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## THE USA'S IMPACT IN SOLVING BORDER DISPUTES IN THE TRANSCAUCASIA IN 1919–1920

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* The Transcaucasian states waged war with each other and desperately wanted to find some disinterested party to resolve their territorial disputes in 1918–1921. The territory was first occupied by the countries of the Triple Alliance, then by the Entente countries, and each of them contributed to the formation or resolution of territorial disputes. *Methods and materials.* Based on the historical-systemic and historical-genetic approaches, the author determines which territorial changes were proposed in the region by representatives of the United States and why. The documents collected in the State Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Archive of Political Documents of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the National Archive of Armenia were involved for analysis. *Analysis.* The influence of the United States on the solution of territorial issues was determined by the general approach to the territory as passing into a mandate state. During the discussion of this issue, the understanding of the American representatives about the borders of this zone expanded first from Armenia in a general sense to Transcaucasia, and then narrowed to the borders of Turkish Armenia, which brought them back to the issue of the borders of the Republic of Armenia. At the same time, representatives working in the region proposed a plan for interstate disengagement, different from the British plan, and tried to introduce a governor-general in the disputed territory. *Results.* The remoteness from the region, the presence of a single channel of information about it through the Armenian Diaspora in the United States affected the narrow perception of the situation in the region by American representatives. The issue of the adoption of a mandate over Armenia or Transcaucasia and Armenia somehow got connected with the issue of costs for its effective implementation. The failed attempt to create an American governor-general in the disputed territories recorded a lack of understanding of the situation in the region and the possibilities of its control and provoked more conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijani.

**Key words:** USA, Transcaucasia, American General Government, Nakhichevan, Karabakh, border disputes, boundary.

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## ВКЛАД США В УРЕГУЛИРОВАНИЕ ТЕРРИТОРИАЛЬНЫХ СПОРОВ В ЗАКАВКАЗЬЕ В 1919–1920 ГОДАХ

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**Аннотация.** *Введение.* В 1918–1921 гг. государства Закавказья вели войну друг с другом и отчаянно желали найти некую незаинтересованную сторону для решения их территориальных споров. Территория была занята сначала странами Тройственного союза, а затем странами Антанты, и каждая из них вносила свой вклад в формирование или решение территориальных споров. *Методы и материалы.* На основе историко-системного и историко-генетического подходов автор определяет, какие территориальные изменения были предложены в регионе представителями США и почему. Для анализа были привлечены документы, сосредоточенные в Государственном архиве Азербайджанской Республики, Архиве политических документов Управления делами Президента Азербайджанской Республики, Национальном архиве Армении. *Анализ.* Влияние США на решение территориальных вопросов определялось общим подходом к территории как переходящей в подмандатное состояние. Долгое время решался вопрос о мандатарии и содержании самой территории. В ходе обсуждения данного вопроса понимание американских представителей о границах этой зоны расширилось сначала от Армении в общем смысле к Закавказью, а затем сузилось до границ Турецкой Армении, что вернуло их к вопросу о границах Республики Армения. В то же время работающие в регионе представители предложили план межгосударственного размежевания, отличающийся от британского плана, и попытались внедрить генерал-губернаторство на спорной территории. *Результаты.* Удаленность от региона, наличие одного канала информации о нем через армянскую диаспору в США – все это повлияло на узость восприятия американскими представителями ситуации в регионе. Вопрос принятия мандата над Арменией или Закавказьем и Арменией так или иначе получил связь с вопросом о затратах для его эффективного осуществления. Провалившаяся попытка создания американского генерал-губернаторства на спорных территориях фиксировала отсутствие понимания ситуации в регионе и возможностей ее контроля.

**Ключевые слова:** США, Закавказье, американское генерал-губернаторство, Нахичевань, Карабах, пограничные споры, граница.

