansing to Page, November 5, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 366, 763.72117/48.
- 80 Page to Bryan, May 19, 1915, p. 2, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 366, 763.72117/227.
- 81 Page to Bryan, October 6, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M675, Roll 50, 855.48/1.
- 82 Page to Bryan, October 23, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M675, Roll 50, 855.48/8.
- 83 Page to Bryan, November 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/890.
- 84 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 215.
- 85 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 216.
- 86 Bryan to Page, August 9, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6241/3b.
- 87 Anderson, “Memorandum of what has been done in preparation for the work of the Government Relief Commission,” August 15, 1914, p. 10, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/478.
- 88 Page to Bryan, October 31, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/5.
- 89 Lansing to Page, September 26, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 166, 841.731/22.
- 90 *Ibid.*
- 91 Page to Bryan, October 20, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711/11.
- 92 Page to Bryan, October 30, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711/9.
- 93 Page to Bryan, September 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 166, 841.731/4; Page to Bryan, September 9, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 166, 841.731/7; see also Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 332.
- 94 Page to Bryan, September 15, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 701.03/3.
- 95 Henry van Dyke to Page, September 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711.
- 96 Lansing to Wilson, October 10, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711/1; Wilson to Bryan, October 13, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711/2; Lansing to Page, October 22, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 154, 841.711/1.



- 97 Lansing to Page, November 3, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/5.
- 98 Cecil Spring Rice to Lansing, November 28, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/8.
- 99 Page to Bryan, December 16, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/14.
- 100 Thomas Ewing to Ben G. Davis, December 10, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/11.
- 101 Pleasant Alexander Stovall to Lansing, March 29, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M560, Roll 145, 851.857 Su 8/22.
- 102 James Gerard to Lansing, October 19, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/30.
- 103 Page to Lansing, November 12, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 121.67/33.
- 104 *Ibid.*
- 105 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 208.
- 106 *Ibid.*
- 107 Page to Bryan, September 19, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6241/2.
- 108 Anderson, “Memorandum about the treatment by belligerents of detained enemy aliens and prisoners of war, and the relief work undertaken through the American Embassies in belligerent countries,” December 1, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 283, 763.72114/123.
- 109 Bryan to Page, January 16, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 284, 763.72114/180.
- 110 Chandler Hale to Page, December 4, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 333, 763.72115/343.
- 111 Skinner to Bryan, December 18, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6741/3; Henry Morgenthau to Bryan, January 28, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6741/6.
- 112 Skinner to Bryan, February 26, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6741/12.
- 113 Bryan to Morgenthau, March 24, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.6741/12.
- 114 Hoffman Philip to Lansing, April 21, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.4167/43.
- 115 Page to Lansing, May 29, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.4167/44.
- 116 Laughlin to Lansing, August 4, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.4167/48.
- 117 Philip to Lansing, July 4, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 704.6746d/7.
- 118 Page to Lansing, July 3, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 702.4167/46.
- 119 Page to Bryan, June 7, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 093.11141/26.
- 120 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 247.
- 121 *Ibid.*
- 122 Page to Bryan, August 12, 1914, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 840.48/218.
- 123 Lansing to Bryan, April 7, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 462.11 T 41/20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.
- 124 Bryan to Wilson, April 2, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 462.11 T 41/14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>.

- 125 Bryan to Wilson, April 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 462.11 T 41/13a.
- 126 *Ibid.*
- 127 Wilson to Bryan, April 8, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 462.11 T 41/15½.
- 128 Page to Bryan, May 12, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 300.115 G 95/21.
- 129 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1928), p. 384.
- 130 Clifford Carver to Page, May 12, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M580, Roll 197, 841.857 L 97/36.
- 131 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 385–386 (quote); see also Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*, p. 307, Page only received word of *Lusitania*’s sinking the night before, leaving him little time to gauge public opinion.
- 132 *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 393–396; *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 436–438.
- 133 Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 2 (New York, Doubleday, Page & Company: 1922), p. 25 (quote); for Wilson’s July 21, 1915 third note to the German Government see *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1915. Supplement, The World War*, pp. 480–482.
- 134 Page to Lansing, September 9, 1915, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 23, 763.72/2107.
- 135 Page to Lansing, November 28, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.41/8.
- 136 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 342.
- 137 Page to Lansing, July 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.11/2018.
- 138 Page to Lansing, May 23, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.112 L 99/8.
- 139 Page to Lansing, May 25, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 341.112 L 99/10.
- 140 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 1, p. 358.
- 141 Page to Bryan, December 15, 1914, p. 4, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 102.913/128.
- 142 Richard Flournoy to C. Johnson, July 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 102.913/128.
- 143 *Ibid.*
- 144 Lansing to Page, July 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 102.913/128.
- 145 John Osborne to Page, August 26, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.411/73.
- 146 Page to Lansing, September 13, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.411/20.
- 147 Cooper, *Walter Hines Page*, p. 337–349.
- 148 Robert Lansing, *War Memoirs of Robert Lansing, Secretary of State* (New York and Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1935), p. 170.

