

Gt. Brit. War Office  
Army. The evacuation of north  
Russia, 1919

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ARMY.

THE EVACUATION  
OF  
NORTH RUSSIA,  
1919.

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*Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.*

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LIST OF ATTACHED PAPERS.

- A.—Note by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff to the Secretary of the War Cabinet on the situation in North Russia, pointing out the necessity for sending administrative reinforcements and pressing for a definite policy. (2nd January, 1919.)
- B.—Note by the General Staff drawing attention to the unsatisfactory position of our troops in North Russia, and pointing out the need for administrative reinforcements, &c. (31st January, 1919.)
- C.—Appreciation of the situation on the Archangel Front by the General Staff, emphasizing the necessity of despatching reinforcements to Russia. (4th February, 1919.)
- D.—Minute by the Director of Military Operations on the situation in North Russia, drawing attention to the dangerous situation existing at Archangel. (27th March, 1919.)
- E.—Telegram from General Maynard to the War Office asking for 400 reinforcements in consequence of dangerous situation due to unrest in the Finnish Legion. (31st March, 1919.)
- F.—Telegram from the War Office to Generals Ironside and Maynard announcing that all troops who had spent the winter in North Russia should return to England by the autumn. (4th April, 1919.)
- G.—General Staff Paper on the situation in North Russia, discussing measures already taken to deal with the situation and making proposals for further action. (15th April, 1919.)
- H.—Telegram from General Maynard to the War Office on operations in the vicinity of Urozero and discussing the possibility of advancing to the northern end of Lake Onega. (17th April, 1919.)
- I.—Telegram from General Maynard to the War Office asking for permission to carry out further operations with the object of capturing Medveyeja Gora and Povyenetz. (25th April 1919.)
- J.—Telegram from the War Office to General Maynard sanctioning an advance to the northern end of Lake Onega at his discretion. (29th April, 1919.)
- K.—Telegram from the War Office to General Ironside authorizing him to make preparations for an offensive in the direction of Kotlas. (4th May, 1919.)
- L.—Telegram from General Ironside to the War Office giving details with regard to proposed operations. (6th June, 1919.)
- M.—Telegram from the War Office to General Maynard informing him that he must limit his operations to holding his present line south of Medveyeja Gora. (17th June, 1919.)
- N.—Telegram from the War Office to General Ironside informing him that his proposed operations would be reconsidered by the Cabinet on 27th June. (18th June, 1919.)
- O.—Telegram from General Ironside to the War Office giving his views on the proposed offensive towards Kotlas. (19th June, 1919.)
- P.—General Staff Paper on General Ironside's proposed operations, describing their objects, and recommending that he should be given a free hand as to their limits and conduct. (25th June, 1919.)
- Q.—Telegram from the War Office to General Ironside sanctioning his proposed advance. (27th June, 1919.)
- R.—General Staff note on the evacuation of North Russia. Short summary of proposals. (15th July, 1919.)
- S.—Minute by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff recommending that Archangel and Murmansk should be placed under one commander for the purpose of evacuation, and that General Sir H. Rawlinson should be sent out to take command. Notification of the approval of the Secretary of State. (30th July, 1919.)
- T.—Telegram from the War Office to General Maynard informing him that the evacuation of Murmansk should follow that of Archangel, and that in the meantime he could withdraw from his present front as might be necessary. (29th July, 1919.)
- U.—Telegram from General Ironside to the War Office giving an outline of the plan of evacuation of Archangel. (6th August, 1919.)
- V.—Details of troops and civilians evacuated from North Russia from 1st June, 1919, to the completion of the evacuation, 12th October, 1919.

MAPS.

- 1. Map of European Russia, showing strengths of anti-Bolshevik Forces and lines held 15th April, 1919.
- 2. Sketch map of North Russia.

# THE EVACUATION OF NORTH RUSSIA.

## I.—MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR.

This Blue Book was prepared six months ago in fulfilment of the undertaking given by me on 12th September last year that at the close of the operations in North Russia "when it is certain that the lives of British soldiers will not be endangered by publicity or the interests of the National Russians prejudiced, a full account of the measures taken and the military reasons for them will be prepared by the General Staff and presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State."

It affords a complete statement of the reasons underlying the various phases of the military operations connected with the British evacuation of North Russia, and will enable all those who wish to understand to measure the difficulties and anxieties which attended the successful attempt to withdraw from North Russia without being involved in disaster or discredit.

The general policy towards the Bolshevik Government, of which the operations in North Russia were a single part, was settled by the Supreme Council of the Allies. Every important step in its execution was approved by the War Cabinet. Parliament was kept continuously informed at every stage to the utmost limit possible without compromising the success of impending or contemplated operations, and the House of Commons at every stage by overwhelming majorities approved the course that was being adopted.

W. S. C.

WAR OFFICE,  
15th July, 1920.

EXTRACT from a speech delivered by the Secretary of State for War on the Army Estimates, in the House of Commons on 29th July, 1919, explaining how the situation in North Russia at the beginning of 1919 arose out of the war against Germany.

\* \* \* \* \*

"After Lenin and Trotsky had signed a shameful peace whereby they betrayed their country and falsified its engagements to its Allies, and whereby they liberated more than 1,000,000 Germans to come over and attack our people in the West—after that fateful event in history had occurred there was a Czech army of about two corps made up of prisoners taken from the Austrians by the Russians whose hearts were always on the side of the Allies, and this army refused to continue any longer with the Bolsheviks in Russia, and it demanded to be set free from Russia, and to make its way over to the Western front, where it could continue the struggle which the Bohemians were waging against German-Austria. After an attempt to secure the exodus of this army by Vladivostock it was proposed that they should cut their way out by Viatka to Archangel. There was the danger of Archangel becoming a submarine base for the Germans, and the danger of the loss of all that great mountain of stores we had accumulated there in order to keep that means of contact with Russia, and for all these reasons, combined with the fact that it was hoped the Czechs would make their way out by that route, the Allies in 1918, as an essential military operation and as part of the war, decided to occupy Archangel and Murmansk and put an inter-Allied force on shore there. This took place in August, 1918.

great indeed, and it was not possible to spare any large force from any of the countries of the Allies, but a number of French, American, British and Italian troops, the British in larger numbers, were landed at Archangel and Murmansk, and the population generally welcomed them. The town and surrounding district passed into our hands, and we became very deeply involved in the fortunes of that region. We were not able to send enough troops to occupy the whole of the area from which it was hoped a sufficient uprising of Russian manhood would have resulted to enable a really large unit of Russian Government to be established. We were not able to go to Vologda or Viatka, and we had to confine ourselves to the comparatively small region of Archangel and Murmansk, and about 100 to 120 miles in various directions from those towns. The Czech troops who were trying to escape from the country *via* Archangel were unable to get as far as Viatka, and they got only to Ekaterinburg. Their advance slowed down and what had originally been intended to be a measure for effecting a junction with these troops and securing their safety, became a mere occupation of Archangel.

But the Committee would make a great mistake if they condemned the decision of policy which led the Allies and this country to make this movement. Although it did not achieve all the results we expected of it, it achieved results greater than anyone would have dared to hope for. Let the Committee

The pressure upon us at that time was very

consider this. Up to the time we landed in Archangel in August, 1918,\* German divisions were passing from the Eastern to the Western front at an average rate of six divisions per month to attack the Allied forces. From the time we had landed there not another division was sent from the Eastern front, and the line there remained absolutely stable, the whole of the German forces being rivetted by this new development, and the anxiety they had about Russia until the complete rebuff occurred in October or November of that year. Therefore it is very wrong to regard this as a mistaken enterprise either from the political principles which inspired it or still less by the results by which it was attended.

"Before the German resistance was broken and the Armistice signed, the winter had settled down on the North Russian coast, and the port of Archangel was icebound, or practically icebound, and our men were forced to spend the whole of last winter in this bleak and gloomy spot in circumstances which caused the greatest anxiety, because it was evident that the Bolsheviks with whom they had been in collision, could, if they chose, have concentrated against this particular sector of the circle by which they were invested a force of indefinite size, and because our men were utterly cut off from the outer world except as far as

small parties were concerned. Therefore their position was one of much anxiety. They were men mostly of the C 3 class, but they had a fine spirit, and once they were assured and promised that they should be brought home before another winter occurred, they discharged their duty with great determination, and maintained the position against some quite serious attacks, and others which might well have become very serious had they been allowed to proceed, and maintained the situation throughout this dark period. Not only was there considerable unrest amongst these troops during their imprisonment, on this coast during the winter but also, as the Committee recognizes in the exhaustion and prostration of the public mind which followed the triumph in the great struggle owing to the general dispersal of energies which had been so long held up by the great strain, there was the greatest difficulty in sending out any form of relief or assistance to those troops for several months.

"Such was the situation that I inherited when I was sent to the War Office in the middle of January of the present year. But although I had not been responsible for any of the events which called this state of things into being, although I heartily agree with them, no one could view that situation without the gravest anxiety."

\* This sentence should read "Up to the time we landed in *Murmansk* in *May*, 1918, &c. . . ."

\* \* \* \* \*

Y. 1100  
1918

*[Faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]*

## II.—MEMORANDUM BY THE CHIEF OF THE IMPERIAL GENERAL STAFF.

Secretary of State.

1. The accompanying documents have been prepared in accordance with your instructions to afford a comprehensive narrative of the campaign in North Russia, together with the various decisions of His Majesty's Government and the instructions issued by the War Office in connection therewith.

I have already reviewed the course of Allied intervention in Russia from 17th November to 19th February and laid particular stress on the point that this policy originated entirely as an anti-German measure. It is unnecessary to labour this point further, but it is interesting to note that in Ludendorff's recently published memoirs he more than once alludes to his pre-occupation regarding the possible reconstitution of an Eastern front, which it was our primary object to effect.

2. The present narrative deals specially with the campaign in North Russia from February, 1919, to the final withdrawal of the Allied Forces at the beginning of October.

The outstanding feature of this year's operations has been the difficulty imposed on the military authorities, both in the theatre of operations and at home, by the absence of any clearly defined policy on the part of the Allied Governments.

Having been initiated as an anti-German measure the signature of the German armistice robbed the campaign of its original purpose. It may then be asked why did we not immediately withdraw our troops from North Russia in November, 1918. There were two main obstacles in the way of doing this. In the first place, owing to climatic conditions, we could not be sure of being able to remove the whole force from Archangel before the Port was closed by ice. In the second place, the prosecution of our anti-German policy had involved us in obligations to those loyal Russians who had remained true to the Allied cause and had thereby compromised themselves with the Soviet Government. We could not precipitately abandon these without doing our utmost to ensure their subsequent safety.

The Allied Governments consequently found themselves committed to the retention of their contingents at Archangel throughout the winter, although they had not decided on any definite policy with regard to the Bolsheviki.

The difficulties of the Entente in formulating a Russian policy have, indeed, proved insurmountable, since in no Allied country has there been a sufficient weight of public opinion to justify armed intervention against the Bolsheviki on a decisive scale, with the inevitable result that military operations have lacked cohesion and purpose.

In these circumstances the action of our Commanders on the spot has been dictated largely by the exigencies of the immediate situation on their front, which itself has been continually changing, thereby adding still further to their difficulties.

3. The want of a clear-cut policy during this period has reacted equally on the departments at home, whose duty it has been to provide for the maintenance and reinforcement of our forces in North Russia. In the early part of this year the situation in this respect was critical, when discontent in the Army, Navy and Air Force was rife, and was being exploited to the utmost by political agitators for their own mischievous ends. Our efforts were hampered at every turn and our difficulties were aggravated by the fact that, for international reasons, some of the causes of anxiety could not be made public. It says much for the staunchness of the national spirit that when the danger was made known as far as it could be, the response was as prompt as it was gratifying. Incidentally we owe a great deal to the Press for their assistance in the matter.

4. Later on, when it had been definitely decided to withdraw the British Forces, the fact of this decision having to be made public added immensely to the difficulties of the

situation. For we were in honour bound to support the loyal Russian forces, at whose invitation we had originally landed troops, and to do all that was possible to enable the North Russian Government to maintain itself after our departure. Alternatively we had to arrange to evacuate the large number of people who were unwilling to risk massacre at the hands of their bloodthirsty foes.

The problem to be solved was thus a complicated and lengthy operation, involving a withdrawal of 170 miles in the face of an enemy who was fully informed of our intentions.

The political situation in our rear was also such as to give cause for anxiety. The moral of the North Russian Government and its supporters, which had never been brilliant, was seriously impaired by the knowledge of our intended withdrawal, while on the other hand, all the forces of anarchy and disruption were encouraged to seize the opportunity of stabbing us in the back at the critical moment. The position was thus fundamentally different from that presented by the Gallipoli evacuation, and, in some respects, even more perplexing.

5. To deal with the situation two things were clearly essential. Firstly, a sufficiency of reliable British troops to relieve the weary and dispirited contingents that had been exposed to the demoralizing influence of the North Russian winter. Secondly, it was imperative to strike a blow at the Bolshevik forces sufficiently heavy to paralyze their offensive efforts during the actual process of our withdrawal. Sir John Moore's action at Corunna provides an interesting historical parallel.

6. These proposals for action were, as you know, submitted to the War Cabinet and approved by it after full discussion. I think we may claim that they were amply justified by the course of events.

I do not, for instance, care to dwell on what might have happened had the Russian mutinies occurred before the arrival of the two splendid brigades commanded by Brigadier-Generals Grogan and Sadleir-Jackson. To anyone in the least conversant with the facts the charges that have been made in certain quarters—that the relief forces were not required—are simply grotesque.

7. A further accusation has been made that instead of loyally carrying out the Government's policy of withdrawal, which was decided in March, we attempted to embark on a far reaching project of invasion into the heart of Russia and only drew back under the pressure of public opinion.

A glance at the documents annexed will suffice to show that such statements are utter moonshine.

The necessity for striking a heavy blow at the enemy, immediately before our withdrawal, in order to disengage the front and allow the operation to be conducted without interference, was, as I have already stated, submitted to the War Cabinet and accepted by them after thorough discussion.

The objective which would ensure the desired result being achieved was Kotlas, the Bolshevik river base, the destruction of which would make it impossible for the enemy to follow us down the Dwina for a considerable time. It so happened that at the time when the preparations for this operation were being first discussed, Kolchak's right wing was successfully advancing, and was already half way between Perm and Viatka with what appeared to be good prospects of reaching Kotlas in a few weeks. Our projected blow at Kotlas, although an operation of strictly limited extent, was therefore intended to serve a double purpose, namely, of disengaging the front to facilitate our own withdrawal and of effecting a satisfactory junction of the North Russian and Siberian forces.

The latter expectation proved illusory, but the former object still held good—and was not carried through only because the abnormally low water in the Dwina made it impossible for our flotilla to advance further. The disengaging blow was, however, ultimately carried out on 10th August with a more limited objective and achieved its purpose. The final withdrawal was effected practically without loss, a result greatly due to the very careful plans of General Ironside and the most devoted co-operation on the part of the Navy and Air Force.

8. Another point to be emphasized is that from the moment of the arrival at Archangel of the first relief force, when the port first opened at the end of May, the process of evacuation commenced and went on continuously to the full capacity of the shipping available until our final detachments sailed on 27th September.

9. The charge that we have deserted those who stood by us is more worthy of consideration, but is none the less unjustified. There are, it is true, only too many people in this country who have forgotten, if they ever knew, what sacrifices Russia made for the Allied cause in the first years of the war, and to such I would suggest that a

study of Ludendorff's memoirs would reveal our debt to Russia in a most striking and unmistakable light. To those who know of, and will be for ever grateful for, that timely assistance, it is indeed painful to incur any suspicion of bad faith, but we can with a clear conscience refute any such aspersion.

The position had to be faced that the British Empire, in common with all the Entente nations, was weary and exhausted, depleted in men and money, and incapable of further military efforts on a great scale. That being so it behoved us to apply what resources were still available in the most profitable direction. North Russia offered no prospects of decisive results, and with Kolchak's failure any sustained military effort in that theatre was doomed to be barren. Moreover, the local conditions were entirely discouraging. In the words of Captain Altham, R.N., our senior naval officer on the Dwina, to whose ability, energy and whole-hearted co-operation the success of our operations is greatly due, "the instability of the Russian troops, the lack of discipline, organizing ability and military leadership of the Russian officers and Higher Command after a year of the most loyal and capable British support, soon made it evident that to continue that support would be fruitless." In the South, on the other hand, Denikin's operations, starting as they did with every conceivable disadvantage, by sheer determination, energy and patriotism had achieved already remarkable success, and offered a much greater prospect of decisive results.

Accordingly it was decided, and I am convinced wisely decided, to concentrate all our remaining efforts in South Russia and to close down our commitments in the North.

Every opportunity was given to such of the population of the Archangel district as desired it to leave and altogether some 6,500 were evacuated, whilst preparations had been made to remove three times that number.

The Russian forces having decided to continue the fight after our departure, were left amply provided with arms, ammunition and equipment of every sort. In the two months which have elapsed since our withdrawal, the North Russian troops have successfully maintained an active defence and made considerable captures of prisoners, guns and ground.

The ultimate fate of this force is, however, obviously dependent on the outcome of the general struggle, and in particular on the result of Denikin's present campaign.

10. I think this country hardly realizes how much it owes to the energy, devotion and skill of the British naval, military and air forces which have for so long sustained the credit of British arms amid the dreariest and most demoralizing conditions. No praise is too high for the work of our commanders, Generals Maynard and Ironside, who through the long anxious months of last winter carried a load of responsibility that would have crushed men of softer fibre.

To Lord Rawlinson also we are greatly indebted for his skilful handling of a thankless task, the satisfactory accomplishment of which was due to his quick grasp of a complicated situation, and the ripe experience, tact and firmness which he brought to bear on the problem.