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**Introduction.** The territorial disputes for the new states of Transcaucasia in 1917–1922 played the role of a stumbling block, which, on the one hand, led to the recognition of their originality, on the other hand, led to a collapse of their Confederation. During all the period of their independence, the three states were involved in wars with each other and were desperate to find some disinterested party who could find a solution to their territorial disputes and enforce it. Since Transcaucasia became one of the fronts of World War I it was consistently influenced first by Germany and the Ottoman Empire, then by France and Great Britain, Italy, later by the United States, until finally the Soviet Russia absorbed it. Meeting the wishes of the regional allies, all representatives of the European powers, with the exception of Italy, which simply did not have time, took part in territorial disputes, offering their own version of the best arrangement. And, finally, the United States whose president announced 14 points that spoke about the interests of specific peoples came to the area. All the Caucasian governors pinned high hopes on a fair solution to territorial disputes, which an uninterested power could offer.

**Methods and Materials.** B.E. Stein wrote a classical soviet work devoted to the question of intervention to the past Russian Empire [25]. Azerbaijan politician and diplomat R. Vekilov in 1919 published his essay devoted to the first political actions of the Azerbaijan Republic [30]. Georgian diplomat, historian and lawyer Z.D. Avalov in his work published in Paris in 1924 thought over the Georgian expectations and their failure [10]. Another former Georgian politician N. Zhordanija later in Stanford published his memoirs criticized the British policy in the area [32].

The Soviet researchers preferred not to consider the period of the Transcaucasia independence and if they had to cover the issue, used to describe contemptuously the area governments as the “men’sheviks” or “national movements”, as one social movements not recognized by all the inhabitants. In spite of the fact that the Georgian Democratic Republic and the Soviet Russia on May 7, 1920, signed the agreement.

The issue of independent development becomes especially relevant for the countries of the South Caucasus after 1991. Scientific directions

have developed to prove the independence of state entities of that period, defending territorial claims, revealing the problem of implementing foreign policy as one of the signs of independent statehood. It is necessary to mention the school of I. Aliyev in Azerbaijan, among its representatives we will name Dzh.P. Gasanly, S.I. Aliyeva, S.O. Mustafayeva [1; 2; 12; 18–20]. The problematic field of works of Armenian researchers is concentrated around the same issues. G. Petrosjan presents the Armenian position during this period [22]. Researcher G.G. Makhmurjan devoted a series of works to the issues of British and American participation in foreign policy in the Caucasus and, in general, to the peculiarities of regional interaction [13–15]. She did a great job of collecting archival documents in the UK, USA, Armenia, as a result of which, in 2012, a collection of documents from the State Department was published, revealing US policy in the Caucasus in the period from 1917 to 1920 [9].

Among Russian researchers, we note the work of V.M. Mukhanov on the formation of statehood in Georgia, its foreign policy [17]. A great contribution to the study of issues of international interference in the process of state building in the Caucasian republics was made by the Russian researcher K.R. Ambartsumjan [3–5; 31]. The question of the participation of great powers in resolving the territorial issue was partly covered in these publications. In the works of E.V. Arkhipova, the influence of the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain on the process of forming the state borders of the republics of Transcaucasia is determined [7; 8].

The picture would be incomplete without a definition of US participation in resolving the territorial issues of Transcaucasia. Therefore, the author of this article turned to diplomatic notes, clerical documents, correspondence of officials, draft resolutions, concentrated in the State Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Archive of Political Documents of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the National Archives of Armenia.

The article was written based on the principle of historicism, which implies taking into account specific historical conditions when making decisions by officials. The historical-systemic approach indicates the need to take into account the entire range of relationships that have

developed between the states in the region in a particular period. The historical-genetic method made it possible to determine the evolution of the views of American leaders regarding interference in the affairs of the outskirts of the Russian Empire, means of control over the Transcaucasus and the definition of borders in the region.