- 149 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 269.
- 150 Page to Lansing, October 13, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/107.
- 151 *Ibid.*
- 152 *Ibid.*
- 153 Katharine Crane, *Mr. Carr of State: Forty-Seven Years in the Department of State* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1960), p. 183.
- 154 *Ibid.*, p. 191.
- 155 Page to Lansing, October 13, 1916, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 124.413/107.
- 156 Page to Lansing, January 20, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, M367, Roll 373, 763.72119/404.
- 157 Page to Lansing, February 24, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910–1929, 862.20212/69, viewable at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/302022>.
- 158 <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/walter-hines-page>.
- 159 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3, p. 147.
- 160 *Ibid.*

# Chapter 7

## Aftermath

*William B. McAllister and Thomas Faith*

The severance of formal relations first with Germany and subsequently with the Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary altered the nature of those diplomatic relationships rather than terminating them altogether.<sup>1</sup> After serving as the interlocutor for so many governments, Washington required assistance from the dwindling number of states remaining neutral to act as go-betweens with Berlin, Vienna, and Constantinople. Moreover, the governments that relied on the U.S. to protect their interests also had to find new representatives. Even when the guns fell silent in November 1918, issues outstanding from the 1914–1917 era necessitated continuing interaction with multiple successor governments for many years after the imperial Central Powers disintegrated. The U.S. commitment to neutral humanitarian engagement during the period of neutrality bequeathed to the Department of State significant responsibilities for decades after the hostilities ceased.

### Transition

U. S. diplomatic activities in the Hapsburg realms illustrate the array of issues with which the Department wrestled. The day after the United States severed relations with Germany, Department officials cabled detailed instructions to Embassy Vienna about preparing for a diplomatic breach with Austria-Hungary. If either side cut ties, the Wilson administration intended to turn protection of U.S. interests over to the Spanish Government and advise the few remaining U.S. citizens to leave immediately. The staff prepared for transfer to Washington of all code books, cipher messages, seals, accounts, vouchers, and financial records related to representing foreign interests and providing individual relief. Lansing indicated how he might allocate departing staff among home billets and foreign posts, as well as which employees he wished to remain under the Spanish aegis to look after American interests. The Department also asked states represented by the U.S. which government they wished to take over their interests so American officials could facilitate the transition of records, funds, and staff. <sup>2</sup> In the ensuing two months Vienna and Washington privately expressed their desire to

maintain relations if possible, but when the United States declared a state of war existed with Germany on April 6, 1917, the Hapsburg government severed diplomatic ties on April 8.<sup>3</sup>

The weeks surrounding Austria-Hungary's termination of relations with the United States generated a flurry of diplomatic activity. Washington consulted with Vienna and Madrid about the particulars concerning transfer of U.S. interests to Spain, including which Department employees would remain to assist in that work.<sup>4</sup> Penfield's staff facilitated the transfer of protecting power obligations to other governments.<sup>5</sup> The Department assigned most departing officers to other European posts, including some to Madrid to help with the representational work.<sup>6</sup> Washington and Vienna negotiated humane mutual repatriation provisions and generous protections for their foreign nationals who remained behind.<sup>7</sup> The Department notified U.S. posts around the world to transfer representation of Austro-Hungarian interests to other powers.<sup>8</sup> Penfield made goodbye calls and arranged for his own departure on April 7, with special courtesies to ease his travel extended by Hapsburg officials.<sup>9</sup> Americans serving at the Embassy and consulates, as well as over 40 other U.S. citizens residing in the Dual Empire, exited within a week.<sup>10</sup> The Department assigned Robert Heingartner, Walter Reineck, and Meredith O'Neill to remain in Vienna, working from the Spanish Embassy to protect U.S. interests.<sup>11</sup>