11. May I be allowed to add that the thanks of the Military Authorities are also due to His Majesty's Government for the free hand which we were given in carrying out the policy of withdrawal, once that had been decided upon? I trust that, in view of the satisfactory termination of the campaign, it will be admitted that this confidence was not misplaced, for it is only by complete mutual confidence and the most intimate co-operation between the Government and the fighting Services that military operations can be successfully prosecuted.

12. Finally, there is one great lesson to be learned from the history of the campaign.

It began with the landing of 150 marines at Murmansk in April, 1918. These were followed by 370 more at the end of May, which were in turn reinforced by 600 infantry and machine gunners on 23rd June. From that time onwards demands for reinforcement followed each other without intermission, and our commitments steadily grew without our being able to resist them, until the British contingent numbered 18,400.

The Mesopotamian campaign started with the despatch of 2 brigades and ultimately absorbed nearly 900,000 men before it was terminated.

The 6 divisions with which we entered upon the Great War in France and Belgium swelled to 63 before victory was achieved.

I think the moral of this is easy to point. It is that, once a military force is involved in operations on land it is almost impossible to limit the magnitude of its commitments.

In the present state of world chaos it will surely be wise to bear this principle in mind, for we may expect to receive continual appeals for troops, "even a company or two" from every part of three continents and the temptation to comply will often be difficult to resist. Therefore, I venture to urge that no such requests outside the British Empire may be acceded to by His Majesty's Government without the fullest and most careful consideration of the larger obligations which such compliance may ultimately involve.

HENRY WILSON,  
*Chief of the Imperial General Staff.*

*1st December, 1919.*

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### III.—NARRATIVE OF EVENTS IN NORTH RUSSIA.

#### I.—FEBRUARY TO MAY, 1919.

1. By the end of February the situation of the Archangel force was causing considerable anxiety. The British troops were nearly all of low medical category, the units were much under strength, and the fighting value of all the Allied troops was poor in consequence of the trying conditions of the long winter. Also the whole force had been engaged in heavy fighting when meeting the vigorous Bolshevik attacks of January and February.

2. To improve the conditions both at Archangel and Murmansk arrangements had been made to send out certain administrative personnel, such as Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Service Corps, and Royal Army Ordnance Corps, which were urgently needed particularly to maintain the long lines of communication (1). But as regards Archangel it became increasingly evident that, if disaster was to be avoided, the forces must be reinforced by troops from home at the earliest possible moment (2). This situation was repeatedly brought to notice by the General Staff (*vide* attached papers A, B, C and D).

(1) Attached Papers A and B.

(2) Attached Papers C and D.

3. During February the question of future policy in North Russia had been engaging the attention of the War Cabinet.<sup>(a)</sup> On 4th March the War Cabinet decided to press the Allied representatives in Paris to agree to the early evacuation of North Russia by the Allied troops. To prepare for this, and to meet the dangerous situation existing at Archangel, the War Cabinet authorized the Secretary of State for War to make any necessary arrangements. Consequently, the latter at once ordered the preparation of a special contingent for Archangel of about 4,000 men, to which was added later a second contingent of similar strength. Each of these relief forces consisted of a mixed brigade of two infantry battalions with units of Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Machine Gun Corps, and Royal Army Service Corps. The first was under the command of Brigadier-General G. W. St. G. Grogan, V.C., C.M.G., D.S.O., and the second of Brigadier-General L. W. de V. Sadleir-Jackson, C.M.G., D.S.O. Whether the actual evacuation of the Allied troops was carried out immediately the port of Archangel opened or later in the summer, it was equally necessary to have at hand a strong force of fresh troops to cover the withdrawal and deal with any contingency that might arise. Any attempt to withdraw and embark the tired Allied troops already at Archangel without taking this precaution might well have been disastrous.

(a) On 3rd March the Secretary of State for War speaking in the House of Commons on the Army Estimates explained the situation in North Russia. For example, he said:—

“I now turn to the position of our forces in Russia. There is an Allied army of a certain size—of exactly what size it is not necessary to say—in occupation of considerable regions of North Russia, based on the ports of Murmansk and Archangel. About half this army is British.

whatever may be the policy decided upon by the Allies in Paris, our forces in Archangel and Murmansk which, as I have said, are interdependent, will have to stay there until the summer is far advanced. Since they have got to stay, they must be properly supported. They must be sustained with reinforcements necessary to their safety, which can reach them within the limit I have described, and must be supplied with everything they may require. It is no use people raising prejudice against these expeditions. Everyone knows why they were sent. They were sent as part of our operations against Germany. It was vitally necessary to take every measure in regard to Russia during the war which would keep as many German troops as possible on the Russian front, and reduce that formidable

movement of the German armies which carried more than a million men to the Western front, and which culminated in that immense series of battles which began on the 21st March last year.

“That reason has passed away, but the troops sent in obedience to it are still on these wild northern coasts, locked in the depth of winter and we must neglect nothing required for their safety and well-being.

Further, we have incurred heavy commitments towards the people of these districts who have espoused our cause, and to the Russian armies, which were encouraged and called into being largely by the Allies and largely for our own purposes during the period of the German war. It has been the custom in this country to pay particular attention to matters of this kind and always to endeavour, to the very best of our ability, to do our duty by those who have put their trust in us, and who have run into danger in consequence of action which we have advised them to take.”

4. In addition to the preparation of the relief forces certain other measures were taken to deal with the situation in North Russia. The Ministry of Shipping were asked to provide three specially strengthened ships to transport the leading units of the relief forces. These would be able to enter Archangel at least a fortnight earlier than the ordinary ships. The Admiralty made arrangements to despatch a strong river expedition to reinforce the small flotilla on the River Dwina, and the Ministry of Shipping took steps to provide the necessary river craft, including boats for the conveyance of troops and supplies, and hospital steamers. Efforts were made to improve the moral of the troops in North Russia by announcing to them the measures being taken for their relief, and arranging for a fuller and better news service. An announcement was made to the troops on 4th April that all who had spent the winter in Russia should return to England by the autumn (3).

(3) Attached Paper F.

5. The withdrawal of the Allied troops from North Russia having been decided on, it became necessary to consider in detail the precise nature and scope of the arrangements to be made to carry it out. It must be remembered that the problem was not purely a military one. A North Russian Government had been formed under our protection, and a number of the inhabitants had enlisted on our side, and many had supported us actively in other ways against the Bolsheviks. Merely to evacuate the Allied troops (an operation of no extreme difficulty provided a sufficiency of fresh troops to cover the withdrawal and embarkation were available) would leave those Russians who had helped us exposed to the brutal revenge of the Bolshevik Army. Such a course was clearly out of the question. Therefore it was necessary to take measures to provide for the security of those Russians who had assisted us, first against the Germans and afterwards against the Bolsheviks. This could only be effected in two ways:—

- (i.) By evacuating considerable numbers of Russians, who would have to be provided for elsewhere.
- (ii.) By placing the North Russian Government in a position to maintain itself against the Bolsheviks after our departure.

6. Of these two methods the second was much the more satisfactory. To leave that portion of North Russia which had been rescued from the Bolsheviks in security under a stable government was obviously preferable to merely abandoning the country, carrying away thousands of Russians, men, women, and children, for whom it would be difficult to find a suitable refuge. The latter course would inevitably involve an immense loss of prestige and re-act most unfavourably on the whole anti-Bolshevik cause. But if the North Russian Government was to have any chance at all of standing by itself, unsupported by Allied troops, it was essential:—

- (a.) To strike a sharp and successful blow at the Bolshevik forces before the departure of the Allied troops;
  - (b.) To organize and train an efficient force of Russians to defend the area liberated from the Bolsheviks;
- And in addition, if the stability of the North Russian Government was to be assured, it was necessary:—
- (c.) To effect a real and permanent junction between the North Russian forces and the right wing of Kolchak's Siberian Army.

7. In March and April there seemed a good prospect of fulfilling all three conditions. The relief forces would be available to support the North Russian forces in such limited offensive operations as might be desirable, which they would in any case have to carry out to secure their own withdrawal; there seemed to be adequate material for the formation of efficient forces in North Russia, provided a sufficiency of good Russian officers could be obtained; the Siberian armies were making steady progress westwards, and, according to the information then available, might reasonably hope to reach Kotlas and the upper waters of the Dwina during the course of the summer.

These considerations were put before the War Cabinet in the General Staff paper, dated 15th April, 1919 (4), and, after full discussion, it was decided to adopt this plan, by which North Russia would be left under a stable anti-Bolshevik government, the Allied troops would be withdrawn under the most favourable conditions, and the North Russian campaign brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

8. General Ironside, therefore, was informed on 4th May that he was authorized to make all preparations, with the resources at his disposal, for dealing a heavy blow against the enemy in the direction of Kotlas (on the Dwina) (5). He was told,

(4) Attached paper G.

(5) Attached paper K.

however, that the War Cabinet would consider this operation before it actually started. Arrangements were made for equipment and clothing for 50,000 men to be sent to Archangel for the Russian forces, and a scheme was put on foot for equipping 1,200 selected Russian officers from prisoners of war in Germany, of whom 700 were to be sent to North Russia.

9. During this period active operations continued spasmodically at Archangel. The Bolsheviks made a number of determined attacks on our positions; these were all beaten off, generally with considerable loss to the enemy. Thus, on 1st March they attacked Yevsievskaia (on the Vaga); on 5th April they attacked Shredmekrenga, when they were repulsed leaving 102 prisoners and five machine guns in our hands; and on 1st and 5th May they made further unsuccessful attacks on the Vaga front. Some anxiety was felt as to the period of the thaw owing to the fact that the ice on the upper reaches of the River Dwina would melt before that on the lower reaches, thus allowing the Bolshevik river flotilla to operate before our own could get up the stream. But, fortunately, the Bolsheviks did not take advantage of their opportunity, and on 13th May our boats sailed up river from Archangel. From this time onwards our flotilla more than held its own with the Bolsheviks, and on the arrival of the strong reinforcements prepared by the Admiralty—composed of monitors, gun boats, mine sweepers and all the craft necessary for administrative purposes—we were greatly superior to them in fighting ships and had all the vessels required for transport purposes up the river.

10. At Murmansk, between the beginning of February and the end of May, an advance of about 80 miles was made by the Allied troops. On 20th February Sejega (on railway, 60 miles south of Soroka) was captured together with 80 prisoners and a large quantity of stores, and on 11th April Urozero (20 miles further south) fell into our hands. The advance was continued and on 25th April General Maynard asked for permission to carry out further offensive operations, with the object of capturing Medvyejya Gora and Povyenetz (6). The object of this operation was to enable him to gain control of all lines of approach to the Murmansk area from the south, while at the same time reducing the front to be held. This was sanctioned, on the understanding that no further reinforcements could be sent to him from England, and was carried out in May (7). Povyenetz was captured on 18th May and Medvyejya Gora on 21st May.

11. These operations were skilfully conducted with a very small number of troops. Most of the serious fighting was carried out by two British infantry companies, a detachment of Royal Marines, and the Serbian battalion. During this period General Maynard felt much anxiety on account of the small number of Allied troops left at his disposal. The two infantry companies referred to above (one company King's Royal Rifle Corps, one company Middlesex Regiment) had been despatched to Murmansk on 12th April, in consequence of the dangerous situation caused by the unrest in the Finnish Legion (8). The latter was raised, in the summer of 1918, from Red Finns, who had fled to Russia and were intended to be used against the Germans. Their *raison d'être* disappeared on the withdrawal of the Germans from Finland; and from that time to their repatriation to Finland in September, 1919, after lengthy negotiations with the Finnish Government, they were merely a source of continual anxiety to General Maynard.

12. Another small but useful reinforcement received by General Maynard were two companies of American Railway Engineers, which had been despatched by the United States Government in reply to our urgent request. These arrived in April, 1919, and did excellent work on the long line of railway until the end of June when they were withdrawn, the American authorities not seeing their way to sanction their retention any longer (b).

(b) On 29th May, speaking in the House of Commons on the Army Estimates, the Secretary of State, in the course of a full explanation of the situation in North Russia, outlined the policy which it was intended to pursue, as follows:—

\* \* \* \* \*

“Admiral Kolchak's Army are purely Russian, and the reinforcements which are preparing behind for him, and which are considerable, are also purely Russian. In the main these armies are equipped by British munitions and British rifles, and a certain portion of the troops are actually wearing British uniforms. The advance of these armies has already drawn 20,000 Bolsheviks off our front at Archangel

and has thus rendered us a real service which may have played a very important part during these critical weeks through which we have just passed.

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“Fighting is still going on in this region, and I speak with great reserve about the future, but this much may be said, that Admiral Kolchak's advance in the northern sector, coupled with the growth and improvement of

## II.—JUNE, 1919.

13. On 26th May the first relief force under General Grogan had arrived at Archangel, receiving an official welcome from the Russian Governor-General on the following day, which was made the occasion of great rejoicing by the inhabitants of Archangel. The brigade then went up the Dwina to relieve the troops holding that front. The second relief force arrived at Archangel on 10th June.

14. *Immediately the first relief force reached Archangel the withdrawal of the Allied troops who had spent the winter in North Russia was commenced, and the process of evacuation continued from now on without interruption* (9). The first troops to go were the American infantry and French contingent. The loss of the battalion of American engineers was much felt when the time came for their repatriation. These troops had done most valuable work and amongst other duties had been

the Russian local troops at Archangel and Murmansk, offers us the prospect of a far better solution of our own problems than we could ever see before. Whereas a few months ago our only plan was to withdraw our troops, and carry with them as refugees 30,000 or 40,000 inhabitants upon whom the Bolsheviks would have wreaked vengeance, people, that is to say, who have been friendly to us and who had worked for us at the time of the German War—whereas that was the only course which seemed open to us then, there is now good prospect of the whole of North Russia becoming self-supporting within a reasonable time and of purely Russian forces maintaining themselves against the Bolsheviks in that theatre. This will relieve us of the extraordinary difficulties of evacuating so large a portion of the population and of providing for them afterwards—how are they to be transported, where are they to go, where are they to stay, how are they to be looked after, what are they to do, when are they to go back, how are they to go back—all this was a formidable problem to be confronted with, but one I would rather have seen faced than leave them to their fate. If the course of events which I have indicated should actually come to pass, we shall be afforded an absolutely honourable and satisfactory termination to an enterprise which, though undertaken from sound military reasons during the German War, threatened us with the gravest embarrassments after it had closed. We shall be relieved from a situation which exposed us to an alternative danger, the danger of disaster through staying on with too weak forces, or the danger of dishonour through going away without winding up our obligations decently. We shall be entirely secured from both these perils. We hope, therefore, that a juncture will be

effected in the near future between Admiral Kolchak's armies and the Russian Archangel forces. The enemy troops in between are not powerful, and the distance is not excessive. Already communication has been established between the armies.

\* \* \* \* \*

“There is therefore reasonable hope that the whole of this North Russian situation may be placed upon a purely Russian basis before the end of the summer without anything in the nature of a disaster to our troops or the desertion of our friends.

\* \* \* \* \*

“I know there are some people who would have paid no regard whatever to our obligations to the North Russian Government and to the inhabitants of Archangel, who would have bundled our troops into their ships or let them be driven into them by the Bolsheviks, and sailed away, and left all those who had helped us to their fate, to, as my hon. and gallant friend has just described to the House, let them stew in their own juice. That is not the British way. We have secured a reputation in the war—indeed we have lived up to an old reputation in which we take much pride—of fulfilling all our obligations soberly but solidly, of being at least as good as our word, of respecting our scraps of paper, and of teaching others to respect them too.

\* \* \* \* \*

“And I am sure that the House and the country would never have pardoned the Government if we had allowed that reputation, which had cost our soldiers a great deal to build up in so many hard-fought fields, to be smirched or sullied by any dishonourable episode or shameful abandonment of duty.”

Again, speaking on the adjournment for the of State made the following statements:—

\* \* \* \* \*

“We are endeavouring to wind up our affairs in North Russia, and it is our hope that North Russia will become self-supporting before the end of the summer, and that then we shall be able to come away, having honourably discharged our duty to those people to whom we committed ourselves during the time of the war. That is really not challenged in any part of the House.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“So far as the troops in North Russia are concerned, they are, of course, an expense, and we have had to feed a large proportion of the

Whitsuntide Recess on 6th June, the Secretary

population of that region from the sea. One of the greatest reliefs we shall get if a junction is formed between Admiral Kolchak's troops and the troops in North Russia, is the fact that that population will become largely self-supporting, and be able to draw upon the large Siberian granaries instead of being fed from the sea. But you must treat North Russia as part of the German War. The troops got there as an essential operation in the German War, and they have remained there because of the ice in the winter, and also because they are winding up our obligations in an honourable fashion.”

\* \* \* \* \*

responsible for all topographical work at Archangel. The evacuation of the original British troops followed, being continued steadily as shipping became available. By 1st September all troops who had spent a winter in North Russia, except those who volunteered to continue serving there, had embarked for the United Kingdom in accordance with the promise which had been made by the Secretary of State for War. (See paragraph 4 above.)

15. Early in June it had become evident that owing to the defeats recently sustained by his centre and southern armies, Admiral Kolchak's prospects of reaching Kotlas had become very small. Consequently, General Ironside was informed that, although the War Cabinet had agreed to his proposed operations, they would reconsider their decision towards the end of June. In the meantime he was to continue his preparations (10).