**Analysis.** Ch. Seymour, the editor of Colonel House's Archives, insists that the need for American intervention in the former Russian Empire territory had long been a subject of doubt and debate among military and civilian officials in USA [6, vol. 1, p. 10, 16, 20]. At first the presidential adviser considering the issue of the post-war structure, spoke in favor of transferring to Russia "spheres of influence in Armenia and the northern part of Asia Minor" [6, vol. 2, p. 32–35]. In November 1918, when the American press took up arms against Russia, House warned that such a policy would throw Russia "into the arms of Germany" and expose the eastern front, while, apparently, he was not aware of the processes that were going on in the warring countries [6, vol. 2, p. 179]. The signing of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was the reason for House to make a positive decision on the issue of intervention in Russia to support the forces of resistance to the Germans and especially Turks in Armenia [6, vol. 2, p. 248, 251]. In May 1918, House informed President Wilson that "the British could also help the Russian forces in the Transcaucasus if it were possible to establish a connection through Persia, which would probably depend mainly on cooperation with the Bolsheviks..." [6, vol. 2, p. 264]. Then, with the consent of the Americans, the Caspian campaign of Dunsterville begins [7, p. 216]. C. Seymour himself did not appreciate the results of the intervention either from the point of view of victory over Germany, or from the point of view of relations with the Bolsheviks [6, vol. 2, p. 276].

In his comments to the 14 points President Wilson developed the idea of ensuring international control over Constantinople and the creation of an independent Armenia [6, vol. 2, p. 438]. In relation to other de facto governments established on the territory of the former Russian Empire, the position of the President assumed: "de facto recognition of the governments of small states that broke away from Russia proper, provided that they convene national assemblies

to create de jure governments; the Brest-Litovsk Treaty must be cancelled...” [6, vol. 2, p. 438]. Expecting that the peace conference in Paris should establish the boundaries of new states on the territory of the former Russian Empire, Wilson specifically noted that “as far as possible, these boundaries should be determined on an ethnographic basis, but in all cases it is necessary to stipulate the right of unhindered economic transit” [6, vol. 2, p. 473]. Considering Turkish Armenia he stated: “Armenia should be given a port on the Mediterranean Sea under the protectorate of some power” [6, vol. 2, p. 479].

One may ask about the information sources used by the President to receive any news about events in the region. The American Committee for Relief in the Near East, as a charitable foundation being part of the Hoover food scheme, ensured the supply of food, medical equipment, attracted specialists of various profiles to the countries as well worked with the population of the Transcaucasus and the Near East and served the main information channel [9, p. 35]. The Red Cross as well as the Armenian society in the USA was the next channel of information. In documents we can also find the State Department employees with Armenian surnames. By the way they were involved into work in the US military and political missions in the Near East and the Caucasus. Thus, the candidacy of L. Dominyan was considered for compiling the mission of G. King and C. Crane to Turkey, but later it was decided to return him to the USA from France [9, p. 82]. The mission of General J. Harbord, which went to the Caucasus in September 1919, included Major G. Shekerdzhyan, “who has traveled a lot in the Transcaucasus in recent months”, an employee of the US High Commissioner in Constantinople G.K. Keropyan; Private T. Seridzhanyan, senior lieutenant of engineering troops A. Khachaturyan, sergeant A. Kojasar, sergeant T. Oganesyanyan [9, p. 123, 229, 304–305]. At the same time, representatives of the Azerbaijani government were not allowed to attend the Peace Conference for a long time, being detained in Constantinople [29, p. 7], that was the reason they had no opportunity to inform the Entente countries about Azerbaijan understanding of regional processes. W. Wilson in his speech in May 1919 draw attention to this injustice, which indicates a deeper acquaintance with the situation.