Albeit on a lesser scale, the same array of issues U.S. officials confronted during the period of neutrality continued to demand the Department's time and attention. Austro-Hungarian consular representatives abroad independently designated which government they thought best suited to take over local protective power duties, which generated short-term confusion about how U.S. officials should effect handover of responsibilities, records, and funds.<sup>12</sup> It took almost two months to ascertain to whom the U.S. consul departing Prague had transferred the keys to the British consulate in that city.<sup>13</sup> The Department endeavored to account for every code book assigned to posts in the Dual Monarchy.<sup>14</sup> The Spanish Government soon forwarded numerous personal correspondences emanating from Austria-Hungary, which required Department officials to examine each case to determine the individual's citizenship status. For those deemed U.S. citizens, the Department passed on messages directly or provided relief funds for any wishing to depart for the United States. For each person declared not a citizen, Washington wrote back to Madrid that the correspondent must channel communications through the Red Cross. The War and Interior Departments blocked pension remittances to persons living in Central Powers states (including U.S. citizens),

which increased pleas from those dependent on such funds.<sup>15</sup> Washington officials utilized their Spanish interlocutors to pay the rent for facilities housing U.S. government archives and furnishings, as well as to forward the salaries of American officers working out of Spain's Embassy in Vienna.<sup>16</sup>

Despite ruptured relations, the December 1917 war declaration, and protracted post-Armistice peace negotiations, the United States maintained a continuous diplomatic presence in Hapsburg lands.<sup>17</sup> The three officials working out of the Spanish Embassy in Vienna after April 1917 carried a very heavy workload.<sup>18</sup> They also struggled with 200 percent increases in cost of living expenses, rampant inflation, and disadvantageous exchange rates when converting their dollars into repeatedly devalued Imperial Crowns. Clerk positions that paid as little as \$500 per annum in 1914 required a Departmental outlay of \$3000 by early 1918—the equivalent of the prewar yearly salary for the Embassy's first secretary.<sup>19</sup> The Department reassigned Heingartner, the senior officer, to Berne in February 1918 as the work significantly increased at that post. O'Neill departed Vienna shortly before the Armistice, arriving in Switzerland "weak, thin from malnutrition and immediately contracted serious grippe," which rendered him unable to report for duty for two weeks.<sup>20</sup> The Entente powers continued the blockade after the November 11, 1918, Armistice, causing Reineck to plead for more supplemental food shipments and an additional 50 percent salary enhancement.<sup>21</sup> In December 1918, the Department ordered him to depart Vienna, but Spanish officials objected because they had no one else qualified to properly look after U.S. concerns. Minister Pleasant Stovall and O'Neill in Berne concurred, fearing that "work in connection with American interests will practically cease if [Reineck] leaves."<sup>22</sup> Washington reconsidered, and thereafter the Department continually employed him in former Hapsburg territories.<sup>23</sup> By summer 1919, Heingartner returned with at least three other Americans as part of the Peace Commission tasked to negotiate a settlement with Austria, while Grant-Smith tapped Reineck for Peace Commission service in Hungary.<sup>24</sup> In 1919, the United States recognized and subsequently established relations with Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (subsequently Yugoslavia). By mid-1920, the U.S. Mission in Vienna, which, in addition to peace treaty-related negotiations, utilized much of its professional staff's time to perform representational work, numbered 17 support personnel, including three American clerks.<sup>25</sup> By the time the United States inaugurated diplomatic relations with the reconstituted Governments of Austria and Hungary in 1921, the Department had established fully functional diplomatic and consular posts throughout the former Hapsburg territories.<sup>26</sup>



## Association

U.S. Embassy London's transition from representing a neutral nation to an associated power substantially exacerbated the manpower shortage and overwork problems that plagued the post since 1914. Difficulties occurred despite the tectonic shift in U.S. relations toward the United Kingdom that Ambassador Walter H. Page advocated all along. Embassy London set about extricating German interests from U.S. posts throughout the British Empire after the break in relations on February 3, and the Embassy also attempted to keep the Department informed about the departure of U.S. Diplomats in Germany from what information it received from the continent, but a tense two-month period for Embassy London followed during which the United States and Germany were not yet formally at war. Once news of U.S. declaration of war reached London, the Embassy became deluged by expressions of Anglo-American unity. Ambassador Page became *de facto* guest of honor at scores of events in the United Kingdom celebrating the United States and the end of neutrality.