16. On 27th June General Ironside was informed that his offensive operations towards Kotlas was definitely approved (11). The considerations which led to this decision are given in the General Staff note of 25th June, 1919, which may be summarized as follows (12): Although from every point of view, as already pointed out, the junction of the Archangel force with Kolchak's right wing was desirable, the necessity for General Ironside's operation in no way depended on this junction being effected; in fact, the contrary was the case. For if the Bolsheviks were relieved from all anxiety on Kolchak's front, they would be enabled to harass Ironside's withdrawal and render the latter not only a difficult but a hazardous operation. Quite apart from the question of stabilizing the Archangel Government, or even the maintenance of British and Allied prestige, it was essential, in order to secure the safe withdrawal of the British forces that this withdrawal should be preceded by offensive operations with the object of disengaging our front and rendering a serious offensive by the Bolsheviks out of the question for a considerable period. The capture of Kotlas, the Bolsheviks' river base, would realize this condition fully, as no advance short of it would do, by rendering possible the destruction of all workshops, depôts, wharves, and river craft, by means of which alone the enemy could follow us down the Dwina.

17. But although it was only by pushing his offensive right through to Kotlas that his objects could be completely attained, General Ironside soon found it necessary to modify his plans very considerably. The water level of the River Dwina, which had been steadily falling, was, on 9th July, recorded as being lower than ever before. This immobilized the Naval flotilla and rendered its co-operation in operations up the river impossible and, moreover, upset all arrangements for the river transport of the force. For these reasons, General Ironside was forced to limit his operations to a blow against Gorodok and Seltsoe, with the object of disengaging his forces and delaying any Bolshevik counter offensive. This operation was to be carried out shortly before the commencement of the final stage of our withdrawal.

18. During the spring the mobilization of the Russian Army at Archangel made steady progress and at the end of June the total of these troops had reached 22,000. This included, besides the Russian National Army, the Slavo-British Legion, which had 50 per cent. of British officers and non-commissioned officers. Several units of the Slavo-British Legion were composed of deserters and prisoners from the Bolshevik side, and these under their British officers were reaching such a high standard of efficiency that they seemed likely to be a valuable addition to the force. At Murmansk, too, General Maynard hoped to be able to increase considerably the small number of local troops which had already been raised. For having reached the north end of Lake Onega, he had occupied a district fairly thickly populated with Russians, who, as a result of their recent experiences, were very hostile to the Bolsheviks. General Maynard estimated that he could raise a force of Russians of a strength equivalent to a British division. To meet the requirements of this force arrangements were made to send to Murmansk arms and equipment for 22,000 men.

19. In June the only noteworthy operation on the Archangel front was the attack carried out by the 2nd Bn. Hampshire Regiment and 3rd Northern Regiment, under Brigadier-General Graham, on the right bank of the Dwina on the 20th. The object of this operation was to capture positions which it was essential for us to hold in order to admit of certain minesweeping, a necessary preliminary to the main river operation, being carried out. After a strong Bolshevik resistance the villages of Ryabikha and Topsa were captured, together with 400 prisoners, three field guns and many machine guns. The river flotilla and Royal Air Force co-operated, sinking an armed barge and driving two others ashore. In the meantime the evacuation of the troops which had spent a winter at Archangel was proceeding steadily.

(10) At-  
tached  
Papers L  
and N.(11) At-  
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Papers  
O and Q.(12)  
Attached  
Paper P.

20. During June General Maynard continued to push southwards. His Russian troops, however, proved very disappointing, and nearly all the fighting continued to be done by the British artillery and two infantry companies and the Serbian contingent. On 17th June General Maynard was informed that he must in future limit his operations to holding his present line south of Medvyeja Gora, and concentrate on training his Russian forces (13). He had, however, sent troops and arms to the Shunga peninsula, at the request of the inhabitants; and in order to secure land communication between the peninsula and the mainland he found it necessary to occupy a position south of Kapeselga. This village was captured on 6th July.

(13) Attached paper M.

### III.—JULY, 1919.

21. On 7th July a determined mutiny took place in the 3rd Company of the 1st Bn. Slavo-British Legion and the Machine-Gun Company of the 4th Northern Rifle Regiment, who were in reserve on the right bank of the Dwina. Three British officers and four Russian officers were murdered, and two British and two Russian officers were wounded. The mutiny was suppressed by the action of the British officers and by gun fire brought to bear on the camp. Invaluable assistance was rendered in this emergency by the Naval personnel of the flotilla.

22. The 1st Bn. Slavo-British Legion was one of those units formed from Bolshevik prisoners and deserters, and, although the great majority were men with no Bolshevik sympathies, there seems no doubt that the mutiny was caused by prisoners who had been deliberately sent over by the Bolsheviks for the express purpose of propaganda and assassination. A number of men were tried by Court-Martial and shot, and the battalion was disarmed and sent to the lines of communication as a labour unit. The ringleaders, taking a number of men with them, escaped to the Bolsheviks.

23. On 22nd July(c) news was received that the Russian regiment in the Onega district had mutinied, and had handed over the whole Onega front to the Bolsheviks. On the Vologda Railway front the Russian troops were also preparing a mutiny, but this was frustrated by the action of the Polish Legion and a small party of British. At the same time unrest was manifested in nearly all Russian units, and it consequently became necessary to stabilize all fronts with British troops. This mutiny, too, was the result of active Bolshevik propaganda, which was assisted by the uneasiness and apprehension which was growing in North Russia, on account of the statements which had been appearing in the British Press with regard to the evacuation.

24. Immediately General Ironside's report on the Onega mutiny was received it was realized that the situation at Archangel had radically changed. But for the presence of the two fine brigades of fresh troops, which had recently arrived, the position would indeed have been very critical. As it was their timely advent relieved the situation of anxiety for the moment. But it was clear that we had failed to create a reliable Russian Army, and, therefore, our hopes of leaving the Russian Government at Archangel in a strong position were unlikely to be realized. It had originally been intended to carry out the withdrawal from the front between 15th October and 10th November—i.e., just before and after the Dwina was closed by ice as being the moment best calculated to leave the North Russian forces in the most favourable situation. Now, however, there was nothing to be gained by the British forces remaining at Archangel a day longer than necessary, and the sole matter for consideration was how best to carry out the withdrawal of the force from its advanced positions and its embarkation at Archangel.

25. In the meanwhile, at Murmansk there had been no marked change in the situation. The detachment of Royal Marines, which the Admiralty had allowed to remain until 30th June, had left for the United Kingdom; and on 19th July the Italian contingent was withdrawn from the line and took no further part in operations

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(c) On this date, 22nd July, 1919, in reply to a supplementary question in the House of Commons regarding the date by which the evacuation of North Russia by British troops would be completed, the Secretary of State answered as follows:—

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“All the troops except the the Military Mission—men who volunteer for the Military Missions—will have left North Russia, if all goes well, before the ice closes in, and we may take that as the early part of November, being the final date when the White Sea will be free; but, of course, the troops there are in contact with the enemy, who is pressing them in many

ways and at many points, and as they begin to depart the local Russians are naturally much upset, and much dissatisfaction and weakness occurs behind. Therefore, the situation is one which requires very careful attention. A most difficult and delicate operation is in process, and one in which we deserve the fullest support of all the sections of the House.”

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pending its embarkation for Italy. Moreover, all the British troops at Murmansk, except two infantry companies, had spent a winter in North Russia, and, consequently, were due to embark for home not later than 1st September. As these included practically the whole of General Maynard's administrative services, the situation as regards personnel was becoming very unfavourable. The French Government had promised to send a contingent to Murmansk in place of French troops withdrawn from Archangel at the beginning of June, but owing to shipping and other difficulties this force had not actually arrived.

26. As, owing to the failure of the Russian forces, there appeared a probability of the withdrawal of the Allied troops both from Archangel and Murmansk becoming a difficult military operation, which could only be properly co-ordinated under the orders of one commander, it was decided to appoint General Lord Rawlinson as Commander-in-Chief in North Russia (14). He sailed from the United Kingdom on 4th August, with orders to carry out the withdrawal of the Allied troops. He was given the fullest discretion as to the time and method of evacuation. (d) In order that he might have at

(14) Attached paper S.

(d) On 29th July, speaking in the House of Commons on the Army Estimates, the Secretary of State made a long speech on the general situation in Russia. The following extracts bore particularly on the situation of our troops in North Russia and the plans for evacuation:—

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“In the first week of March the War Cabinet decided that Archangel and Murmansk should be evacuated before another winter set in, and they directed the War Office to make arrangements accordingly. But they also prescribed that whatever support, nourishment, succour, reinforcements or aid might be required or needed by our troops for their safe extrication from this position should be used and despatched by the War Office; and, further, that due regard should be had to the obligations which we had inevitably contracted with every class of the population of Archangel and Murmansk, and with the local Russian Army and local Russian Government we had called into being. That was the task they remitted to the War Office, leaving to the military the widest possible latitude as to the means, method, time and circumstance in which they should carry out that task. Such was the policy which was laid down then. Such is the policy which has been followed since, and such is the policy which will be carried to its conclusion in the future.

This decision of policy was communicated to the Russian leaders. On the 30th April, Admiral Kolchak was informed that all the Allied troops would be withdrawn from North Russia before the next winter, but in the meantime we hoped to make it possible for the North Russian Government and the Russian Army to stand alone after the Allied troops had left. It will readily be seen that if such a solution could have been reached, if this local Government and local Army could have maintained itself or could have joined up with the main anti-Bolshevik Russian Army, that would have relieved us of the extremely anxious and painful operation of carrying away a portion of the population and of the troops who were now there, and affording them asylum and refuge, and of settling a most terrible problem for decision for all those loyal Russians who elected to remain on that shore. It was communicated to the Russian leaders—the intention was communicated to the troops, to the volunteer brigades who were sent out, and these troops were told that the men who had been there last winter would come home before the harvest, and the others would come home before the winter set in. They went out with

that knowledge, and when they arrived they made no secret of what was the limit of the task they had undertaken and the limit of their stay on those shores. Once it was perfectly clear that this knowledge was public property in the whole of the Archangel and Murmansk region, once it was perfectly clear that the enemy, as well as the local Russians, were aware of it, I communicated the fact to Parliament in a public announcement.

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“I should like to say a word about the difficulties of evacuation. Although to us who sit here at home in England it may seem very easy to say ‘Clear out, evacuate, cut the loss, get the troops on board ship, and come away’—although it may seem very easy to arrive at that intellectual decision, yet on the spot, face to face with the people among whom you have been living, with the troops by the side of whom you have been fighting, with the small Government which has been created by our insistence, with all the apparatus of a small administration, with all its branches and services, when you get our officers and men involved like that on the spot, it is a matter of very great and painful difficulty to sever the ties and quit the scene. I do not disguise from the House that I had most earnestly hoped and trusted that it would be possible in the course of events for the local North Russian Government to have a separate life and existence after our departure, and with the fullest assent of the Cabinet and the Government, and acting strictly on the advice of the General Staff, we have been ready to hold out a left hand, as it were, along the Dvina River to Admiral Kolchak in the hope that he would be able to arrive in this district and, by joining the local Russian forces, which amount to nearly 30,000 men, stabilize the situation and enable our affairs there to be wound up in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

\* \* \* \* \*

“The General Staff who have been conducting all the operations are of opinion that there is no cause for alarm in regard to the safety of the British troops, but they ask that entire latitude shall be given to the commanders, that absolute discretion shall be afforded to them as to how and when and in what manner

his disposal adequate troops to carry out this operation a force was prepared for service in Russia of the following strength: Three infantry battalions, one machine-gun battalion, personnel of two batteries, Royal Field Artillery, one field company, Royal Engineers, and tank detachment, with five tanks. Of these a first échelon of two battalions infantry, two machine-gun companies and the artillery, engineers and tanks was to be despatched as soon as it was ready, while the remainder was to remain in readiness in England, to embark for North Russia if required. In addition to this a battalion of Royal Marines was sent at once to Murmansk, for use either there or at Archangel if required, and the French Government agreed to send at once to Murmansk one battalion of infantry as their promised contingent.

(15) Attach-  
ed paper U.

27. General Ironside telegraphed his plans for the evacuation of Archangel (15), and arrangements were made for the necessary shipping to be provided at once. The North Russian Government at first stated that if the British troops were to be withdrawn they must abandon the idea of defending Archangel, and, consequently, General Ironside proposed to disarm and disband all Russian troops not being evacuated, and destroy all stores which could not be removed. It was estimated that some 13,000 Russians would have to be evacuated. On 30th July, however, the North Russian Government decided to continue the defence of Archangel, and these plans had to be modified.

28. Instructions were also sent to General Maynard with regard to his evacuation. The Admiralty considered it imperative that the port of Murmansk should be held a few weeks after the withdrawal from Archangel as it was required as a base where the river craft could be refitted for the voyage to the United Kingdom. Consequently the evacuation of Murmansk had to be carried out after that of Archangel, but in the meantime General Maynard was authorized, should he think it advisable, to withdraw to positions covering Soroka (16).

(16) Attach-  
ed paper T.

they carry out the policy which they are directed to carry out from here. If reinforcements are needed reinforcements will be sent to them, if they wish to manœuvre in this direction or in that as a part of their operation of retirement so as to secure the best and safest possible circumstances for embarkation, they shall have the fullest liberty to do so, and so far as I am concerned I am not prepared to give any forecast or detail of the method or manner in which this operation, of which we make no concealment, and on which I consider we are entirely agreed, is to be carried out by the military men on the spot, and I appeal to the House to accept the position in that respect.

"I should like to point out, if I may do so parenthetically, as I am known to hold strong views on this subject, that I have not committed this country to any commitments or to any obligations of any sort or kind with regard to Russia to which we were not committed, and as I think properly committed, before I had anything to do with the affair at all. All I have been labouring to do is to discharge faithfully, honourably and efficiently the obligations into which we had entered in the days of the German War and into which I hold we had rightly and properly entered. I think that should be recorded if it is not challenged in any quarter of the House. I defy anyone to show a single commitment or obligation which I have been personally responsible for creating on behalf of this country in regard to intervention or interference or intercourse with Russia during the present period of war.

"I return to the question, what has it got to do with us? Here I am going to quote the speech of the Prime Minister, which has been three or four times referred to, always with appreciation, in this debate. I understand that

my right hon. friend opposite, Sir D. Maclean, accepts the policy put forward in the speech. He said that he stands by that speech. He quoted one passage with approbation, but I should like the House to remember other passages which are also in that speech. The Prime Minister said, having expressed the opinion that it would be a great act of stupidity to attempt military intervention in Russia.

\* \* \* \* \*

"*Bolshevism threatened to impose by force of arms, its domination of those populations that had revolted against it, and that were organized at our request. If we, as soon as they had served our purpose and as soon as they had taken all the risks, had said, 'Thank you, we are exceedingly obliged to you, you have served our purpose. We need you no longer. Now let the Bolsheviks cut your throats,' we should have been mean—we should have been thoroughly unworthy indeed of any great land. It is our business since we asked them to take this step, since we promised support to them if they took this step, and since by taking this step they contributed largely to the triumph of the Allies, it is our business to stand by our friends.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

"I have put these considerations before the Committee, but I am bound to answer the specific questions which my right hon. friend put to me. He asked me whether our troops were used for any purpose beyond that of mere relief and extrication. The answer is, No. The General Staff had full latitude as to carrying out that operation, and they included the hopes of a junction being affected with Admiral Kolchak as part of the definite machinery and manœuvre for the evacuation of the country if it could be achieved."

\* \* \* \* \*

## IV.—AUGUST, 1919.

29. On 10th August, in pursuance of the policy previously authorized, General Sadleir-Jackson's brigade and Russian troops attacked the enemy's positions on the River Dwina. The attack was completely successful. All objectives were taken and six enemy battalions accounted for, the men composing them being either killed, captured, or dispersed. The total captures amounted to over 2,000 prisoners, 18 guns and many machine guns. The advance ended with the capture of Puchega and Borok situated 20 miles from our original position. The naval flotilla co-operated most effectively in the attack, not only carrying out bombardments and mine-sweeping, but also providing Naval and Marine landing parties. The reasons for carrying out this offensive operation have already been explained. It was necessary to deal the enemy such a blow as would paralyze him and render him unable to hold us to our ground or interfere seriously with our withdrawal. Owing to the water of the Dwina being so low, the scope of the operation had to be limited and the advance could not reach Kotlas, the only vital point on this front. Nevertheless sufficient ground was gained to cover the advanced mining operations which the Navy were undertaking. And although the attack for local reasons had to be carried out rather earlier than might have been desirable it was undoubtedly effective and attained its object.

30. On 12th August General Rawlinson arrived at Archangel and discussed the question of the evacuation with Generals Ironside and Maynard and the Russian authorities. Both General Rawlinson and General Ironside agreed that in view of the state of the Russian troops any attempt by the Russians to defend Archangel for an indefinite period after the British withdrawal was doomed to failure. General Rawlinson did everything he could to persuade General Miller, the Russian Governor-General, to agree to transfer his most reliable troops to the Murmansk side, where, provided they concentrated on this one front, there was much more chance of the Russians maintaining themselves permanently. But General Miller persisted in his intention to defend Archangel, and in this decision he was supported by an order from Admiral Kolchak directing him to hold Archangel to the last.

31. In these circumstances General Rawlinson was obliged to do everything he could to place the Russians in as favourable a position as possible to continue their resistance throughout the winter. To this end a sufficiency of food, arms, ammunition and coal was left at Archangel, though it was decided that no further supplies of any kind could be sent out from the United Kingdom. General Rawlinson also allowed two British companies to be used in an attack which General Miller was very anxious to make at Emptsa on the Vologda Railway in order to improve the moral of his troops. This attack was successfully carried out on 29th August.

## V.—SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER, 1919.

32. The first echelon of the force prepared in England to assist in covering the withdrawal and act as a reserve in case of emergency arrived in North Russia by the end of August. One battalion and two machine-gun companies and the tanks went to Archangel and the remainder to Murmansk. On 12th September, in view of the favourable situation, General Rawlinson was able to say that the second echelon, consisting of one battalion and two machine-gun companies would not be required to leave England.