According to the opinion of the allies, Transcaucasus should have been allocated to a certain mandated territory, that is, controlled by some European power. In this regard, it is interesting to dwell on the evolution of the concept of “mandate” used in relation to the national outskirts of the Russian Empire. The evolution of the term can be traced in the correspondence between House and Wilson [6, vol. 2, p. 538–539], where we see the concepts of “sphere of influence”, “mandate” were mixed, and later the term “mandate” was preferred. For the first time, House explained the European understanding of the term “sphere of influence” to the president on April 28, 1917, after a conversation with British Foreign Secretary A.J. Balfour: “the words imply permanent occupation or suggest that each nation has the exclusive right to develop all resources within its sphere; it was by no means clearly expressed” [6, vol. 2, p. 35]. Offering the United States to join the policy of intervention in Siberia, A.J. Balfour in January 1918 used the term “mandate” [6, vol. 2, p. 250]. In October 1918, discussing with W. Wilson comments on 14 points and, in particular, explaining the 5<sup>th</sup> point, E. House pointed out the meaning of the term “mandate”: “a colonial power does not act as the owner of its colonies, but as a guardian over the natives in the interests of the community of nations...” [6, vol. 2, p. 436, 472]. W. Wilson at the meeting of the Council of Ten on January 27, 1919 in Paris also emphasized that “the mandate essence is directed against further annexations. ...We must develop countries for the benefit of their inhabitants...” [9, p. 46]. But G. Hoover, during the work of the American peace delegation on July 1, 1919, frankly said that taking on a mandate over Armenia alone – “the almshouse of Europe” – is too costly, it is more expedient to combine it with a mandate over Mesopotamia [9, p. 142]. The United States went to the Caucasus for a mandate over Armenia, but got bogged down in clarifying what “Armenia” was: whether it was only Turkish Armenia, or Turkish together with Caucasian Armenia, and where then to draw borders both between them and with their neighbors.

We should note during the Paris Conference in June 1919 Turkish and Russian Armenians discovered a divergence of views on their future: the Turkish preferred the United States would receive a mandate over both parts of Armenia,

while the Russians demanded recognition of independence [9, p. 129]. Over time, they had to announce the creation of a joint delegation.

From October 1918 Allied troops began to arrive in Transcaucasia under the “mandate” umbrella [7, p. 216]. At the same time, the United States was offered mandates over Constantinople and Armenia (Turkish) [6, vol. 2, p. 602]. Playing on the contradictions between the national governments of Transcaucasia, the British were never able to establish full control over the region. The expectation to use local natural resources, at least for reimbursement of costs, was not justified. D. Lloyd George, speaking on January 28, 1919 at a meeting of the Council of Ten, noted: “For example, British units occupied Russian Armenia and Syria. We do not want to be there, but someone must have been there... Sooner or later these troops will have to leave, but they cannot do this without knowing who will take their place” [9, p. 52]. In May, at a meeting of the Council of Four, he noted: “The Caucasus is very rich, but it takes a lot of work to look after it, and the British Empire cannot accept this additional responsibility” [9, p. 93]. As early as May 21, 1919, D. Lloyd George noted at a meeting of the Council of Four: “I think the United States needs to control the Caucasus. Now the British control it, but we are not able to stay there” [9, p. 115]. J. Clemenceau resisted him. Soviet researcher B.E. Stein in his work considered the contradictions of the Allies on the issue of control over the outskirts of the Russian Empire [25], so we will not dwell on them. In June 1919, Great Britain announced the withdrawal of its troops from the territory of the Caucasus. A full-fledged evacuation, originally scheduled for July 15, was later postponed to August 15. Still English business retained its presence in the fields of Baku, which created difficulties for the subsequent mandate holder. Italian Prime Minister V.E. Orlando announced his readiness to take the vacant seat. An expedition of Gen. Penello was expected to start moving to the area. The Allies directly accused the Italians of inciting the Turks to “continue their policy of oppression and massacre” (D. Lloyd George’s speech at a meeting of the Council of Four, May 2, 1919) [9, p. 89]. But already in the second decade of June 1919, a change of government took place in Italy and the new Prime Minister F.S. Nitti withdrew