Embassy London divested itself of responsibility for the interests of the German, Austro-Hungarian, and the Ottoman Empires, yet the overall volume of work increased enormously. "I find myself busier than I have ever been," Page wrote in July 1917, "the kind of work the Embassy now has to do is very different from the work of the days of neutrality."<sup>27</sup> Embassy London assumed responsibility for coordinating visits from a steady stream of U.S. military officers, members of the Red Cross, and other officials including Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, Jr., in March 1918. Ambassador Page regularly attended meetings of U.K. Government officials, and his correspondence shifted in tone to reflect his increased access to war information. Page confided to President Wilson that "the secretaries in the Embassy have a joke among themselves—that the Ambassador has become a Member of the Government without portfolio."<sup>28</sup> The Chancery expanded its footprint dramatically, occupying several buildings which included space for a growing number of Army and Navy personnel. "The Embassy now is a good deal bigger than the whole State Department ever was in times of peace," Page boasted in 1918, nevertheless the pace and quantity of the work still dwarfed post personnel and resources.<sup>29</sup> Adding to the challenge, air raids around London became more frequent and destructive placing the Embassy, as Page put it, "now literally in the war," and there were other new hardships as well.<sup>30</sup> The Ambassador's 19-year-old nephew was killed in action near Belleau Wood on June 25, six months before the Ambassador himself succumbed to illness on December 21.

## Interlocution

The multitudinous issues arising from the periods of both neutrality and belligerency increased the burden on the U.S. Legation at The Hague, the most geographically crucial post located in a neutral country on the continent. In early November 1918 communications with German interlocutors concerning the cessation of hostilities passed through Legation The Hague.<sup>31</sup> Subsequent peace treaty negotiations also often were transmitted via The Hague.<sup>32</sup> U.S. officials in the Netherlands facilitated re-establishing relations with the Belgian Government and re-opening Legation Brussels.<sup>33</sup> Dutch posts quickly became a center for repatriation of U.S. POWs,<sup>34</sup> and later for the return of U.S. war dead and establishing American soldiers' cemeteries in Europe.<sup>35</sup> The demand for citizen services also increased. Legation Hague arranged for U.S. newspaper reporters to enter Germany within a week after the shooting stopped<sup>36</sup> and managed transit permissions for U.S. passport holders travelling to Germany for business purposes after the Berlin government accepted the Armistice provisions.<sup>37</sup> The Legation even assisted U.S. citizens who wanted marry German nationals before formal completion of the peace treaty.<sup>38</sup> Lacking a diplomatic presence in Germany and functional representation in Russia after August 1918, posts in the Netherlands collected and passed on news about political events, economic issues, military affairs, and social conditions in those countries.<sup>39</sup> Long after the Armistice, The Hague also operated as a key interlocutor between Madrid and Washington as the Spanish government endeavored to protect U.S. interests, facilitate relief payments, forward remittances, and address complaints in German and Hapsburg territory.<sup>40</sup> Legation Hague also dealt with multiple maritime issues arising from the war, including continued processing of claims related to wartime sinkings, such as the S.S. *Arabic* in August 1915 and post-Armistice damage to U.S.-flagged ships that struck floating mines in the North Sea.<sup>41</sup> Unsurprisingly, the widespread problems with financial accounting of post expenditures and continued difficulties with the security and cost of diplomatic communications continued into the post-war era.<sup>42</sup> The Wilson Administration signaled the importance of Legation Hague by assigning the Department's Assistant Secretary of State, William Phillips, to serve as Minister from 1920–1922.<sup>43</sup>