33. The relief of the Allied contingents and original British troops, which had been going on steadily since early in June, having been completed at the beginning of September, the evacuation of Russians and other nationalities from Archangel was proceeded with (17). Altogether, 6,535 were taken away, nearly all of these going to the Baltic States and South Russia. These numbers were not so large as expected, though every facility was given to Russians of all classes to come forward for evacuation. (17) Attached paper V.

34. An attack to recapture the town of Onega, supported by a monitor, had been made on 1st August. This was unsuccessful, for although the attacking party was skilfully landed by the Royal Navy and led by British Lewis gun parties from both the Navy and Army, the Russian troops would not go forward. Early in September, however, the Bolsheviks withdrew from the northern end of the Onega Valley, and on 10th September Onega town was occupied without opposition. Russian troops also continued to make progress on the Vologda Railway front south of Emptsa and towards Kochmas.

35. Shortly before the commencement of our withdrawal, on the Dwina front, the enemy made several vigorous attacks on our positions, especially at Puchega and

Ivanovskaya, on 6th and 11th September. These were beaten off, however, and General Sadleir-Jackson succeeded in disengaging his troops and carrying out his retirement down the river, clearing Troitsa on 12th September. The withdrawal was continued without incident, and by 23rd September all the British troops, with the exception of an armoured train and some units of the Royal Air Force, had arrived within the inner defences of Archangel. The position which it was decided the Russian troops should hold, after our departure, was the line Emetskoe (on River Dwina)—Seletskoe—Obozerskaya (on the Vologda Railway)—Bolshiozerki. This was a strong line, for which good defences had been constructed. On the Pinega front their line had been withdrawn to Verkhne Palenga, 14 miles above the junction of that river with the Dwina. When the withdrawal of the British troops was completed the Russian forces were still holding this line, and on the railway front were considerably in advance of it. The embarkation of the British troops was carried through without any hitch, and on 27th September the evacuation of Archangel was completed and General Ironside and his staff embarked for the United Kingdom.

36. At Murmansk, as has been said, the shortage of administrative personnel had been causing anxiety. But the situation in this respect was much improved by diverting to Murmansk a considerable number of men of the Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, and Royal Army Ordnance Corps, intended for Archangel, but no longer required there owing to the acceleration of the evacuation. These, together with the fighting troops sent out in August—both British and French—ensured a sufficiency of Allied troops to carry out the withdrawal.

37. On 14th September General Maynard began offensive operations south of Kapeselga. These were undertaken at the direction of General Rawlinson, to ensure the withdrawal of the Allied troops being effected without molestation by the enemy. This attack, carried out by British, Serbian, and Russian troops, resulted in the complete defeat of the enemy and our advance to a point several miles south of Lijma. In this and other recent operations in this region the land forces were much assisted by the flotilla on Lake Onega. The flotilla had been reinforced by 12 motor boats, prepared by the Admiralty, and had gained complete command of the northern part of the lake.

38. On 30th September General Maynard was placed on the sick list and Brigadier-General H. C. Jackson was appointed to command the Allied forces at Murmansk. After the successful operation referred to above the withdrawal of the Allied troops began. By 29th September Kem was evacuated by the British and by 4th October all British troops were north of Kandalaksha. The Serbians at the request of the Russians agreed to provide a garrison at Kem for a few days longer. The Russian troops were in difficulties soon after the departure of the British troops. Having lost Lijma as the result of a Bolshevik counter-attack, the Russian Command appealed to General Rawlinson for assistance. But it was quite impossible for the latter to allow any Allied troops to become involved once more in the fighting as they were all being concentrated at Murmansk for embarkation. As it turned out, however, the Bolsheviks did not press their attack, and did not advance any great distance north of Lijma. The evacuation of Murmansk proceeded smoothly and was completed on 12th October. After that date no British troops nor representatives remained in North Russia, with the exception of a liaison officer at Archangel, who was left for intelligence purposes.

39. The withdrawal of the Allied forces from both fronts was carried out practically without loss. It was so effected that the loyal Russian forces were left in a favourable position for carrying on active operations. As a consequence of this the embarkation of the Allied troops was not followed by any disturbances in Archangel or Murmansk, and the offensive operations of General Miller's troops continued without interruption on the Vologda Railway and Onega fronts. The total casualties (killed, died, wounded and missing) sustained by British forces in North Russia from the commencement of the campaign in the spring of 1918 to the evacuation in October, 1919, were 106 officers, 877 other ranks, including 41 officers and 286 other ranks killed. The withdrawal of the Allied forces is described in greater detail in General Rawlinson's despatch.

## IV.—ATTACHED PAPERS.

### A.

#### SITUATION IN NORTH RUSSIA.

The Secretary,

War Cabinet.

The War Cabinet decided on 31st December, 1918, that while no demobilization measures are to be taken for the present, no further reinforcements are to be ordered to North Russia until the question can be dealt with in Paris. I have wired accordingly to the Officers Commanding at Murmansk and Archangel. The latter decision may entail a withdrawal from his present forward position by General Maynard, and he has been warned to give early notice of such withdrawal.

In view of the proposed discussion at Paris, I forward the following short *resumé* of the situation :—

It became evident by the autumn that our original intention of joining hands with the Czechs on the Perm—Vologda railway could not be realized. About the same time indications were observed of a German withdrawal from Finland and the menace of a German-Finn attack on the Murman Railway gradually became less, finally disappearing about the middle of October.

In these circumstances it was decided that nothing was to be gained by pushing the advance from Archangel, but that, should it be decided to adopt a forward policy, more effective pressure could be brought to bear on the Bolshevik Government by an advance southwards from Soroka. It was therefore decided that it was essential to hold the Murman line to a point south-west of the White Sea in order—

- (i.) To open up and secure communication with Archangel in case of emergency after the port was frozen up.
- (ii.) To be prepared for forward action if such should eventually be demanded by Allied policy.

Orders to the above effect were sent to General Maynard, who proceeded with his dispositions accordingly. Since the above it has been pointed out to General Maynard that a purely defensive policy is to be adopted. The necessity for maintaining communication with Archangel, however, still exists. In addition, our advance has laid upon us the responsibility of protecting such of the population as lie behind us. It may be added that our forward position has been, and is, a large measure of protection for Finland against Bolshevism, relieving that country of all anxiety except for its south-eastern frontier.

The total number of Allied and local troops under General Maynard's command is as follows :—

—	Rifle strength.	Ration strength.
British .. .	3,905	6,832
French .. ..	250	731
Italian .. ..	1,200	1,251
Serbian .. ..	958	1,220
Total Allied.. ..	6,313	10,334
Locals .. ..	3,500	4,441
Grand Total.. ..	9,813	14,775

Of the above forces about one-half are echeloned at and south of Kandalaksha down the Murman Railway; our advanced positions at Kem and Soroka being garrisoned by a force of about 3,000.

The above distribution is necessitated, not only to hold the front against any possible Bolshevik attack, but also to protect the line itself from sabotage.

In view of the miserable condition of the Murman Railway, the great length (about 350 miles) to be guarded and the disaffection of part of the population, the security of the lines of communication between Kandalaksha and Kem causes great

anxiety. *Great hardship, and not improbably disaster, to our troops may result if the necessary personnel for railway maintenance is not sent to General Maynard at an early date.*

The severe nature of the climate is well-known to the War Cabinet. During the next few months temperatures of many degrees below zero, with frequent snow blizzards, have to be faced. During the three winter months there is little light during the whole 24 hours. Foreseeing these conditions the War Office have made such provision as has been possible in the time available for the health and comfort of the troops. Clothing, food and comforts have been provided on a satisfactory scale, and there is no anxiety on this score. The matter of housing, including lighting, however, is a source of great concern, and General Maynard has pressed for the despatch of certain engineer personnel which he considers essential. If it is decided to maintain our present positions in the Murmansk area, it is essential that the railway and Royal Engineer personnel mentioned above should be despatched without delay. The total numbers involved are about 1,000.

On the other hand, any withdrawal from our present positions will expose considerable numbers of the Russian population, who have supported the Allied force, to massacre by the Soviet troops.

Although the despatch of drafts to North Russia may prove very unpopular, and may even lead to insubordination and other serious trouble, it must be realized that the only alternative may be a withdrawal at least to Kandalaksha.

2. *Archangel*.—General Ironside has been informed that he is to adopt a purely defensive attitude, continuing the training of the Russian troops in the area now occupied. His advanced posts are situated at Onega, on the Archangel—Volgoda railway (some 100 miles south of Archangel), and on the Dvina River, some 180 miles from the latter place. In addition a small column is operating against scattered bands of Bolsheviks over 100 miles to the east of Archangel. The Allied and local forces at Archangel are as follows:—

—	Rifle strength.	Ration strength.
British .. .. .	3,121	6,293
French .. .. .	1,400	1,686
American .. .. .	4,200	5,203
Total Allied .. .. .	8,721	13,182
Locals .. .. .	1,700	2,715
Grand total .. .. .	10,421	15,897

Good progress is being made with the training of the Russians. With these General Ironside has had a little difficulty, but his firm action, it is hoped, will prevent a recurrence of any insubordination. General Ironside has sent demands for reinforcements, both for infantry and for technical personnel.

It has been impossible to meet these demands largely owing to the fact that communication, save with ice-breakers, is now impossible. General Ironside, however, appears confident of being able to maintain his position and it is doubtful whether, in view of their anxieties in other directions, the Bolsheviks will be able to stage any serious attack against Archangel before the opening of that port.

The climate is milder than that of Murmansk. Although General Ironside will probably be faced with considerable difficulties owing to our inability to supply him with all his requirements in technical personnel, the situation as regards housing and the railway is not so acute as that at Murmansk.

3. To sum up, I would earnestly draw the attention of the War Cabinet to the present unsatisfactory situation of our forces in North Russia and to the urgent necessity of coming to a decision on the policy to be adopted without delay. Unless it is decided to withdraw forthwith to Kandalaksha, it is essential that the railway personnel and other details required by General Maynard should be despatched forthwith; and every day's delay adds to the risk which is already serious.

(Signed) HENRY WILSON,  
C.I.G.S.

2nd January, 1919.

## B.

## SITUATION IN NORTH RUSSIA.

Secretary of State.\*

1. On 31st December, 1918, the Imperial War Cabinet decided that no further reinforcements were to be ordered to North Russia until the whole question had been dealt with by the Allies in Paris. On 2nd January, 1919, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff submitted to the War Cabinet a Memorandum (Paper A) drawing attention to the unsatisfactory situation of our forces in North Russia, and to the urgent necessity of coming to a decision on the policy to be adopted without delay. It was pointed out in this Memorandum that unless it was decided to withdraw General Maynard's forces from Soroka, at least to Kandalaksha, it was essential that the railway personnel and other details required by General Maynard to maintain his force should be despatched forthwith, as every day's delay added to the risk, which was already serious. Since then a month has gone by, but the Allied Governments appear to be no nearer a decision as regards their policy than before, nor does the tentative proposal for the Prinkipo Conference afford reasonable grounds for anticipating a speedy solution of the problem.

2. In the course of the past month the situation has developed as follows :—

- (i.) Hostile attacks under able leadership have been pressed with vigour on the Archangel forces, necessitating our withdrawal from Shenkursk. This reverse, although not very serious from the purely military point of view, is likely to have an unfortunate effect on the moral of both the Allied and newly-raised Russian troops under General Ironside's command, as well as on the Russian population of the occupied area, in which there are always the elements of Bolshevik intrigue at work.
- (ii.) The port of Archangel is now closed by ice for the transport of troops, other than the very few which can be taken in by ice-breakers; consequently the only means by which reinforcements can reach General Ironside is by the overland route from Soroka, along the shores of the White Sea to Onega. The possibility of doing this depends, as I pointed out to the War Cabinet on the 2nd instant, on General Maynard's maintenance of his hold on Soroka and the positions about Sumski Posad, immediately to the east of the latter.

3. In these circumstances I consider that the reinforcement of General Ironside's force is necessary, and instructions have already been issued to this effect. (Telegram, dated 30th January, 1919, attached.)

*Therefore it is urgently necessary that the railway and other troops required by General Maynard to keep open the Soroka line should be sent him forthwith.*

4. I would further draw attention to the fact that the responsibility for the maintenance of the troops in North Russia is an Allied one. The campaign was undertaken by direction of the Supreme War Council, and although the command and co-ordination of the Allied forces was entrusted to the British, the Allied Powers are equally concerned in the due reinforcement and maintenance of their contingents operating in that theatre. I hope, therefore, that you will see your way to bringing this point to the notice of the Prime Minister in Paris, in order that he may use his influence with the Allied Governments, especially those of France and America, to ensure, first, that no measures of demobilization are taken which would weaken the fighting strength of the forces at Archangel or Murmansk; and, secondly, that the provision of adequate reinforcements may be considered. The latter are estimated as follows :—

Two battalions infantry.

One machine-gun company.

One pioneer battalion.

Replacements for all Allied contingents on a basis of 10 per cent. of establishment.

It is suggested that of these the Americans might be asked to find one battalion and one machine-gun company, the French one battalion, and the French or Italians one pioneer battalion. The whole force should be despatched to Murmansk in the first instance, whence the units for Archangel will proceed by march route from Soroka *via* Onega.

\* Mr. Churchill had succeeded Lord Milner as Secretary of State on 14th January, 1919.

5. Under the terms of Army Order 14 of 1919, the British Army of Occupation in North Russia is definitely recognized, and provision for it anticipated, so I imagine that this Order supersedes the previous decision of the War Cabinet forbidding the despatch of reinforcements to that theatre. I should be glad, however, to know if I am right in this assumption and to receive your approval to send out the details scheduled in Appendix A, the immediate despatch of which—irrespective of any Allied reinforcements that may be sent—I consider is imperative if the risk of disaster to the Allied forces in North Russia is to be avoided. It is also essential that all men due for demobilization under the new Order should be replaced before they leave North Russia.

(Signed) P. DE B. RADCLIFFE, *D.M.O.*  
for *C.I.G.S.*

31st January, 1918.

#### APPENDIX A.

##### REINFORCEMENTS REQUIRED FOR NORTH RUSSIA.

(a.) *For Murmansk.*—

Railway troops, 2 companies and details* ... ..	720
Royal Engineers —	
1 works company* ... ..	150
Signals* ... ..	240
Electric lighting* ... ..	40
Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Department, Royal Army Medical Corps.*	258
	1,408*
2 companies pioneers (unless provided by Allied troops as suggested in paragraph 3 of this paper).	400
Required to complete the present establishment ... ..	587
	2,395

Of these the most urgent are those marked thus : \*.

(b.) *For Archangel.*—

Balance of outstanding demands ... ..	143
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(c.) To place matters on a satisfactory basis a pool of reinforcements should be established in this theatre, over and above the establishment strength of units. The numbers required would be on a 10 per cent. basis :—

For Murmansk ... ..	520
For Archangel ... ..	720

(d.) The unit of Renault Tanks now being demobilized in France should be despatched as early as possible to Murmansk.

*N.B.*—All troops for Archangel would have to proceed first to Murmansk and Soroka, moving thence by march route *via* Omega after one or two months' acclimatization in the country.

31st January, 1919.

*From the War Office to the General Officer Commanding, Murmansk.*

(Paraphrase.)

30th January, 1919.

Many thanks for your suggestions which are very helpful. We estimate that you will have room for 430 on ice-breakers after accommodating details from "Stephen." This should be filled with half machine-gun company and infantry. Remainder of one battalion of infantry, one company of which should be mobile, should leave as early as possible for Archangel by march route. In view of the fact that for the time being no threat to Pechenga or Murmansk exists it is considered that you should be able to reduce very considerably the force in those areas. The troops you are to send to Archangel will for the present therefore not be replaced. We are shortly sending you six caterpillar tractors, carrying 3 tons each as an experiment, and more will eventually be available if successful.

Repeated to Archangel.

## C.

## APPRECIATION OF THE SITUATION ON THE ARCHANGEL FRONT.

*General Situation.*—As the result of strong Bolshevik attacks carried out by superior numbers which were commenced on the 19th January, the Allied forces at Ustpadenga (on the River Vaga, south of Shenkursk), and at Tarasevo, were compelled to withdraw to positions indicated below, 55 miles and 20 miles respectively, north of the former positions. The positions now held by the Allied forces are as follows: Kleshevo on the River Onega (70 miles south-east of Onega)—south of Oberzerskaya, on the Archangel—Vologda railway line (100 miles south of Archangel)—south of Kadish, on the River Emsta—6 miles south of Shredmachenga—Ust-Syumskoi, on the River Vaga—Oseredok, on the River Dwina, with a flanking post 10 miles south-east of Pinega.

*Allied Forces.*—The Allied forces on the Archangel front total 18,325, with a rifle strength of 11,195. They are constituted as follows:—

—	Ration strength.	Rifle strength.
British .. .. .	6,220	2,530
French .. .. .	1,680	840
Italian .. .. .	25	25
Americans .. .. .	5,100	2,700
Russians, &c. .. .. .	5,300 ✓	5,100
	18,325	11,195

Of the Russians, 1,250 are not fully trained. Of the above numbers there are 2,000 rifles in reserve at Archangel and 1,200 on the lines of communication south of Archangel, the remainder being distributed on the front.

As regards armament the Allies have 35 field guns (of which 17 are in reserve at Archangel) and 10 heavy guns (of which 5 are in reserve at Archangel) of superior quality to those of the Bolsheviks, and large quantities of machine guns.

There are at present under orders from Murmansk one battalion of infantry and a half machine-gun company, of which the machine gunners and 300 infantry should reach Archangel by ice-breakers by about 12th February; while the remainder of the infantry (600 men) are proceeding by march route from Soroka through Onega, where they should be concentrated by 24th February. The distance from Onega to the railway at Oberzerskaya is about 100 miles over a well-organized route, and these troops should be available for action on or about 10th March. General Manyard at Murmansk has also been ordered to be prepared to despatch one further battalion and a half machine-gun company if necessary.