all troops from the Caucasus. In his opinion, Italy did not have sufficient financial and human resources to exercise effective control over a remote territory [16, p. 129–130]. Already on June 27, 1919, H. Hoover wrote to W. Wilson about the need to appoint a commissar to Armenia with the following functions: “supervision and advice on various state affairs throughout Russian and Turkish Armenia... up to determining the political fate of this space”, offering position of Gen. J. Harbord [9, p. 135–136]. From the point of view of the Caucasian governments, the United States was as desirable a guarantor of security as any European country. So, M.-G.D. Gadzhinsky, the representative of the Azerbaijani government at the Armenian-Azerbaijani conference on December 15, 1919, pointed out that “internal agreements are not always observed... Therefore, a strong hand is needed to govern everyone, an international guarantee is needed for the conscientious fulfillment of the obligations assumed” [24, l. 44 back].

In July 1919, the question of who would take over the mandate over the Caucasus was being decided. American Colonel William N. Haskell was appointed a High Commissioner in Armenia according to the Council of Five decision on July 5, 1919. He “takes full responsibility for all measures of assistance in Armenia, various charitable organizations operating there. All representatives of the governments of the United States, Britain, France and Italy in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Constantinople should immediately be instructed to cooperate and provide support to Colonel William Haskell” [9, p. 148]. His candidacy was also proposed by the director of the American Relief Administration (ARA) G. Hoover. However, until the middle of the spring of 1920, in Tiflis, in addition to Haskell, there were also representatives of the three powers: J. Wardrop, Ch.-M. de Nonaku, M. Gabbe), who one way or another disavowed the decisions and recommendations of Haskell [14, p. 60]. At a meeting of the American peace delegation in Paris on July 11, it was noted that he was authorized to act as an employee of the State Department, and he was supported only with several officers [9, p. 154]. Mission led by Gen. J. Harbord was supposed to study political and economic problems, the question of the establishment of the Armenian state. The United States did not have

the opportunity to quickly send a full-fledged contingent to the region, as the issue should be approved in Congress.

The delimitation question of mandated territories, based on the notion that the territories themselves came under consideration by Tribunal of the League of Nations. Therefore, the newly formed governments on the territory of Transcaucasia wrote dispatches to the League, sent delegations with their ideas about the best territorial demarcation. Separately, the issue of borders was raised at a meeting of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference on March 13, 1919. Then the president of the American Geographical Society, proving the ethnic boundaries as the base for state borders I. Buman proposed to consider “the border between Armenia and Georgia, ethnic issues”, but US Secretary of State R. Lansing offered to study the question in more detail, and send a mission of field observers to the region [9, p. 72–73]. Speaking at a meeting of the American Peace Delegation on July 2, 1919, H. Hoover recommended: “The United States should not take any action in Armenia without a complete and very thorough study of the geographical boundaries that will be given to this country, due to the enormous economic importance of these boundaries” [9, p. 143–144].

The need for an urgent solution to the territorial issue of the Armenian Republic was noted in the urgent telegram No. 3513 of the US Vice-Consul in Tiflis H.O. Doolittle addressed to the head of the American mission in Paris F. Polk, the director of the military intelligence department, Major R. Tylers, Secretary of State R. Lansing, G. Hoover, G. Morgenthau July 23, 1919, when the withdrawal of British troops from the Caucasus was already being completed. “Karabakh and Zangezur officially subordinated by the British to the Azerbaijani government, as well as Nakhichevan, Kagyzvan and Sarikamysh officially appointed by the British to the Armenian government” were indicated as the most conflict territories [9, p. 166].