## Protraction

The Department's diplomatic obligations incurred in August 1914 extended for many years after the cessation of hostilities. The Swedish Government, which represented Hapsburg interests in the United States beginning in February 1917, continued inspecting detainee camps in the United States after the Armistice.<sup>44</sup> The United States and Austria-Hungary engaged in negotiations for the mutual exchange of government furnishings and diplomats' personal effects left behind when the countries severed relations, a process that dragged out for a decade.<sup>45</sup> In February 1920, Department officials in Europe still held funds received from the German government to cover building maintenance expenses; they could not return the money until Washington resumed diplomatic relations with Berlin.<sup>46</sup> In December 1920 Department officers monitored the Spanish repatriation of Japanese diplomatic archives originally received by Penfield at the outbreak of war.<sup>47</sup> The reestablished U.S. Consulate Trieste continued processing Japanese records and effects left in their possession throughout the 1920s.<sup>48</sup> In 1926, an Austrian clerk employed during the war by the United Kingdom to protect British interests appealed to Washington to intercede with London on his behalf for a small pension.<sup>49</sup> Ten years after the Armistice, the United States and the Republic of Austria (which inherited many Hapsburg obligations when the Empire collapsed) had still not agreed about what reimbursement Vienna owed Washington for representational services rendered across the globe.<sup>50</sup> The Department also engaged in protracted negotiations with individual American officials concerning reimbursement for travel and other expenses, as well as to secure return of their personal effects left behind.<sup>51</sup> Penfield repeatedly requested special favors and import duty exemptions to recover precious items he did not sell when he departed Vienna.<sup>52</sup> Four years after the Ambassador's death in 1922, the Department continued to negotiate with his estate.<sup>53</sup> Responsible U.S. Government officials could not have anticipated in August 1914 that the decision to engage as a disinterested Great Power amid Great War would entail significant Government responsibilities for decades into the future.

## Professionalization

Most importantly, the United States experience during the period of Great War neutrality fundamentally altered the nation's diplomatic machinery. U.S. diplomatic and consular officials who toiled in Europe and around the globe, Department principals

in Washington, key members of Congress, the press, academics, commentators on foreign affairs, and the public more generally all concluded that the country's interests required a more professional, representative, and unified foreign service. The functions consular officials performed in the crucible of war obliterated distinctions between their work and that of the diplomatic service, which in turn undermined the diplomats' exclusive exalted social status. Moreover, in the post-war era most assumed that the Department would prioritize promoting U.S. trade, which strengthened the standing of consular officers; facilitating commercial relations necessitated interaction with foreign counterparts who operated in the political realm. Changes in technology, industry, and the balance of power rendered the United States less insulated from global trends. A growing consensus emerged about the necessity to create a trained cadre of foreign affairs specialists to promote U.S. interests, advance American commerce, and serve as a first line of national defense. Noted Department historian Warren Ilchman labeled this impetus "the political necessity of professional diplomacy."<sup>54</sup>

As noted in the concluding sections of previous chapters, the momentum toward full professionalization arose even before war's end. While the hostilities raged, Congress enacted provisions to enhance salaries to at least compensate for inflation and also significantly increased the number of authorized diplomatic officers.<sup>55</sup> In January 1919, longtime Department advocate Congressman John Jacob Rogers introduced the first of multiple bills proposed over the subsequent five years to improve the status and professional capacities of the nation's diplomats.<sup>56</sup> The final version of what came to be known as the Rogers Act, signed into law in May 1924, included the following provisions essential to professionalization:

- An adequate salary structure that enabled individuals lacking personal wealth to pursue a career
- Appointment of all Department diplomatic and consular officials to general employment classes (rather than the previous practice of appointing to a specific position, which required new congressional authorization every time an officer moved to a new posting)
- The possibility of promotion, through evaluation by a competent Board of Examiners, to the highest ranks of the Department, which included both Principal Officer positions in Washington and Ministerial/Ambassadorial-level postings abroad

- Establishment of a Department school and attendant training programs to provide technical expertise and professional development opportunities
- Residency allowances, representational funding, and provision for family transportation expenses
- Departmental responsibility to procure and maintain appropriate buildings and work spaces at posts
- Retirement and disability benefits