The forces at General Ironside's disposal are of a very heterogeneous nature; the British troops are largely Category "B" men, having been sent out at a time when the situation in France demanded all available "A" troops, and have not proved themselves to be of the best moral.

Our main asset is the strong character of General Ironside, whose personality has raised moral wherever he has been able to come into direct contact with his troops, and who enjoys the full confidence of the Russians, both soldiers and politicians. He has several batteries of first-class Canadian and British artillery and has lately received a number of good commanding officers capable of taking vigorous action.

*Bolshevik Forces.*—The Bolsheviks have at their disposal a total of approximately 22,700 men, with a rifle strength of 18,300 men, which denotes an 80 per cent. increase as compared with estimates of two months ago. They have 66 field guns, 9 heavy guns, and about 150 machine guns. Of this force about 17,900 are in forward positions in contact with the Allies, and the remaining 4,800 are in reserve at Vologda and Viatka. In addition to this reserve there are approximately 100,000 men, formed into units but still in training in the interior of Russia, who can be drawn upon if necessary. Communications with the interior of Russia are good. The Bolshevik organization and system of command have shown a marked improvement in the recent operations, and the General Staff feel sure that assistance is still being derived from German and Austrian officers. The Bolshevik troops on this front may be considered to be reliable, as prior to the commencement of the recent operations certain units which were known

to be unreliable were replaced, and, moreover, a severe form of discipline has been instituted on this front which may be calculated to prevent desertion and disobedience of orders on the part of newly mobilized units.

*Enemy Intentions.*—The enemy in his attacks, which have developed since the proposal for an armistice was sent out by the Paris Conference, had for his first objective the capture of the very prosperous and pro-Ally area of Shenkursk ; and for his second, the severing of communication between the Dwina force, with headquarters at Beren-Itskaya (at the junction of the Dwina and Vaga Rivers) and Archangel. He has attained the first of these objectives and has pillaged and burnt the town of Shenkursk, murdering many of the inhabitants, but has so far failed to attain the second objective. There is no doubt that a general offensive will take place in the near future with the object of driving the Allied forces back upon Archangel and forcing their capitulation. The enemy doubtless also counts upon a rising of portions of the population of Archangel against the Northern Russian Government, when the Allies evacuate their forward positions.

*Allies' Position.*—The military position at present is serious, but need not be regarded as critical. General Ironside's somewhat extended front has been much shortened, and he still has reserves in hand with which to deal with attacks in the immediate future. We have, however, to reckon with the depressing effect on the Allied troops, and also on the Russians, of a withdrawal, but, on the other hand, the Bolshevik advance brings the danger nearer, and all pro-Ally elements know that their fate and that of all their families is sealed if they yield.

If the attack progresses, and General Ironside's reserves are absorbed into the fight, the situation may become critical, and it is of the most urgent importance that further reinforcements be made immediately available. These can at present only be sent to Murmansk, whence they will proceed either by march route through Onega, or possibly by ice-breaker from Kem to Archangel. It must also be borne in mind that the only sound method of defence is by taking the offensive, and, without additional reliable troops, General Ironside is unable to do this.

General Maynard, whose lines of communication are immense, requiring large guards against internal enemies and against the looting propensities of all Russians, would be very hard-pressed to supply the reinforcements already called for, and must be given not only further technical units but also fighting troops, as his hold on the country to the south of Soroka is essential to the despatch of these reinforcements to Archangel.

*Summary.*—The above survey of the situation leads to the conclusion that it is essential to despatch to Murmansk the reinforcements, both of fighting and technical troops asked for in the paper submitted to the Secretary of State by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff on 31st January (see Appendix A). Without these we may be driven back close upon the town of Archangel, thus surrendering territory and stores to the enemy and delivering into his hands the inhabitants, who rely on us for protection. We may also risk a grave disaster to our own and Allied troops, for whose safety the British Government is primarily responsible. Such a success, moreover, would give to the Bolshevik cause an impetus which would be felt not only in Siberia and South Russia but throughout the civilized world.

GENERAL STAFF,

4th February, 1919.

#### APPENDIX A.

##### REINFORCEMENTS REQUIRED FOR NORTH RUSSIA.

A.—*Technical troops, and replacements for units already in North Russia.*

(a.) *For Murmansk :—*

Railway troops, two companies † and details*	720
Royal Engineers—One works company*	150
Signals*	240
Electric lighting	40
Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Ordnance Department, Royal Army Medical Corps*	258
	1,408*
Two companies pioneers (unless provided by additional units as in B)	400
Required to complete the present establishment	587
	2,395

Of these the most urgent are those marked thus : \*.

† One operating and one maintenance company.

(b.) *For Archangel* :—

Balance of outstanding demands	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	143
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(c.) To place matters on a satisfactory basis a pool of reinforcements should be established in this theatre over and above the establishment strength of units. The numbers required on a 10 per cent. basis would be—

For Murmansk	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	520
For Archangel	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	720

(d.) The unit of Renault Tanks now being demobilized in France should be despatched as early as possible to Murmansk.

**B.—Additional Combatant Units.**

Two battalions of infantry.  
One machine-gun company.  
One pioneer battalion.

N.B.—All troops for Archangel would have to proceed first to Murmansk and Soroka, moving thence by march route *via* Onega after one or two months' acclimatization in the country.

**D.**

**Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff.**

1. I wish to draw attention to the military situation in North Russia, which in my opinion is now such as to give rise to considerable anxiety. The chief cause for this anxiety is not so much the actual military offensive power of the Bolshevik forces opposing us, as the unreliable state of the troops composing the forces under the command of Generals Ironside and Maynard and the uncertain political situation in their rear. These troops are a heterogeneous assortment of all nationalities and were never of high quality. They are now tired, dispirited, home-sick, and inclined to be mutinous; their moral is undoubtedly so low as to render them a prey to the very active and insidious Bolshevik propaganda which the enemy are carrying out with increasing energy and skill.

2. As regards Archangel, no further reinforcements can now reach General Ironside, either overland from the Murman Railway or by icebreakers, until the melting of the ice opens the port. This cannot take place until the beginning of June at the earliest, and may even be delayed three weeks or a month later. The enemy are undoubtedly concentrating numerically superior forces on the Archangel front with a view to a vigorous offensive in the near future, during a period which is peculiarly favourable to them, owing to the fact that the ice on the Dwina River melts on the upper reaches some weeks before it permits of navigation at Archangel. Thus the Bolshevik gun-boats, with their relatively heavy armament, are in a position to operate against the Allied front on the river before our troops can be supported by our own river craft.

3. In these circumstances it is, to my mind, imperative in the first place to do everything possible to raise the moral and fighting efficiency of General Ironside's forces. This can be done—

- (i.) By sending out as many specially selected officers of the highest stamp as possible.
- (ii.) By authorizing Generals Ironside and Maynard to publish a definite announcement that all men entitled to demobilization will be replaced at the earliest possible moment by fresh personnel.

Steps have already been taken to send out additional officers, but nothing has been done towards the second step for fear of political complications in this country. I submit that the time has gone by when the latter can now be allowed to override the grave military necessities of the situation.

If the facts of the case are made public, that is to say, if the people of this country are told that British troops are in serious danger and must be relieved at the earliest possible moment, I cannot believe that the spirit of the nation is so contemptible as not to respond to the call with alacrity. In the meantime we should press on with the organization of the special brigade already approved and ensure that the specially strengthened ships are available and ready to sail from this country not later than the 1st May.

4. Furthermore, we should urge that every possible means should be employed to take pressure off the Archangel front by supporting all anti-Bolshevik forces that are a

serious factor in the enemy's military problem. First in this category comes the Siberian Army of Admiral Kolchak, which has lately made encouraging progress on the Perm—Ufa front, and whose further advance will have a direct effect on the situation at Archangel. For this reason, whatever larger questions of policy may be involved, we should hesitate to withdraw the 9th Bn. Hampshire Regiment from Admiral Kolchak's command at Omsk until it can be replaced by an equally tangible guarantee of Allied support in the shape of the large mission already suggested by the Secretary of State. In the meanwhile, the 9th Bn. Hampshire Regiment should be maintained up to strength.

It is, further, important to encourage the Japanese in any efforts they may be prepared to make towards sending troops to the Ural front, or assisting in the equipment, training and organization of the Siberian Army.

5. Lastly, we should encourage a Finnish offensive on Petrograd in conjunction with that of the Germans and Esthonians, with the same object, viz., of forcing the Bolsheviks to detach troops from Archangel and hampering their initiative in that sector.

6. To sum up, I wish to urge that, apart from all questions of high policy, *the dominating feature of the Russian question from the British point of view, is now the military situation at Archangel*, and I submit that all other considerations should be subordinated to the solution of the difficult problem which confronts us there. Whatever dissatisfaction or difficulties may be caused in this country by the action I have suggested above as regards the provision of reinforcements for North Russia, I have no hesitation in saying that it is nothing to the storm of indignation which would be aroused by a disaster to our arms in that theatre.

27th March, 1919.

(Signed) P. DE B. RADCLIFFE,  
D.M.O.

### E.

*From the General Officer Commanding, Murmansk, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.)

31st March, 1919.

I have received absolutely reliable information that Finnish Legion intends to revolt and join against us with Bolsheviks; proposed day of rising is Sunday, 6th April. They have lately been carrying out active propaganda amongst Karelian Regiment, and a large number of Karelians are expected to join them. They plan either to move south, attack in conjunction with Karelians our forward troops in rear, and join hands with Bolsheviks, or to move north against Murmansk simultaneously with a Bolshevik rising here. They propose if they move south to destroy Kovda Bridge, 35 miles south of Kandalaksha, and if they move north Niva Bridge, 16 miles north-east of Kandalaksha, to prevent arrival of reinforcements from north and south respectively. A move south in my opinion is far the more probable, as after destruction of Kovda Bridge they could traverse Karelia collecting Karelian adherers, whilst they would be unlikely to get Karelians to move north of Kandalaksha, and Karelians siding without them would have to act against us independently. Though far from being panic stricken it is useless to disguise fact that critical situation may arise at once. My British troops have been so reduced by reinforcements to Archangel that I am left with an exceedingly small force on which I can rely. I am trying to bring over two platoons from Pechenga, and am asking Admiral to land party of marines, but in view of fact that Finnish Legion numbers 1,400, and they might get anything up to 2,000 Karelians to join them, apart from help from Russian Bolsheviks, these are very small reinforcement. I therefore urge very strongly that one or more men-of-war, with landing parties of at least 400, be at once sent here. Weather is much warmer, and full Arctic equipment is not essential. I hope this request may be granted, as otherwise we shall be incurring needless risk. I shall probably go down the line to-morrow myself to endeavour to arrest Finnish leaders. This may put the fat in the fire, but it appears to me that this is only action which has any chance of stopping the revolt. I am taking all possible military precautions.

Repeated to Archangel.

## F.

*From the War Office to General Ironside, Archangel.*

(Paraphrase.)

4th April, 1919.

Will you please communicate, as you may deem expedient, the following message to the troops:—

“Although you are cut off from your country by the ice, you are not forgotten. Your safety and well-being, on the contrary, is one of the main anxieties of the War Office, and we are determined to do everything in our power to help you and bring you safely home. You were sent to North Russia to help draw off the Germans from attacking our armies in France, and undoubtedly you helped last year to keep large numbers of German troops away from the battlefield and so enabled a decisive victory to be won.

“Whatever may be the plan of action towards Russia decided on by The League of Nations, *we intend to relieve you at the earliest possible moment*, and either bring the whole force away or replace you by fresh men. These reliefs are being prepared now, and will come through the ice to your aid at the earliest moment when the ships can break through. Meanwhile, your lives and your chance of again seeing your home and friends and your fellow-countrymen, who are looking forward to give you a hearty welcome, depend absolutely upon your discipline and dogged British fighting qualities. All eyes are upon you now, and you represent the British Army which has fought and won and which is watching you confidently and earnestly. *You will be back home in time to see this year's harvest gathered in*, if you continue to display that undaunted British spirit which has so often got us through in spite of heavy odds and great hardships. Only a few more months of resolute and faithful service against this ferocious enemy and your task will have been discharged. Carry on like Britains fighting for dear life and dearer honour, and set an example in these difficult circumstances to the troops of every other country. Reinforcement and relief on the way. We send you this personal message with the most heartfelt wishes for your speedy, safe and honourable return.”

Repeated to General Maynard, Murmansk.

## G.

Secretary of State,

I submit herewith the General Staff paper on the Situation in North Russia which the War Cabinet asked for.

I should be glad of early approval to the proposals in Part II., paragraph 13, as it is urgent that clear instructions should be issued to General Ironside forthwith.

I would also invite attention to the urgent necessity of a decision as to the feeding of the civil population, as stated in Part I., paragraph 8.

HENRY WILSON,  
C.I.G.S.

16th April, 1919.

SITUATION IN NORTH RUSSIA.

PART I.

MEASURES ALREADY TAKEN, OR CONSIDERED NECESSARY BY THE WAR OFFICE TO PREPARE FOR THE EVACUATION OF ALLIED TROOPS AND INHABITANTS IN NORTH RUSSIA.

1. *The despatch of two companies of infantry to Murmansk on the 9th April.*

These two companies are primarily intended to suppress the present trouble on the Murman Railway, but they may be regarded as a small mobile reserve which could, if the situation in the Murmansk area permits, be sent to Archangel immediately communication with that port is possible, and in advance of the relief force mentioned below.

2. *The preparation of relief forces, consisting of two special contingents of about 5,000 men each.*

The composition of each of these contingents is as follows :—

- 2 battalions infantry.
- 1 machine-gun battalion.
- 1 battery, Royal Field Artillery.
- 2 light trench mortar batteries.
- 1 field company, Royal Engineers.
- 1 signal company.
- 1 horse transport company.

Certain modifications in the above organization have been suggested by General Ironside, chiefly with a view to enabling the North Russia Government to stand alone after the evacuation of Allied forces. These modifications are now being considered.

It is hoped that the first contingent will be ready to embark about 1st May. Orders for the formation of the second contingent have been issued. It is to be ready to embark about 15th May if required.

Difficulty has been experienced in obtaining some of the personnel, especially infantry, Royal Army Service Corps and Royal Army Medical Corps. It is hoped, however, that the public appeal for volunteers made on the 9th April will produce the numbers required for both contingents.

3. *Provision of specially strengthened ships.*

The Ministry of Shipping has been pressed to provide three specially strengthened ships ready to sail with the first units of the relief forces on 1st May. If only ordinary vessels were used it would be necessary to wait at least another fortnight for the ice-floes to be completely cleared, and in view of the uncertainty as to what the military and political situation at Archangel will be in two months from now, to take the risk of this delay is totally unjustifiable. It is anticipated that the season may be an early one. The first units may therefore arrive in Archangel about the third week in May, and the evacuation of the undesirable elements should be commenced immediately afterwards.

4. *Despatch of selected officers.*

Two Senior General Staff officers and 12 selected senior officers, in addition to the ordinary officer reinforcements, have been despatched to Murmansk for onward passage to Archangel in ice-breakers.

5. *Measures to improve moral.*

In addition to the appeal for volunteers issued on 9th April, the following measures have been taken to improve the moral of the troops in North Russia, and to ensure the co-operation of the British public :—

- (i.) A telegram has been sent to Generals Ironside and Maynard authorizing them to announce to the troops that measures are being taken for their relief at the earliest possible moment.
- (ii.) Arrangements have been made for a further and better news service for the troops.
- (iii.) A frank statement of the danger of the present position has been issued to the Press.

For obvious reasons, however, the most alarming feature, which is that constituted by the lowered moral of the Allied forces, could not be made public. Arrangements have been made for frequent and full *communiqués* and for periodical lectures to the Press.

6. *Action by the Foreign Office.*

The Foreign Office have been asked to consider the destination and disposal of any Russians whom it may be necessary to evacuate.

An estimate of these numbers is 18,000, 5,000 of whom are fighting forces in the British and French Legions.

It is hoped that if the measures advocated by the General Staff in Part II. of this paper are taken, the North Russian Government should be enabled to stand alone after

the withdrawal of the Allied forces, and the necessity for evacuating the above large numbers will not arise. It is, however, very necessary that this problem should be considered by the Foreign Office in conjunction with the War Office and Ministry of Shipping.

#### 7. *Action by the Admiralty.*

The War Office is in communication with the Admiralty on various matters connected with the possible evacuation of North Russia. Until, however, the questions of policy raised in Part II. of this paper are settled, the following are the only matters upon which action has been possible :—

- (a.) The Admiralty are despatching a strong river expedition for the reinforcement of the present flotilla on the River Dwina.

The expedition will reach Murmansk in sufficient time to enter the White Sea at the earliest practicable moment.

It is anticipated that the British naval forces on the Dwina will be more than sufficient to cope with the Bolshevik river forces.

- (b.) In connection with the above, the Ministry of Shipping (who have taken over the responsibilities in this respect of the Inland Water Transport Department) have made arrangements with the local military and naval authorities at Archangel for the despatch of suitable river transport, including craft for the conveyance of troops and supplies and hospital steamers. It has been impossible in the short time available completely to meet the requirements of General Ironside, but it is hoped that there will be no serious deficiency.

- (c.) The Admiralty have informed the War Office that if the complete evacuation of Archangel by Allied troops is ordered, they see no object from the naval point of view in remaining in possession of any ports in the Arctic after the military forces have been withdrawn.

The Admiralty point out, however, that if evacuation is ordered, that at Archangel should be carried out first. The retention of Murmansk, and possibly of Pechenga, for some time is essential, as these inlets are required in order to form harbours of refuge for the small craft from Archangel, where preparation for their voyage to England can be carried out.