On July 24, 1919, the head of the ARA in the Caucasus, Major J. Green, noted in his telegram to Director G. Hoover about the difficulties: food aid supply to the Armenians was blocked because of the occupation of Karabakh and Zangezur by the “Turks and Tatars”

(Azerbaijanis) forces [9, p. 169]. This situation implied that the division of territories proposed earlier by the British was never carried out. Secretary of State R. Lansing tried to convince the British to delay the withdrawal due to fears of massacre between the locals. Information about the clashes in July 1919 came to the American representatives from survivors of the American hospital in Nakhichevan. The New York Herald wrote about this emotionally on August 9, 1919 [9, p. 179–181; 26].

Understanding that a delay could not be achieved, and it was impossible to send any contingent to the Caucasus with no approval by the US Congress, already on August 12, R. Lansing recommended to the chairman of the American Committee for the Independence of Armenia, J.W. Gerard, not to send food and military supplies to Armenia, because they would be stolen while being transported through Georgian territory, the probability of their arrival to the Armenians would encourage the Turks and Tatars to attack more violent [9, p. 186–187, 195].

At the same time, the governments of the Transcaucasian republics were confident that the United States military forces would arrive in the region. On August 21, W. Haskell made a statement in Erivan that he was collecting information about the situation in the Caucasus and that General Harbord was expected to arrive to determine the required number of troops, and the issue of the Armenian mandate itself was to be resolved in the near future [9, p. 193–194].

On August 27 1919 W. Haskell visiting Tiflis turned to the chairman of the Peace Conference, J. Clemenceau, with a request to send troops to prevent the massacre [9, p. 200]. On August 29, J. Clemenceau declared his readiness to send 12,000 men of all military branches [9, p. 226]. However, the expedition could not begin until September 10, with a landing point in Cilicia, which significantly postponed the date of its arrival in the Caucasus.

The heads of the American section of the international commission on mandates in Turkey, G. King and C. Crane, considering the issue of Turkish Armenia and its borders not only with internal Turkey, but also with Transcaucasia, reported in Paris on August 28 that “the territory of the state of Armenia is not defined, the Armenians were not widely represented in any

of the lands to be given to them...; the establishment of the Armenian state will be, in a certain sense, a punishment for the Turkish people...” [9, p. 203]. Developing the idea about the territory of Armenia he recommended: “to take both from Turkish and Russian territory” [9, p. 208]. At the same time, it was noted that Armenians represent a small minority in the space from the Black to the Mediterranean Sea, and the provision of control to them will be carried out contrary to the “Wilsonian principles” [9, p. 209]. The concept of “historical Armenia” in this report is formulated in the following terms: “reduced to the Armenian Highlands, located jointly in Turkey and Russia and having access to the Black Sea [through Batum], would have a good chance of establishment and longevity. The Turkish area, governed by Russia in 1917, can be roughly taken as the Turkish part of this “lesser Armenia”, and the current territory of Russian Armenia as the rest” [9, p. 210]. Based on these arguments he proposed the mandate should be formed only over the Armenian state completely separated from Turkey within the borders described above, which would allow at least a little closer to the ethnic principles of defining borders.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia on October 1, 1919, handed over to the military mission of J. Harbord documents substantiating the territory of Armenia basing on the British command orders to determine the borders, the protests of the local population [9, p. 246–247]. Thus, the British distribution of territories seemed unfair in Armenia in the part of Karabakh was nevertheless regarded as legitimate.

J. Harbord in his telegram to the head of the American mission in Paris, F. Polk, on October 6, was reporting W. Haskell approved the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan previously fixed by the British and was giving a description of the borderline: “[Azerbaijan], although formally, is at peace with Armenia, carries out military operations near the Persian border in the area of Nakhichevan and Sharur, where a small ledge with Armenian villages separates two groups of the Tatar population, and through which Azerbaijan hopes to build an all-Islamic railway to Turkey” [9, p. 258]. J. Harbord also supported W. Haskell’ idea offered on September 1 to define a neutral zone as the locals were in constant clashes.

According to the offer Karabakh and Zangezur were recognized as parts of Azerbaijan. The neutral zone covered the Nakhichevan and Sharuro-Daralagez area [9, p. 260, 302–303], W. Haskell proposed to organize its administration following the example of the British General Government in Batum.