Support arose from allied quarters as well. In the immediate postwar era institutions of higher learning such as Georgetown University launched Schools of Foreign Service featuring specialized curricula to prepare future diplomats. Patronage for professionalization even emanated from beyond the grave. At his death in 1922, Frederic Penfield, the last U.S. Ambassador to the equally deceased Austro-Hungarian Empire, bequeathed funds to several universities sufficient to establish permanent scholarships for the study diplomacy and foreign affairs.<sup>57</sup>

Though much altered by subsequent congressional legislation and Departmental fiat, the 1924 Rogers Act remains the foundation of the U.S. Government's premier institution dedicated to addressing foreign affairs. The bureaucratic, organizational, and personnel structures of today stem from the modernization program implemented in the immediate post-Great War era. The impetus for those momentous changes arose in large measure from the lived experience and sacrifice of men and women who toiled to play an assistive role as a powerful but neutral state amidst an unprecedented global conflagration.

## **The United States as Great Power**

Although historical commentators often opine that the United States became a Great Power upon entry into the Great War as a belligerent in April 1917, the account presented here suggests that the United States achieved that status in August 1914. The U. S. Government acted vigorously to remove its nationals from danger, and the belligerent powers recognized it served their own interests to cooperate as fully as possible in facilitating the exodus. Nor could any warring state afford to refuse the arrival of American Red Cross personnel, even though the interposition of an alien

presence generated considerable complications; rejection of such help portended negative public image consequences at home and abroad that none wished to incur. Most notably, the warring nations turned to the United States to protect property, secure sensitive documents, and especially to support their nationals unable to escape enemy territory. A very small cadre of Department personnel deployed in Europe utilized their country's prestige as a disinterested neutral of considerable influence to look after millions of POWs and detainees. Absent monitoring and the prospect of admonition by the only non-belligerent Great Power, one can imagine much darker fates befalling enemy-alien captives during a war that featured levels of brutality that contemporaries considered unprecedented in human history. The fundamentally modern Department of State that emerged from officials' wartime experience provided the United States with an organization, populated by trained professionals, that remains central to addressing global responsibilities the nation assumed at the moment "the lamps" were "going out all over Europe."<sup>58</sup>



## Notes

- 1 The Ottoman Empire severed diplomatic relations with the United States on April 20, 1917, but neither side declared war. The United States declared war on Austria-Hungary on December 7, 1917. Both Bulgaria and the United States refrained from formally severing diplomatic relations.
- 2 Lansing via Berne to Penfield, February 4, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/13a. See also Penfield via Berne to Lansing, February 6, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/15. Penfield continually objected to remitting U.S. interests to the Spanish officials in Vienna, who he considered pro-German and neglectful of their duties. See, for example, Penfield via Berne to Lansing, February 7, February 8, and April 4, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/14, /16, and /21. The Ambassador even sold most of his belongings at great financial loss rather than entrust them to Madrid's representatives. Penfield to Phillips, January 27, 1919, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123P37/59.
- 3 Lansing to Penfield and Lansing to Willard, both April 9, 1917, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917. Supplement 1, The World War*, (Washington: GPO, 1931), pp. 618-619; Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 16, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/26.
- 4 Lansing via Berne to Penfield, April 5, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/21; Lansing to Penfield, April 6, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/21a; Grew to Lansing, April 14, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.632/34. For an example of a detailed inventory of records and property entrusted Spanish care, see Busser (former Trieste Consul writing from Berne) to Lansing, April 18, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/6.
- 5 Spain assumed the interests of Japan, the United Kingdom, and Rumania until confirmation in late April that Switzerland would do so. Switzerland assumed the interests of France, Italy, and Rumania in late April, 1917. Grew to Lansing, April 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.4163/13; Grew to Lansing, April 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.5163/10; Grew to Lansing, April 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6563/9; Grew to Lansing, April 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.9463/10; Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 10, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/2; Willard (Embassy Madrid) to Lansing, April 11, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/3; Grew to Lansing, April 13, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.5163/9; Grew to Lansing, April 13, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6563/10; Grew to Lansing, April 13, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.9463/9; Andrews (from Jassy) via Petrograd to Lansing, April 28, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.7163/4.
- 6 See, for example, Stovall (Berne) to Lansing, April 8, 1917 and attached notes, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/81; Stovall to Lansing, April 24, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123W693/39.
- 7 Penfield via Berne to Lansing, April 7, 1917 and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 351, 763.72115/3086. (Microfilm 367 materials are viewable online: see <https://text-message.blogs.archives.gov/2017/04/04/world-war-i-foreign-policy-records-part-i-the-department-of-state/>)
- 8 See, for example, Department to multiple posts, April 9, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300/28a; Consulate-General Ottawa to Department, April 10, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300/28.
- 9 Lansing via Berne to Penfield, March 28, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/19a; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, April 1, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/19; Penfield via Berne to Lansing, April 3, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/20.