- (d.) The Rear-Admiral Commanding the Naval Forces in the Arctic was informed on 11th March, 1919, of the probable future policy to be adopted in North Russia, and was directed to discuss the matter with General Ironside. He was further directed to telegraph his appreciation of the naval operations involved after such discussion.

#### 8. *Feeding of civil population.*

In conclusion, it is necessary to point out the serious nature of the situation in default of any definite policy as to the supply of foodstuffs for the civil population.

As regards Murmansk, the Americans have begun to fulfil the obligations which they undertook in the summer of 1918, and are sending direct from America the foodstuffs necessary for the population of about 100,000. With the food now *en route* the Murmansk area is provisioned in flour up to the end of June, and to a later date in some other essential foodstuffs. But, so far as the War Office is aware, no arrangements are in contemplation for any further supply.

As regards Archangel, the supplies at present in the country are sufficient to feed the population of about 600,000 up to the end of June only, and it is understood that no arrangements whatever have been made to provide for further supplies.

Whatever may be the policy adopted towards North Russia, it is suggested that even from the purely political point of view it is impossible to contemplate the abandonment of the assistance hitherto given to the population, except in the case of the capture by the Bolsheviks of Archangel.

From the military point of view, failure to continue supplies for the civil population would render any military measures impossible, and in a larger degree than any other factor would make for the speedy downfall of the North Russian Government and its military forces.

## PART II.

## FUTURE POLICY AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION.

1. The precise nature and scope of the arrangements to be made for the withdrawal of the Allied troops from North Russia depend on the military and political conditions obtaining at the time when the operation is carried out.

Two situations may arise ; either—

- (a.) Conditions will be such as will enable the Archangel Government to maintain its existence and the Russian forces to keep the field after the Allied units have been withdrawn ; or
- (b.) The Russian forces will disintegrate and the Archangel Government will fall. In this case it will be necessary to evacuate large numbers of the anti-Bolshevik population in addition to such units as the Slavo-British Legion which have been organized with the assistance of Allied personnel.

Which of these two situations come to pass will depend on the military situation at the moment, which in turn will be largely governed by the measures taken between now and then.

2. It may be assumed that His Majesty's Government would prefer to see situation (a) brought about if possible, in order to admit of the withdrawal being carried out with as little loss of prestige as may be.

To make quite certain of the stability of the Archangel Government it will be necessary to—

- (i.) Strike a sharp and successful blow at the Bolshevik forces.
- (ii.) Effect a real and permanent junction between the North Russian forces and the right wing of Kolchak's Siberian Army.
- (iii.) Provide a cadre of British officers and non-commissioned officers to organize, instruct and lead Russian units.

If (i) and (ii) can both be achieved, the desired result will almost certainly be brought about. If only (i) and (iii) can be done, it may possibly be realized. If neither of these conditions can be carried out, the fall of the Archangel Government and the disintegration of the anti-Bolshevik forces may be reckoned on as certain.

What then are the chances of effecting these conditions ?

3. Any junction of the Siberian and North Russian forces, to be effective, must be based upon—

- (a.) Secure lateral communications.
- (b.) Ensured efficiency of both the national North Russian and Siberian forces.

4. To secure adequate lateral communications, it is the opinion of the General Staff that it would be sufficient to occupy permanently the important junction of Viatka, together with the railway from Viatka to Kotlas and the Dwina River line. A point on the Archangel—Vologda line, sufficiently far south to guard against any Bolshevik advance from Vologda, should at the same time be held.

It would undoubtedly be preferable to secure the railway junction at Vologda and thus ensure through railway communication between Siberia and Archangel, but this is probably beyond the capabilities of the Siberian Army in the time available. The permanent occupation of Viatka by the Siberian forces would probably be an effective deterrent to any Bolshevik advance by Vologda upon Archangel. The Dwina River section between Kotlas and Archangel is, of course, a weak link in the chain, but the possibilities of transferring troops and material by river during the open season and by sleigh during the winter (December-May) on this section are sufficient for material purposes. The moral effect of such communication would be sufficient to secure the efficiency of the young North Russian forces and the continuance of mobilization of large numbers.

5. The second condition mentioned in paragraph 3 above, *i.e.*, the efficiency of the North Russian and Siberian forces, is dependent on a variety of factors. The chief factor in the case of the North Russian forces is our ability to supply—

- (a.) Sufficient capable Russian officers and other ranks to take the place of Allied personnel, both for executive and administrative staff and regimental duties.
- (b.) Sufficient material for the Russian forces yet to be mobilized.

With whatever rapidity and generosity the necessities are supplied, however, it must be clearly recognized that the factor of time is against the ability of the Russians to stand unaided by such a nucleus as could be supplied by a strong British mission.

6. As regards the efficiency of the Siberian forces, by far the most important factor is to ensure the stability of the Government under Admiral Kolchak.

This, in the opinion of the General Staff, would best be assured by the speedy recognition of that Government.

The other factors essential to the efficiency of the forces are—

- (a.) The effective maintenance and operation of the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- (b.) The continued presence of small numbers of Allied personnel to hearten the Siberian armies.
- (c.) The continued supply of such material (in addition to that already sent) as may be required by Admiral Kolchak.

As regards (b), steps are being to replace the two British battalions now in Siberia by an increase of General Knox's present Mission (which now numbers about 400) to a total strength of 2,000.

Until the above replacement is possible the two battalions should be retained in Siberia, and steps are being taken to keep the 1/9th Bn. Hampshire Regiment, now at Omsk, up to strength.

As regards further supplies of material, it is not anticipated that demands will be of any magnitude. A considerable amount has been, and probably will be, captured by the Siberian forces, and there are indications that certain quantities are being obtained by local manufacture. Experts may possibly be required to assist in the latter.

7. General Ironside, on his part, states that the Russian troops under his command are showing rapid improvement. He points out that it is possible to obtain 10,000 recruits in the Mezen and Pechora areas, which can be rendered thoroughly anti-Bolshevik, and where good work is already being done by a British Mission. General Ironside reckons that he can count, under certain definite conditions, on having 23,000 efficient Russian troops ready to fight by the end of the summer.

The conditions postulated by General Ironside are as follows :—

- (a.) That he is able to reckon on equipment being sent direct to the estuaries of the Mezen and Pechora Rivers for the 5,000 Russians he hopes to raise in each of these two areas.
- (b.) That a large number of reliable Russian officers are sent as soon as possible.
- (c.) That he maintains his present positions.

8. General Ironside, in addition, points out that it should be clearly realized that owing to the lowered moral of all his Allied forces, together with continuous fighting and severe conditions, practically the whole of the Allied forces now in the Archangel area require evacuation; that he is working with a very imperfect machine owing to sickness and changes in his staff, and that he does not know who will remain or who will go.

He therefore asks that he may be allowed definitely to call for volunteers among officers and non-commissioned officers now serving in Archangel for further service in North Russia under two categories :—

- (a.) For British subordinate commands and staff.
- (b.) For an expansion of the Slavo-British Legion.

In the case of the latter the intention of General Ironside is to form the present Slavo-British Legion into an efficient force of—

3 battalions	...	...	}	50 per cent. British officers (and 50 per cent. non-commissioned officers for artillery only).
2 squadrons	...	...		
3 batteries	...	...		

This force would form a backbone to the purely Russian National forces.

9. If it were found possible to utilize purely British forces for operations undertaken with a view to securing the effective junction of the North Russian and Siberian forces as postulated in (paragraph 4) above, General Ironside is prepared to guarantee to take Kotlas provided that—

- (a.) The naval flotilla is adequate.
- (b.) That 5,000 good fighting men are sent from England.

- (c.) That British administrative personnel on a liberal scale are provided.
- (d.) That 2,000 non-mobile British troops are provided for the duties of communication.
- (e.) That there is a certainty of the Siberian forces co-operating successfully.
- (f.) That the Bolshevik forces in other theatres are thoroughly employed.

As regards (a) above, the naval reinforcements now being provided by the Admiralty, with the river gunboats already at Archangel, are probably more than adequate for the purpose.

The 5,000 British troops are now being provided by the first contingent of the Russian relief force due to sail about 1st May (*see Part I.*).

There is little doubt that sufficient administrative personnel could be provided.

The 2,000 line of communication troops could be found from the second brigade which is due to embark about 15th May.

As regards (e), while there is every hope of the effective co-operation of the Siberian forces, there can be no positive guarantee of their success.

As regards (f), there is every hope that General Denikin's activities, together with the fear of losing the rich grain and coal of the Ukraine and Donetz basins, will keep strong Bolshevik forces in South Russia.

The Bolsheviks will undoubtedly be fully employed by the Siberian armies.

On the other hand, the Polish forces torn by fears of Germany on the one side and occupied by hostile forces of the Ukraine on the south, cannot be reckoned upon to bring any effective pressure to bear upon the Bolshevists.

Similarly, the lack of Allied policy in regard to Finland and the other Baltic States precludes the timely, effective (and perhaps decisive) action which might otherwise have been undertaken against Petrograd. In this connection, however, it cannot be too strongly pointed out that the news that the Allies were taking active measures to assist these States would undoubtedly prevent any great transference of Bolshevik forces from this front. Incidentally, such assistance would keep the Esthonian forces (of whose disinclination to continue the struggle there are persistent reports) in the field. The despatch of missions to the Baltic States is therefore highly desirable.

10. The conclusion arrived at by a study of the above considerations is that the chances of securing the continued stability of the Archangel Government and its military forces are considerable, provided the conditions are realized:—

- (i.) That British units are allowed to undertake an advance on Kotlas; and
- (ii.) That British officers and non-commissioned officers are allowed to volunteer for employment in the Russian units, such as the Slavo-British Legion, which are now in process of organization.

11. Both these conditions require careful examination before acceptance. With regard to the first, the use of British units, such as the reinforcements now being sent out, may lay us open to the accusation of breaking faith, on the grounds that these troops were provided and despatched to rescue our beleaguered garrison and not to undertake offensive operations against the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, it must be admitted that it will most certainly be necessary to act offensively to a certain extent in order to enable the delicate and difficult operation of withdrawal to be carried out successfully, quite apart from any political considerations. If this is conceded, it is impossible to tie down General Ironside as regards the details of his operations or to forbid him to advance beyond a certain line. All military experience, and in particular the history of our present operations in North Russia, teaches the impossibility of setting a definite limit to operations once they have been undertaken. Therefore, provided it is made quite clear to General Ironside that all British and non-Russian units must be withdrawn before the winter, it is considered he should be left a free hand to achieve his object in the most effective manner possible.

12. As regards the second condition, unless certain limitations are set to its scope, its acceptance would have the disadvantage of hampering us with considerable commitments in North Russia, and if no junction with Kolchak should be effected we might find ourselves greatly embarrassed next winter if we still had British personnel remaining in the country. Should the Archangel Government fall after the withdrawal of the Allied units, the officers and men of our Mission would be liable to capture or death at the hands of the Bolsheviks, and the effect on our prestige would be deplorable. On the other hand, it is fair to argue that in leaving a British Mission of this nature we should only be carrying out the same policy as in Siberia and in South

Russia. Taking these points into consideration, it is recommended that General Ironside should be permitted to call for volunteers from the British troops now under his orders, or about to join him, for the purpose of instructing and commanding Russian units on the clear understanding that there is no guarantee as to the length of time for which these individuals will remain, and that it may be necessary to withdraw them entirely before the port of Archangel closes for the winter. The question is further simplified by the fact that if the prospects towards the end of the summer are so unfavourable that the Archangel Government is likely to fall, it will be necessary in any case to evacuate the Russian units in which the British personnel will be serving.

13. It is therefore recommended that instructions should be issued to General Ironside in the following sense ---

- (i.) To make all necessary preparations to strike as effective a blow as possible at the hostile forces, with the object of facilitating the ultimate withdrawal of the Allied forces under such conditions as will enable the Northern Russian Army to keep the field and maintain the stability of the Archangel Government.
- (ii.) To call for volunteers from the British forces now in or proceeding to North Russia as General Ironside has suggested, and to proceed with the expansion of the Slavo-British Legion on the understanding that all such personnel may have to be withdrawn before next winter.

14. The following additional proposals for action are made on the assumption that the continued existence of the Archangel Government is a British and Allied interest :—

- (a.) Immediate measures for the collection and despatch of the 700 Russian officers required.
- (b.) The despatch of such additional equipment as may be enumerated by General Ironside. (This involves the consideration of shipping a portion of such material direct to the Mezen and Pechora Rivers.)
- (c.) That General Ironside be ordered to submit the numbers of such further personnel as may be required after he has ascertained what number can be locally obtained.
- (d.) That the Admiralty and Ministry of Shipping be required to consider—
  - (i.) What measures can be taken to afford similar assistance to the above as regards the Dwina River forces, and
  - (ii.) The general naval and shipping effort involved by the above proposals.
- (e.) That the attention of the Foreign Office be called to the urgent necessity of securing the continuation of supplies for the civilian population of Murmansk and Archangel, *see* Part I., paragraph 8.
- (f.) That all measures necessary for the support of the Siberian forces enumerated in paragraph (6) above be undertaken, more especially the recognition of Admiral Kolchak's Government.
- (g.) That Allied Missions be at once despatched to the Baltic States, including Finland, and that immediate further assistance be given to Esthonian as demanded by the Esthonian delegates.

15. In conclusion, it must be pointed out that Great Britain is the mandatory of the Allies in respect to North Russia, and that British troops and British trained troops form the great majority of the forces. Under these circumstances, although the responsibility for a decision as to policy may theoretically be an Allied one, Great Britain will never be absolved in the event of failure or disaster. On the other hand, if the measures recommended above are energetically pushed forward there is good reason to anticipate a satisfactory conclusion to the North Russian campaign.

GENERAL STAFF,

15th April, 1919.

## H.

## ATTACKS EAST OF UROSOZERO.

*From the General Officer Commanding, Murmansk, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.)

17th April, 1919.

With view to following up success at Urosozero I ordered Russian troops to attack Vojmosalmi (35 miles east of Urosozero). Attack was successful, resulting in capture of Vojmosalmi and all villages at south-east angle of Lake Vigozera. Up to the present no further details have been received beyond fact that we took a considerable number of prisoners and that all went well. By capture and retention of Vojmosalmi, which is on main road running parallel to railway from Povyenetz to Sumski Posad, I have gained complete control of Lake Vigozero and also of main route to Nyukhotskoe (on south shore of White Sea) which branches off at this point. As I also hold with Slavo-British troops Lizarevo (35 miles W.N.W. of Urosozero) I control all approaches northwards along an approximate east and west line through Urosozero.

The Bolsheviks, who are reported to be preparing further withdrawal, seem to have been taken completely by surprise by these sudden attacks coming at a time when they knew well we had internal difficulties which they had hoped to take advantage of.

I realize fully any further advance will be something of a hazard but Russian troops are exceedingly anxious to undertake operations against Medvyejya Gora and Povyenetz at northern extremity of Lake Onega and success in such undertaking offers great possibilities. Only lines of advance northward by rail and road would be in our hands. Line of defence would be much shortened especially as Finnish frontier makes large bend towards railway at this point. If successful attack is made before ice on lakes breaks a considerable amount of lake shipping now at Medvyejya would be captured and from secret information I gather that the Russian officer in command of flotilla on Lake Onega would at once join us. We should then be in a strong position and during the summer could probably force Bolsheviks to evacuate Petrozavodsk. I should not hesitate to give my sanction if Russian mobilization were advanced as results offered are very great. But as matters stand, before making decision I must await further news of enemy movements.

If reports are true Finnish troops are about to attack Petrozavodsk and are now assembling at Sordavala this would afford splendid opportunity for concerted action and probably lead to break up of the whole Bolshevik force from Petrozavodsk northward. Can you ascertain truth from Finnish Government and suggest co-operation, which would be welcomed by the Russians.

Repeated to Archangel.

## I.

*From the General Officer Commanding, Murmansk, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.)

25th April, 1919.

Reference the last portion of my telegram, dated 17th April. Provided that there is no immediate prospect of the withdrawal of the Serbian battalion and that the Middlesex and King's Royal Rifle Corps Companies are to remain with me I consider I can capture Medvyejya Gora, Povyenetz, even without co-operation with Finnish Government troops. It affords great opportunities as a military operation, as already explained.

The only practicable summer route from the south passing to west of railway starts at Medvyejya and runs north-west past the western edge of Lake Segozero.

The only other summer route leading northwards is Povyenetz—Sumski—Posad road.

Thus possession of these two places would give control of all avenues of advance northwards till, at least, next November, and the extent of front to be held would be enormously reduced.

The political considerations are even more weighty than the military, as Russian leaders are urging me very strongly to be allowed to press forward, stating that unless they are permitted to follow up recent successes the moral of the troops

will suffer. They affirm, too, that the advance will open up the most hopeful of all recruiting areas, and do more than anything else to stop Bolshevik agitation throughout the occupied area.

Operations of this scale cannot, however, be entrusted to Russian troops only, but Serbians are getting impatient at inactivity, and my two fresh companies are anxious for work at the front.

As general situation much improved I can, therefore, spare willing troops.

I am commencing to deport a considerable number of undesirables, and have situation in Murmansk in hand.

On understanding that deputation goes to Helsingfors the Finnish Legion is quiet.

At Kem and Soroka leading men, who have been plotting against us, are being removed, including General Sveginseff, and pro-Bolshevik population cowed.

I feel justified, under these circumstances, in further aggressive action, providing really good results are promised.

Difficulty during summer of feeding my troops to north-west of Lake Segozero, unless I can secure the only summer route to Medveyejya, is additional reason for further advancing.

Having explained situation I am assuming, that should favourable opportunity offer, you will leave it to my discretion to make proposed advance.

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## J.

*From the War Office to the General Officer Commanding, Murmansk.*

(Paraphrase.)