The Azerbaijani researchers now describe the neutral area as the “American Governor General” [12; 18]. Azerbaijani researcher S. Mustafayeva states, W. Haskell made this decision following the lead of the Armenian government [18, p. 24]. Another Azerbaijani author Dzh. Gasanly indicates the strategic importance of the territory, which allowed to the Allies to control not only the Transcaucasus, but the entire Near East [12, p. 391]. We cannot deny the influence of the Armenian representatives on the first decisions of the Americans. However, it should be noted that Haskell could have followed the decision of the British in relation to the Nakhichevan and Sharur-Daralagez districts and forced the local authorities to submit to the Republic of Armenia, but for some reason he did not. The Armenian government could not gain a foothold in this territory. That is, Haskell understood the precariousness of the Armenian influence in the counties. American representatives in their correspondence noted constant inter-ethnic clashes in the neutral zone, with a mixed settlement of Armenians and Azerbaijanis, which cast doubt on the decision of the British. Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives were actively engaged in diplomatic struggle in Paris to justify their rights to these territories. Most likely, having no confidence in any of the warring parties here, Haskell decided to create an American governor general as the government of an external force. As the documents say at the end of September 1919, the Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Yu. Jafarov wrote to Haskell to confirm the agreement about the American citizen as a governor over these areas in order to avoid new clashes between Armenians and Azerbaijani [28].

As soon as the Denikin’s Volunteer Army occupied Petrovsk and Derbent in May 1919, the Azerbaijani government’s fears about its security from the north intensified. And Haskell took advantage of this fear when, on September 26, in his telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of

Azerbaijan, he informed that he would not negotiate with Denikin on the establishment of a neutral zone between him and Azerbaijan until the Azerbaijani authorities agreed with his proposal for a neutral zone, including the Nakhichevan and Sharur districts [11]. We know from Harbord's letter to the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan N. Usubbekov on October 7, 1919, Azerbaijan agreed with the neutral zone including the Nakhichevan and Sharur districts, although this text of the telegram leaves the impression that this consent was obtained by blackmail: "...unless its [the Azerbaijani people] move forward will be interrupted by difficulties with your neighbors, which will entail the displeasure of the Great Powers" [9, p. 262].

Azerbaijani researcher Dzh. Gasanly states in mid-September, Haskell announced "that Colonel of the US Army Engineering Troops Edmund L. Dalley was appointed governor of Nakhichevan and will take up his duties from October 23" [12, p. 399]. Increasing his pressure in October Haskell promised the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister that if the Azerbaijani government assists in appeasing the Muslim population of the neutral zone of Nakhichevan and Sharur-Daralagez counties, he will apply in Paris for the recognition of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani government resisted the establishing the neutral zone understanding the possibility that in the future control over the American governor-general would be transferred to Armenia.

Haskell's deputy, Colonel J. Rey, arrived in Nakhichevan on October 24 and announced to the population about the creation of a "zone of union administration under the command of an American governor." [23]. Several American officers arrived in the region in November causing a protest from the population, and later they returned to Erivan. And in January 1920 not a single American was left in the area.

Haskell during his meeting in November 1919 in Paris with the chairman of the Azerbaijani delegation at the Peace Conference A.M. Topchibashev, no longer returned to the issue of the governor-general, while developing the idea of transferring the entire Transcaucasus as a mandated territory to any one state [23].