- 10 Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 7, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123P37/31; Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 12, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/22; Stovall (Berne) to Lansing, April 15, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/25; Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 16, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.63/26; Grew via Berne to Lansing, April 16, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123G861/154.
- 11 Heingartner formerly served as Vice-Consul at the Consulate-General Vienna, Reineck formerly served as Vienna Embassy Chief Clerk, and O'Neill formerly served as a clerk in the Vienna Embassy department that dealt with American passport, welfare, and whereabouts issues. Grew to Phillips, June 8, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/96a; Penfield to Lansing, March 15, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/82.
- 12 See, for example, questions about handing over Austro-Hungarian interests in Morocco to Netherlands authorities. Blake (Consulate Tangier) to Lansing, April 16, 1917 and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6381/11 and /11½.
- 13 Page (Embassy London) to Lansing, May 12, 1917 and attached notes, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.4163/15; Lansing to Page (Embassy London), May 25, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.4163/16.
- 14 Carr to Busser (Consulate Almeria, Spain), May 24, 1917, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/ 6.
- 15 See, for example, Stovall (Legation Berne) to Lansing, June 26, 1917 and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/8.
- 16 Spanish Embassy Vienna via Wilson (Berne) to Lansing, November 6, 1917 and attached documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.631/12.
- 17 See generally *passim*, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, decimal 124.633, dating from April 1917 through November 1921.
- 18 Extant records at the U.S. National Archives include 23 large volumes of documents, covering the years 1917-1922, during which U.S. officials worked through the Spanish government to protect American interests.
- 19 Reineck and O'Neill to Grew and attached documents, January 9, 1918, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 24.633/105.
- 20 Stovall to Lansing, November 26, 1918, USNA, RG 59, CDF, 1910-1929, 124.633/125.
- 21 Reineck via Berne to Lansing, November 22, 1918, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/128.
- 22 Stovall to Lansing, December 27, 1918 and January 3, 1919, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/127 and /129.
- 23 Polk (Acting) to Berne Legation, January 15, 1919, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/127.
- 24 American Mission Vienna to Department, August 7, 1919, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/137 and attached memoranda; Grant-Smith to Carr, March 12, 1920, attached to USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/145.
- 25 Shoecraft to Department, October 19, 1920, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.633/159.
- 26 See *Register of the Department of State*, including biographical entries, May 1, 1922, (Washington: GPO, 1922).
- 27 Burton J. Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 2 (New York, Doubleday, Page & Company: 1922), p. 291.