29th April, 1919.

Your telegram, dated 25th April, last sentence. There is every advantage from the purely military point of view in making the advance you suggest to the north end of Lake Onega, not only for the favourable influence it is likely to have on operations of the Archangel force but also for the improvement of the situation locally. As no further reinforcements of railway or other troops can be sent it must be clearly understood that this advance must be undertaken with the resources now at your disposal. You must also consider whether it will involve liabilities beyond what you are able to meet for the feeding of the civil population.

A further political complication is introduced by the recent Finnish incursion in the direction of Olonets, which may antagonize Russian feeling although useful as a purely military enterprise against the Bolsheviks. Therefore it is not desirable that you should join up with these Finnish forces until we get a clear undertaking from the Finnish Government that they have no annexationist designs on Russian territory in this area.

Subject to the above conditions it is left to your discretion to make the proposed advance if a favourable opportunity offers.

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## K.

*From the War Office to General Ironside.*

(Paraphrase.)

4th May, 1919.

You are authorized to make all preparations, with the resources at your disposal, to strike a heavy blow against the Bolsheviks in the direction of Kotlas, if a favourable opportunity should occur for effecting a junction with Gaida\* about that point. Before such a move is actually carried out, however, Cabinet approval will have to be obtained.

Repeated to General Knox.

\* One of Admiral Kolchak's commanders.

## L.

*From the General Officer Commanding, Archangel, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.) 6th June, 1919.

Your telegram, dated 4th June. Paragraph 2. Operations can begin in the first week of July. Kolchak should be informed he must at least keep his right flank where it is on Glazov Railway.

Paragraph 3 (1). All conscript troops are being withdrawn to base where they will be employed until shipped home before 1st September. (2.) Noted. (3.) The last of the American troops will have been shipped by 1st July, and I do not require them here now. If any more American engineers come I can employ them at base work. (4.) Noted.

Paragraph 4. The *morale*, feeding and equipment of enemy's troops opposed to us on Dwina and Vaga are bad. Desertions frequent, and all our raids have succeeded with ease. A strong push will upset everything. I therefore forward following outline of operations to take place simultaneously :—

- (a.) Advance against Kotlas with one British and Graham's composite Russian Slavo-British Legion Brigades. One operation embracing the river area laid with mines can be done in single jump, which will open way direct to Kotlas, whole operation taking about 15 days.
- (b.) 2nd British Brigade, concentrated at Beresnik as support to (a), which support should, however, not be necessary, and to carry out large raid against Vaga, objective, capturing mobilized men opposed to us and turn them into soldiers and destroying material enemy cannot replace. These operations should give me Kotlas with a large number of tugs, steamers and barges, and with combined aeroplane and gun bombardment should have very few casualties. Monitors will not be able to reach Kotlas as river shows every sign of being very low this year, but flotilla is sufficient.
- (c.) Advance against Plesetskaya by purely Russian forces employing new smoke screen, which will be no danger to non-combatants. Our position on railway will thus be strengthened, and any operations to push us back prevented, while my main forces are at Kotlas.

Considering your (a) and (b) of paragraph 4, I put forward following points :—

- (a.) If a chance of junction appears, operations on Dwina will be extended to a point about 30 miles south of Kotlas to ensure cutting of railway and capturing material and to block the Suchona, but in no case further. Grahams mixed brigade will be employed at Kotlas to prepare base and send down tugs and barges, and the British brigade will be employed to clear up the Withegda River and bring in the right flank of Siberians and Shaposhnikoff. As soon as junction is effected, the British brigade at Beresnik, with the exception of what is required to block the Vaga, will go down country to be employed against Pinega or on railway as required.
- (b.) If no junction is in sight, objective will be to seize and hold Kotlas as long as possible and clear up Withegda area, sending all craft down to Archangel and making Kotlas impossible as a base for winter. There will be no danger of being cut off in either case, as a withdrawal from Kotlas with our present flotilla is assured at all times, and there will be ample time to do all we want and have troops ready to embark in October and November before port closes.

Repeated to General Officer Commanding, Murmansk.

## M.

*From the War Office to the General Officer Commanding, Kem.*

(Paraphrase.)

17th June, 1919.

1. From your telegram of 12th June, containing a description of the behaviour of the new Russian forces, it was already obvious that you had reached the limit of what you can do, and you must now concentrate your efforts on consolidating your

present position, and, with the aid of the Russian officers now being sent you, on organizing and training the Russian troops. It is hoped that before long you will have the motor boats, and also the tanks which are now being prepared.

Your British troops are to be congratulated on having given a good example to the Russians once more, and your successful operations as a whole have done much to assist Ironside. You will realize, however, that no risk must be run of upsetting Ironside's plans by the transfer of any of his troops at this juncture, as so much depends on the success of this operation.

Repeated to General Officer Commanding, Archangel.

## N.

*From the War Office to General Ironside, Archangel.*

(Paraphrase.) 18th June, 1919.

Your proposed operations have been approved and that approval stands. Cabinet approval was, however, obtained as part of an operation to join hands with Kolchak.

The defeats which Kolchak's armies sustained in the centre and south may preclude the effective junction which we had in view. In these circumstances, with the Secretary of State's concurrence, the Cabinet have decided to review on 27th June the entire situation in the light of all information available then. After hearing the military advice they will then decide—

- (a.) Whether there is sufficient prospect of obtaining a real junction with Kolchak to justify the operation as originally presented to them, or
- (b.) Whether your operation should proceed independently as an indispensable part of the process of evacuation in spite of the fact that no effective junction with Kolchak can be hoped for.

Therefore, you should not begin your movement without informing us beforehand and receiving our confirmatory wire. Meanwhile, on the assumption that sanction will be given you should continue preparations and you are invited to telegraph your views on (a) and (b) so that on 27th June they may be laid before the Cabinet.

## O.

*From the General Officer Commanding, Archangel, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.) 19th June, 1919.

Reference your telegram, dated 18th June. Preparations for advance on Kotlas are nearing completion. Mine sweeping commences to-morrow under air and flotilla bombardment. Enemy behaviour under bombardment should show their value and give indications of what his front line battalions intend to do. As regards (a), you can judge better of Kolchak's operations than I can, but in any case two points should be borne in mind:—

- (1) Russians are easily affected by success and if there were any wavering our arrival at Kotlas might just give that extra moral required.
- (2.) That in any case I should be able to pull in Kolchak's right wing from the direction of Yarensk on the Withegda and make a large reinforcement to the Russian force detailed from our forces to move just south of Kotlas by arming the badly armed and unarmed.

As regards (b), I would put forward following points: In order to be certain of an orderly evacuation it should be carried out as a peace operation. To ensure this I must disengage myself on all my fronts and render an offensive by the Bolsheviki during a reasonable period an impossibility. I must therefore take an offensive on the important points of my front and these offensives must be carried out against a definite objective, the gaining of which will—

- (1.) Disengage my forces and enable me to embark in peace.
- (2.) Place the Russians in a position to maintain themselves even though they do not join up with Kolchak.

Roughly, these objectives are three in number and I wire them with a short *résumé* of reasons—

- (1.) Capture of Plesetskaya on the Vologda Railway so as to destroy enemy's base and capture the junction of roads leading from railway line towards Onega on the west and Tarasevo and Shenkursk on the east and so prevent an enemy winter campaign.
- (2.) Clearing of the Pinega area so that whole of northern region shall be clear of Bolsheviks.
- (3.) Advance on Kotlas for the object of destroying all workshops, depôts, wharves, capturing all enemy boats and rendering the place useless as a base during this summer or winter. Also to bring in the right wing of Siberians and arm them and to clean up the Witcheгда area.

These three objectives gained the evacuation before 10th November, should be effected as a peace operation leaving behind the mission of strength to be decided later. I am employing troops so that brunt of work falls upon Russians who will be fighting practically unaided in objectives (1) and (2), and in objective (3) I am employing the Russians and Slavo-British Legion to move to the south of Kotlas if that is necessary and the Volunteer Brigade under Jackson to clean up Witcheгда area, while the Regular Brigade under Grogan will return as occasion offers to base to take the place of conscripts being demobilized by 1st September and perhaps to supply small detachments for Pinega.

In no case do I think that any advance less than to Kotlas will have the desired effect in disengaging our forces, and it does offer possible chance of bringing on Kolchak. I have no intention of allowing British forces to get into such a position that they would require relief or that they could not withdraw. I do not think that it would be advisable to continue an advance against Kotlas if the enemy really puts up a stubborn resistance.

## P.

### GENERAL IRONSIDE'S PROPOSED OPERATIONS.

*(With reference to telegram, dated 18th June, from War Office to General Ironside and General Ironside's reply, dated 19th June.\*)*

1. The two main objects of the projected operations were originally as follows :—
  - (a.) To secure the safe (and it may be added the creditable) withdrawal of British forces.
  - (b.) To assist the anti-Bolshevik forces in so doing.

As regards (b), the main object was to secure a junction between the North Russian and Siberian forces.

2. Since the General Staff paper of 15th April was written, certain factors have materially affected the situation, viz. :—

- †(i.) The impending recognition of Admiral Kolchak's Government and the determination of the Allies to afford him all possible assistance.
- (ii.) The success which, up to the present, has attended the Bolshevik endeavours to deal the most formidable of their opponents, the Siberian armies, a knock-out blow. The retirement, in particular, of General Gaida's forces eastward from Glazov towards Perm.
- (iii.) The rapid successes of General Denikin.
- (iv.) The development of the situation before Petrograd.

3. It is not necessary to labour the point that we are now more than ever bound to assist Admiral Kolchak, but it is necessary to point out that the general situation presents one of those cases in which one depressing feature is apt to monopolize attention to the detriment of offensive possibilities and decided action. Such action has been proved by experience to have the most surprising consequences in Russia, where the moral factor counts to-day to an unparalleled degree.

4. The operations under contemplation must not, however, be considered solely from the point of view of Admiral Kolchak. The real test to which the proposal must be subjected is, whether or not it is necessary in order to enable the withdrawal of the British forces from North Russia to be carried out with certainty, and without losses and confusion.

\* See Papers N and O.

† See footnote on pages 39-41.

5. If General Ironside's withdrawal is to be an orderly one, effected in safety, it is obvious that he must carry out offensive operations of some kind. It is entirely unsafe to assume that a retirement under any other circumstances would not be closely followed up by the Bolshevik forces, however weak they may be. A methodical withdrawal, in face of a close pursuit, and possibly threatened by local risings in rear, would be a matter of considerable difficulty. It must be remembered that it would be difficult to explain our action to the newly raised Russian forces. The embarkation of the force at Archangel might well become a hazardous proceeding. If it is clear that offensive operations of some kind are an essential preliminary to withdrawal, it only remains to consider what their scope should be, and whether, on the Dwina, it is really necessary to push the offensive as far as Kotlas.

6. As General Ironside points out, any offensive operations, to be of any value, must have definite objectives, the capture of which will have a real effect on the military situation. In this case the nearest objectives which fulfil this condition are Kotlas, on the River Dwina, and Plesetskaya, on the Vologda Railway. Both of these places are of the greatest importance to the enemy as advanced bases. If these advanced bases can be captured by us, and held sufficiently long to enable the removal or destruction of all ammunition, supplies, military stores, boats and rolling stock to be carried out, it is safe to assume that any Bolshevik operation north of them would be out of the question for a considerable period. On the Dwina this result cannot be completely achieved by any blow struck at the Bolsheviks, however heavy it may be, unless it is followed up by a rapid advance and the seizing of Kotlas.

7. General Ironside is confident of being able to overcome the Bolshevik resistance without much difficulty, and hopes to go straight through to Kotlas. The recent preliminary action at Troitska (which was undertaken solely with a view to removing enemy mines on which they largely rely for their defence) has shown that there may be serious fighting in the early stages of the operations, as was only to be expected. But after the first attack there is every reason to hope, from the information we possess, that the Bolshevik forces will become very rapidly disorganized.

In all military operations it is, of course, necessary to be prepared for the unexpected. In the event of a really stubborn Bolshevik resistance it will be for General Ironside to decide to what extent the attack should be pushed home. He alone will be in a position to balance on the one side the probable increased losses without which an unmolested withdrawal could not be secured, and on the other side fewer additional battle casualties with a dangerous retreat and embarkation carried out in contact with the enemy.

8. The General Staff has every confidence in General Ironside. He has shown himself to be possessed of the qualities necessary to enable him to form a correct judgment in the event of a situation arising such as that indicated above. He has given an assurance that he has no intention of allowing his British troops to get into any position from which they could not withdraw without relief.

In view of the above, the only sound course is to give General Ironside the necessary sanction for the operations, leaving him a free hand as to their limits and conduct.

GENERAL STAFF,

25th June, 1919.

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† *Note, dated 26th May, 1919, from Allied and Associated Powers to Admiral Kolchak.*

The Allied and Associated Powers feel that the time has come when it is necessary for them once more to make clear the policy they propose to pursue in regard to Russia.

It has always been a cardinal axiom of the Allied and Associated Powers to avoid interference in the internal affairs of Russia. Their original intervention was made for the sole purpose of assisting those elements in Russia which wanted to continue the struggle against German autocracy and to free their country from German rule, and in order to rescue the Czecho-Slovaks from the danger of annihilation at the hand of the Bolshevik forces. Since the signature of the Armistice, on 11th November, 1918, they have kept forces in various parts of Russia. Munitions and supplies have been

sent to assist those associated with them at a very considerable cost. No sooner, however, did the Peace Conference assemble than they endeavoured to bring peace and order to Russia by inviting representatives of all the warring Governments within Russia to meet them in the hope that they might be able to arrange a permanent solution of Russian problems. This proposal and a later offer to relieve the distress among the suffering millions of Russia broke down through the refusal of the Soviet Government to accept the fundamental condition of suspending hostilities while negotiations or the work of relief was proceeding. Some of the Allied and Associated Governments are now being pressed to withdraw the troops and to incur no

further expense in Russia on the ground that continued intervention shows no prospect of producing an early settlement. They are prepared, however, to continue their assistance on the lines laid down below, provided they are satisfied that it will really help the Russian people to liberty, self-government and peace.

The Allied and Associated Governments now wish to declare formally that the object of their policy is to restore peace within Russia by enabling the Russian people to resume control of their own affairs through the instrumentality of a freely elected Constituent Assembly, and to restore peace along its frontiers by arranging for the settlement of disputes in regard to the boundaries of the Russian State and its relations with its neighbours through the peaceful arbitration of the League of Nations.

They are convinced by their experiences of the last twelve months that it is not possible to attain these ends by dealings with the Soviet Government of Moscow. They are therefore disposed to assist the Government of Admiral Kolchak and his associates with munitions, supplies and food, to establish themselves as the Government of All Russia, provided they receive from them definite guarantees that their policy has the same object in view as that of the Allied and Associated Powers. With this object they would ask Admiral Kolchak and his associates whether they will agree to the following as the conditions upon which they accept continued assistance from the Allied and Associated Powers.

In the first place, that, as soon as they reach Moscow, they will summon a Constituent Assembly elected by a free, secret and democratic franchise as the supreme legislature for Russia to which the Government of Russia must be responsible, or if at that time order is not sufficiently restored they will summon the Constituent Assembly elected in 1917 to sit until such time as new elections are possible.

Secondly, that throughout the areas which they at present control they will permit free elections in the normal course for all local and legally-constituted assemblies, such as municipalities, Zemstvos, &c.

Thirdly, that they will countenance no attempt to revive the special privileges of any class or order in Russia. The Allied and Associated Powers have noted with satisfaction the solemn declarations made by Admiral Kolchak and his associates that they have no

intention of restoring the former land system. They feel that the principles to be followed in the solution of this and other internal questions must be left to the free decision of the Russian Constituent Assembly; but they wish to be assured that those whom they are prepared to assist stand for the civil and religious liberty of all Russian citizens and will make no attempt to reintroduce the regime which the revolution has destroyed.

Fourthly, that the independence of Finland and Poland be recognized, and that in the event of the frontiers and other relations between Russia and these countries not being settled by agreement, they will be referred to the arbitration of the League of Nations.

Fifthly, that if a solution of the relations between Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Caucasian and Trans-Caspian territories, and Russia, is not speedily reached by agreement, the settlement will be made in consultation and co-operation with the League of Nations, and that until such settlement is made the Government of Russia agrees to recognize these territories as autonomous, and to confirm the relations which may exist between their *de facto* Governments and the Allied and Associated Governments.

Sixthly, that the right of the Peace Conference to determine the future of the Roumanian part of Bessarabia be recognized.

Seventhly, that as soon as a Government for Russia has been constituted on a democratic basis, Russia should join the League of Nations and co-operate with the other members in the limitation of armaments and of military organization throughout the world.

Finally, that they abide by the declaration made by Admiral Kolchak on 27th November, 1918, in regard to Russia's national debts.

The Allied and Associated Powers will be glad to learn as soon as possible whether the Government of Admiral Kolchak and his associates are prepared to accept these conditions, and also whether in the event of acceptance they will undertake to form a single government and army command as soon as the military situation makes it possible.

(Signed) G. CLEMENCEAU.  
D. LLOYD GEORGE.  
WOODROW WILSON.  
V. E. ORLANDO.  
SAIONJI.

#### *Reply from Admiral Kolchak.*

The Government over which I preside has been happy to learn that the policy of the Allied and Associated Powers in regard to Russia is in perfect accord with the task which the Russian Government itself has undertaken, that Government being anxious above all things to re-establish peace in the country and to assure to the Russian people the right to decide their own destiny in freedom by means of a Constituent Assembly. I appreciate highly the interest shown by the Powers as regards the national movement, and consider their wish to make certain of the political conviction with which we are inspired as legitimate. I am therefore ready to confirm once more my

previous declarations, which I have always regarded as irrevocable.

1. On 18th November, 1918, I assumed power, and I shall not retain that power one day longer than is required by the interest of the country. My first thought at the moment when the Bolsheviks are definitely crushed will be to fix the date for the elections of the Constituent Assembly. A Commission is now at work on direct preparation for them on the basis of universal suffrage. Considering myself as responsible before that Constituent Assembly, I shall hand over to it all my powers in order that it may freely determine the system of government. I have, moreover, taken the

oath to do this before the Supreme Russian Tribunal, the guardian of legality. All my efforts are aimed at concluding the civil war as soon as possible by crushing Bolshevism in order to put the Russian people effectively in a position to express its free will. Any prolongation of this struggle would only postpone that moment. The Government, however, does not consider itself authorized to substitute for the inalienable right of free and legal elections the mere re-establishment of the Assembly of 1917, which was elected under a regime of Bolshevik violence, and the majority of whose members are now in the Sovietist ranks. It is to the legally elected Constituent Assembly alone, which my Government will do its utmost to convoke promptly, that there will belong the Sovereign rights of deciding the problems of the Russian State, both in the internal and external affairs of the country.

2. We gladly consent to discuss at once with the Powers all international questions and in doing so shall aim at the free and peaceful development of peoples, the limitation of armaments and the measures calculated to prevent new wars, of which the League of Nations is the highest expression. The Russian Government thinks, however, that it should recall the fact that the final sanction of the decisions which may be taken in the name of Russia will belong to the Constituent Assembly. Russia cannot now, and cannot in future, ever be anything but a democratic State where all questions involving modifications of the territorial frontiers and of external relations must be ratified by a representative body which is the natural expression of the people's sovereignty.

3. Considering the creation of a unified Polish State to be one of the chief of the normal and just consequences of the world war, the Government thinks itself justified in confirming the independence of Poland proclaimed by the Provisional Russian Government of 1917, all the pledges and decrees of which we have accepted. The final solution of the question of delimiting the frontiers between Russia and Poland must, however, in conformity with the principles set forth above, be postponed till the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. We are disposed at once to recognize the *de facto* Government of Finland, but the final solution of the Finnish question must belong to the Constituent Assembly.

4. We are fully disposed at once to prepare for the solution of the questions concerning the fate of the national groups in Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and of the Caucasian and Trans-Caspian countries, and we have every reason to believe that a prompt settlement will be made, seeing that the Government is assuring, as from

the present time, the autonomy of the various nationalities. It goes without saying that the limits and conditions of these autonomous institutions will be settled separately as regards each of the nationalities concerned. And even in case difficulties should arise in regard to the solution of these various questions, the Government is ready to have recourse to the collaboration and good offices of the League of Nations with a view to arriving at a satisfactory settlement.

5. The above principle implying the ratification of the agreements by the Constituent Assembly should obviously be applied to the question of Bessarabia.

6. The Russian Government once more repeats its declaration of the 27th November, 1918, by which it accepted the burden of the national debt of Russia.

7. As regards the question of internal politics, which can only interest the Powers in so far as they reflect the political tendencies of the Russian Government, I make a point of repeating that there cannot be a return to the regime which existed in Russia before February, 1917, the provisional solution which my Government has adopted in regard to the agrarian question aims at satisfying the interest of the great mass of the population, and is inspired by the conviction that Russia can only be flourishing and strong when the millions of Russian peasants receive all guarantees for the possession of the land. Similarly, as regards the regime to be applied to the liberated territories, the Government, far from placing obstacles in the way of the free election of local assemblies, municipalities and Zemstvos, regards the activities of these bodies and also the development of the principle of self-government as the necessary conditions for the reconstruction of the country, and is already actually giving them its support and help by all means at its disposal.

8. Having set ourselves the task of re-establishing order and justice, and of ensuring individual security to the persecuted population which is tired of trials and exactions, the Government affirms the equality before the law of all classes and all citizens without any special privilege. All shall enjoy without distinction of origin or of religion, the protection of the State and of the Law. The Government whose head I am is concentrating all the forces and all the resources at its disposal in order to accomplish the task which it has set itself at this decisive hour. I speak in the name of all National Russia. I am confident that Bolshevism once crushed, satisfactory solutions will be found for all questions which equally concern all those populations whose existence is bound up with that of Russia.

(Signed) KOLCHAK.

*Further Note, dated June, 1919, from Allied and Associated Powers to Admiral Kolchak.*

The Allied and Associated Powers wish to acknowledge receipt of Admiral Kolchak's reply to their Note of 26th May. They welcome the tone of that reply, which seems to them to be in substantial agreement with the propositions which they had made, and to contain satisfactory assurances for the freedom, self-government, and peace of the Russian people and their neighbours. They are, therefore,

willing to extend to Admiral Kolchak and his associates the support set forth in their original letter.

(Signed) D. LLOYD GEORGE.  
WOODROW WILSON.  
G. CLEMENCEAU.  
V. E. ORLANDO.  
N. MAKINO.

## Q.

*From the War Office to the General Officer Commanding, Archangel.*

(Paraphrase.)

27th June, 1919.

After consideration of all provisions and arguments contained in your telegram of 19th June (Paper O.), and opinion expressed in your telegram of 6th June, paragraph 4 (B) (Paper L.), you are authorized to carry out advance as proposed.

## R.

## EVACUATION OF NORTH RUSSIA.

1. It was proposed that evacuation should be carried out in two or three lifts. It was, therefore, suggested that :—

One brigade should be concentrated at Archangel by 21st September.  
Remainder should be concentrated at Archangel by 21st October.  
River craft to reach Archangel by 1st October.  
Shipping to be clear of White Sea by 1st November.

2. Ironside considers that if operation is in any way a military one, time between beginning and end should be shorter. He thinks suggested dates too early, and mentions :—

- (a.) If river craft ordered to Archangel by 1st October Russians will be exposed to Bolshevik boats for three weeks. Gunboat and three monitors should drop down just before the frost (about 20th October).
- (b.) From military point of view best time for evacuation is just before and just after frost, when manœuvre is impossible (15th October-10th November). White Sea is not frozen then.
- (c.) By 1st September all conscripts will have gone, and Grogan's Brigade will be split up for base duties. If this is sent away by 21st September Jackson's Brigade will have to be withdrawn, leaving enemy a month in which to attack Russians before snow arrives.
- (d.) Evacuation of 9,000 remaining after 21st September should take place as follows :—
  - (i.) All useless mouths, &c., between 15th October-31st October (5,000).
  - (ii.) A fighting force of 3,000 with 1,000 base troops (total 4,000) between 1st November-10th November, but as close to 1st November as possible.
- (e.) If there should be some reason for 21st September being the commencement, evacuation should be carried out exactly as described above. But the time is absolutely unsuited to the local conditions.

3. The whole question of the evacuation, however, depends on the policy which is to be adopted in North Russia next winter. In this connection the following points must be borne in mind :—

- (a.) If we are going to continue to support the local government and forces large quantities of military stores and food will have to be shipped to Archangel before the port closes. But in this case there is some hope that the evacuation will not be interfered with by the enemy or as the result of local risings.
- (b.) If we are not going to continue to afford any effective support to North Russia large numbers of Russians (perhaps 30,000) may have to be evacuated to save them from the Bolshevik vengeance. In this case it is unlikely that we shall withdraw unmolested.

GENERAL STAFF,

15th July, 1919.

**S.**

Secretary of State.

Now that we are nearing the time when our troops in Archangel and in Murmansk are going to carry out the difficult operation of retirement to their respective ports and re-embarkation there, I am no longer satisfied that we in the War Office can exercise sufficient supervision and command over these two simultaneous and almost inter-dependent operations. I want permission to appoint General Sir Henry Rawlinson in supreme command in Northern Russia.

HENRY WILSON,  
C.I.G.S.

26th July, 1919.

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Secretary of State approved this on 30th July, 1919.

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**T.**

*From the War Office to the General Officer Commanding, Kem.*

(Paraphrase.)

29th July, 1919.

Reference your telegram, dated 27th July. Your remarks about the time of withdrawal are not understood. It was stated in War Office telegram of 26th July, that your evacuation would follow that from Archangel. This was certainly not intended to preclude the gradual withdrawal from your present front at any time which you might on military grounds consider necessary, in which matter you have entire liberty of action.

Repeated to General Officer Commanding, Archangel.

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**U.**

*From the General Officer Commanding, Archangel, to the War Office.*

(Paraphrase.)

6th August, 1919.

Following is outline of evacuation of Archangel:—

Numbers as regards local troops and civilians can still only be estimated but will be verified shortly.

First batch.—All for Baltic provinces and Poland to go direct on first transports arriving here to clear by 20th August or before that date if possible. Total, 3,000.

Second batch.—All demobilizable men and men who have done the winter here and useless mouths to go between 1st September and 14th September. All these are British military, 5,800.

Third batch.—Russian civilians, total, 8,000. A ferry service to Kem or Murmansk will be possible if they are to go there. Embarkation can take place any time after 1st September. But see my telegram of 5th August regarding Murmansk.

Fourth batch.—Russian military, including Slavo-British Legion. Total, 3,700. A ferry service can be used to Murmansk side if they go there.

Fifth batch.—Total, 8,000 men, including Polish contingent of 300, to be embarked together at latest date, 1st October. Ships to be in port by 21st September. If enemy pressure is not too great this number can be reduced.

Repeated to General Officer Commanding, Kem.

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## V.

*Troops and Civilians Evacuated from North Russia from 1st June, 1919, to  
12th October, 1919.*

Ship.	Sailing date from North Russia.	British.		Allies, &c.			Civilians.
		Officers.	Other ranks.	—	Officers.	Other ranks.	
"Stephen" .. ..	3.6.19	3	12	Russians .. ..	5	37	1
				Serbians .. ..	1	..	..
				French .. ..	25	767	..
"Kalyan" .. ..	3.6.19	17	257	Americans .. ..	2	323	..
				French .. ..	..	27	..
"Czar" .. ..	3.6.19	3	..	Americans .. ..	52	1,511	10
				Poles .. ..	1	..	..
"Braemar Castle" ..	5.6.19	27	211	French .. ..	1	..	..
				Italians .. ..	..	15	..
				Americans .. ..	1	1	..
				Serbians .. ..	10	114	..
				Lithuanians .. ..	..	12	..
"War Coppice" ..	11.6.19	2	2	.. ..	..	..	..
"Czaritza" .. ..	11.6.19	95	1,421	.. ..	..	..	1
"War Plum" .. ..	12.6.19	..	3	.. ..	..	..	..
"Porto" .. ..	15.6.19	1	..	Americans .. ..	47	1,313	20
				Italians .. ..	..	1	..
"Menominee" .. ..	15.6.19	..	..	Americans .. ..	34	893	..
				Y.M.C.A. .. ..	1	..	..
				Red Cross .. ..	8	..	..
				French .. ..	2	20	..
"Viantagor" .. ..	17.6.19	3	8	.. ..	..	..	1
"Pretorian" .. ..	17.6.19	40	517	.. ..	..	..	3
"Resolve" .. ..	24.6.19	2	2	.. ..	..	..	1
"Danube 2nd" .. ..	24.6.19	1	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"Quilpue" .. ..	24.6.19	22	671	Americans .. ..	15	3	1
				French .. ..	..	1	..
"Knias Pojarsky" ..	26.6.19	4	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"Steigerwald" .. ..	27.6.19	..	..	Americans .. ..	27	708	7
"Kosma Minin" .. ..	30.6.19	1	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"Roll Call" .. ..	1.7.19	..	3	.. ..	..	..	..
"Mikula" .. ..	2.7.19	10	1	Americans .. ..	1	..	..
"Retort" .. ..	5.7.19	2	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Bellaventure" .. ..	8.7.19	1	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Braemar Castle" ..	10.7.19	26	376	Serbians .. ..	..	2	4
				Italians .. ..	..	1	..
				Americans .. ..	..	3	..
"Czar" .. ..	17.7.19	69	1,385	Americans .. ..	12	6	40
				French .. ..	3	11	..
				Poles .. ..	5	10	..
"Cornishman" .. ..	25.7.19	21	167	Italians .. ..	1	44	2
				Americans .. ..	..	1	..
"Menominee" .. ..	28.7.19	6	43	Americans .. ..	34	675	..
				French .. ..	2	1	..
				Italians .. ..	2	123	..
"Kalyan" .. ..	28.7.19	78	638	French .. ..	1	3	1
"Argus" .. ..	2.8.19	..	37	.. ..	..	..	1
"Mikula" .. ..	6.8.19	2	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Czar" .. ..	10.8.19	34	849	Italians .. ..	36	905	..
				Serbians .. ..	1	..	..
"Kut" .. ..	12.8.19	1	..	.. ..	..	..	11
"London Belle" .. ..	15.8.19	3	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"War Panther" .. ..	17.8.19	1	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Czaritza" .. ..	17.8.19	..	..	.. ..	..	..	1,069
"Toloo" .. ..	21.8.19	51	1,161	Italians .. ..	6	48	4
				Americans .. ..	1	..	..
"Kalyan" .. ..	22.8.19	67	473	Americans .. ..	7	24	..
				French .. ..	..	19	..
				Serbians .. ..	..	12	..
				Australians .. ..	..	11	..
				Canadians .. ..	..	1	..
				South Africans .. ..	..	1	..
"Ulua" .. ..	22.8.19	40	926	Americans .. ..	1	2	3
"Sibir" .. ..	27.8.19	..	8	.. ..	..	..	..
"Kursk" .. ..	31.8.19	8	36	Finnish Legion .. ..	10	1,025	58
"Willochra" .. ..	3.9.19	..	..	.. ..	..	..	1,467

Ship.	Sailing date from North Russia.	British.		Allies, &c.			Civilians.
		Officers.	Other ranks.	---	Officers.	Other ranks.	
"Kildonan Castle" ..	3.9.19	43	1,935	Slavo-British Legion	..	204	26
				Koreans .. ..	..	13	..
				Bolshevik hostages ..	..	47	..
				Americans .. ..	8	48	..
				French .. ..	3	7	..
				Italians .. ..	2	4	..
				Japanese .. ..	1	4	..
				Chinese .. ..	..	204	..
"Cap Verde" .. ..	4.9.19	..	87	Russians .. ..	40	406	..
				French .. ..	..	4	..
				Lithuanians .. ..	..	82	..
				Chinese .. ..	..	58	..
				Koreans .. ..	..	30	..
"La Plata" .. ..	11.9.19	1	..	Slavo-British Legion	1	52	1,008
"Vedic" .. ..	14.9.19	46	314	Slavo-British Legion	6	468	378
				French .. ..	1	1	..
"Menominee" .. ..	15.9.19	89	1,074	Americans .. ..	..	3	2
				Italians .. ..	..	1	..
"Ulua" .. ..	15.9.19	48	1,099	French .. ..	1	2	..
"Ed. Woermann" .. ..	19.9.19	1	2	Slavo-British Legion	6	468	766
				Finnish Legion ..	15	198	..
"Toloa" .. ..	22.9.19	41	581	Poles .. ..	26	389	..
				Russians .. ..	1	..	..
				Bolshevik hostages ..	..	54	..
				French .. ..	..	1	..
"Manitou" .. ..	27.9.19	86	2,160	Russians .. ..	..	..	..
"Czaritza" .. ..	27.9.19	170	1,166	Russians .. ..	..	34	..
"Kildonan Castle" .. ..	27.9.19	114	2,122	.. ..	..	..	1
"Braemar Castle" .. ..	27.9.19	431	363	Poles .. ..	2	12	..
"Czar" .. ..	29.9.19	185	1,434	Americans .. ..	2	1	15
				Russians .. ..	1	..	..
"Cap Verde" .. ..	1.10.19	29	234	French .. ..	35	607	21
				Americans .. ..	2	..	..
"War Magpie" .. ..	4.10.19	5	7	Russians .. ..	3	3	..
"Schleswig" .. ..	3.10.19	143	1,003	Russians .. ..	..	1	5
"Cassel" .. ..	5.10.19	1	3	Slavo-British Legion	14	109	712
"Aro" .. ..	30.9.19	31	..	Canadians .. ..	..	1	..
"Sloop Ladas" .. ..	1.10.19	10	44	.. ..	..	..	..
"Bacchus" .. ..	2.10.19	3	15	.. ..	..	..	..
"Ulua" .. ..	6.10.19	78	1,086	French .. ..	..	2	20
"Toloa" .. ..	8.10.19	105	925	Serbians .. ..	2	1	9
				Russians .. ..	1	..	..
"Gravel" .. ..	8.10.19	4	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"Haldon" .. ..	8.10.19	5	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Stoneaxe" .. ..	8.10.19	4	..	.. ..	..	..	1
"Coalaxe" .. ..	9.10.19	1	..	.. ..	..	..	..
"Menominee" .. ..	11.10.19	92	1,198	Poles .. ..	..	1	15
"Erebus" .. ..	11.10.19	8	2	.. ..	..	..	1
"Kalyan" .. ..	12.10.19	53	229	Serbians .. ..	..	12	2
				Russians .. ..	1	..	..
				French .. ..	1	..	..
"Santa Elena" .. ..	12.10.19	6	131	Russians .. ..	2	14	822
"St. Giles" .. ..	12.10.19	2	1	.. ..	..	..	..
"Voronej" .. ..	12.10.19	11	54	Serbians .. ..	33	672	24
				French .. ..	..	6	..
				Poles .. ..	..	3	..
"Welshman" .. ..	12.10.19	4	4	Finns .. ..	..	1	..

## SUMMARY:—

British officers .. .. 2,491  
British other ranks .. .. 26,485

28,976

## Allied and other nationalities—

Officers .. .. 562  
Other ranks .. .. 12,902  
Civilians .. .. 6,535

19,999

Grand Total .. .. 48,975



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