- 28 Hendrick, *The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 3 (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1925), p. 378.
- 29 Hendrick, *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page*, Volume 2, p. 379.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 412.
- 31 See, *inter alia*, Legation Hague to Department, November 6, 1918, RG 59, CDF-1910-1929, M367, Roll 386, 763.72119/2499.
- 32 See, *inter alia*, Gunther to Department, November 5, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, M367, Roll 444, 763.72119/7637.
- 33 Legation Hague to Department, November 25, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 855.001/49.
- 34 See, for example, Legation Hague to Department, November 25, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 763.72114A/381; *passim*, Lansing to Legation Hague, November 29, 1918, RG 84, Netherlands, Volume 294.
- 35 Legation Hague to Department, November 10, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 351.116/65; Legation Hague to Department, November 26, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 300.116Un3/20.
- 36 Legation Hague to Department, November 16, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 811.91612/54 and /55.
- 37 Legation Hague to Department, November 28, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.111/123.
- 38 Gunther to Department, December 2, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 130 Sa 142-.
- 39 See, for example, Germany: Legation Hague to Department, November 19, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.51/1154; Legation Hague to Department, November 24, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.51/1155; Legation Hague to Department, March 22, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.00/859; Phillips to Colby, May 26, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862T.01/117; Phillips to Colby, June 9, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.00/973; Phillips to Colby, July 20, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.00/993; Phillips to Colby, August 4, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.00/999; Phillips to Colby, March 30, 1921, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.796/20.  
Russia: Legation Hague to Department, November 14, 1918, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 862.00/316; Phillips to Colby, May 26, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7019; Phillips to Colby, June 2, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7060 and /7061; Phillips to Colby, June 7, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7091; Phillips to Colby, September 15, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.51/814; Phillips to Colby, September 23, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.51/830; Phillips to Colby, October 27, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7692; Phillips to Colby, October 30, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7572; Phillips to Colby, December 20, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 861.00/7942.  
Russian-Polish War: Phillips to Colby, August 6, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 760c.61/141.
- 40 See, for example, American Express Company to Hague Legation, December 31, 1918, RG 84, Netherlands, Volume 297; Legation Hague to Department, November 25, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 363.11/2931; Legation Hague to Department, December 20, 1919, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 012/25875; Legation Hague to Department, January 12, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/55; Legation Hague to Department, February 10, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/63; Legation Hague to Department, February 16, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5263/66; Legation Hague to Department, February 25, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 703.5262/66.
- 41 For *Arabic* see Armour to Department, June 6, 1921, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.585/70. For multiple documents concerning post-war sea mine damage, see the examples of SS *Kerwood* in RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, file 300.115 K 47 and SS *Liberty Glo* in RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, file 300.115 L 61.

- 42 Legation Hague to Department, February 2, 1920, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 124.565.30; Phillips to Colby, July 29, 1921, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 051.56/29; Phillips to Colby, August 5, 1921, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 051.56/31 and /33.
- 43 See <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/people/phillips-william>
- 44 Swedish Minister, Washington, to Department, November 22, 1918 and attached documents, USNA, RG 59 1910-1929, CDF, 701.6311/298.
- 45 Swedish Legation Washington, to Department, August 14, 1918, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 701.6311/296; Department memo, July 19, 1928, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300/30.
- 46 Vopicka (Legation Bucharest) to Department, December 17, 1919 and related documents, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6272/2.
- 47 Frazier (Vienna) to Colby, December 15, 1920, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.9463/11.
- 48 See documents dated May 1925 through October 1927 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.9463/12 through /14.
- 49 Johann Fleischmann to Department, December 6, 1926, and associated documents in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.4163/17. The Department could do nothing to help Fleischmann.
- 50 See, for example, Austrian Legation Washington to Department, July 14, 1922, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300; Austrian Legation Washington to Department, January 23, 1923, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6361/36; Austrian Legation Washington to Department, February 16, 1926, September 8, 1928, and January 17, 1929, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 704.6300/ 29 through /31.
- 51 See, for example, correspondence concerning storage of William Coffin's effects in Budapest, dated March- June 1918, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123C651/154 through /158; disagreement about Glenn Stewart's claims for travel reimbursement, Stewart to Department, January 28, 1919, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123St421/36.
- 52 See *passim* multiple records in Penfield's personnel file, dated May 1917 through April 1919 in USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123P37/38a through /58.
- 53 Bliss to Comptroller General of the United States, April 22, 1922, USNA, RG 59, CDF 1910-1929, 123P37/67a; Agent of the United States to the U.S.-Austrian-Hungarian Tripartite Claims Commission Robert Bonyne to Department, December 22, 1926, RG 59, CDF, 123P37/74.
- 54 Warren Frederick Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779-1939: A Study in Administrative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 138.
- 55 *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134, 167-168. The number of Secretary positions increased from 70 in 1914 to 122 in early 1918, although not enough qualified applicants applied to fill all the available positions.
- 56 Ilchman provides a detailed account in Chapter 4.
- 57 *New York Times*, June 27, 1922, p. 14; July 2, 1922, p. 22; June 1, 1923, p. 19; *Washington Post*, July 5, 1922, p. 6.
- 58 Viscount Grey of Fallodon, *Twenty-Five Years 1892-1916*, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1925) p. 20. <https://archive.org/details/GreyViscountOfFallodonTwentyFiveYears/page/n35>

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED





OFFICE OF THE  

---

HISTORIAN

UNCLASSIFIED