As for Harbord's mission, it's main task was the question of managing the Transcaucasus. On

October 13, while aboard the Martha Washington, Harbord received several memorandums from his subordinates recommending a device. One of his officers offered while introducing a mandate over the entire territory of Turkey and Transcaucasia, concentrate power in the hands of the "American High Commissioner for the Near East Mandate", avoid the expressions "governor general" or "governor", still transferring him military and civil power; consider the area as politically unified, and "the settlement of border disputes must be subordinated to the more urgent problem of restoring order throughout the space"; not to recognize the independence of the republics, but to allocate a number of administrative districts, including Georgian, Azerbaijani and Armenian, which should include the three provinces of Turkish Armenia, access to the sea and the Republic of Armenia, with the protection of the rights of all living minorities. It is expedient to separate the Batumi region into an administrative unit, subordinate to the Transcaucasian General Commissar, with further resolution of the issue [9, p. 292–296].

As a result of his mission, J. Harbord compiled a detailed report – a mixture of rumors, personal observations, statistics and impressions from negotiations with local governments - which he sent by telegram to Secretary of State R. Lansing from the Martha Washington on October 16. He proposed not to solve the territorial issue while the region is governed by a mandate holder. The need for a single mandate over Transcaucasia and Anatolia, Rumelia and Constantinople was especially emphasized, "so that the borders of the Turkish vilayets of Armenia and Anatolia, as well as the internal borders of Russian Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, remain in their current position" [9, p. 323].

Haskell speaking outside the agenda on December 1, 1919, informed the chairman of the Paris Peace Conference that Armenia and Azerbaijan had signed an agreement with his support (November 23, 1919). According to paragraph 2, the parties agreed to "open the roads to Zangezur for peaceful traffic." The third paragraph indicated that territorial disputes should be "settled by amicable agreement, or, if this fails, will be left to the neutral party for arbitration" [9, p. 352–353]. The activity of Denikin's army is considered here as the reason for the involvement



of Turkish forces by Azerbaijanis, therefore, an urgent request is made to the Peace Conference “to determine the boundaries of Denikin’s activity... The limits recommended for his activity should correspond to those that were previously held by the British” [9, p. 353]. Haskell also voiced a proposal to transfer the entire Transcaucasus under a US mandate. Thus, the United States departed from the original plan only to protect the Armenians in the region, as the officials convinced that it was difficult to secure funding for assistance programs due to territorial disputes, and to resolve them, the current situation demanded to attract troops, which also required funding, which Congress could go to only in the case of understanding the acquired benefits. Thus, Dzh. Gasanly, following the English historian E. Monroe, believes that American industrialists were interested in Baku oil, but their interest was not enough to make decisions. The peace conference confirmed that Haskell could act in Azerbaijan and Georgia only as a representative of the Near East Relief Committee and not interfere in other matters [12, p. 409–411]. Thus, his territorial decisions were disavowed.

US High Commissioner M. Bristol characterizing interethnic relations in the region of Nakhichevan and Zangezur on December 4 sent a telegram to R. Lansing, in which he reported that “Zangezur region is also burdened by British policy, which first subordinated this region to Azerbaijan in February 1919, and then, when the British began to evacuate, their policy changed and the local Armenian council was allowed to govern Zangezur; the final evacuation left this issue unsettled” [9, p. 354]. However, the Armenian researcher G. G. Makhmuryan disputes the very fact of Zangezur subordination to the Azerbaijani government, she draws attention to the fact that V. Thomson’s decision of January 15, 1919 was canceled on January 26, 1919 by the government of the Republic of Armenia, and on February 19, 1919 by the commander of the British forces of Transcaucasia J. Forestier – Walker [9, p. 357].

W. Haskell informed R. Lansing on January 22, 1920, about new Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes in the area to the south of Goris, “not far from Ordubad”, in the valley of the Vakhchi and Gekhi rivers, as a result, the Azerbaijanis fled to Ordubad and Nakhichevan; about the fears of Azerbaijanis

that “Armenia’s goal is to drive out all the Tatars from Zangezur, capture Ordubad and Julfa, and later to clear Nakhichevan” [9, p. 383–384]. The Zangezur region was of interest to all disputing parties, because the area allowed to control the Yerevan-Julfa railway.

The fall of Denikin’s army provoked the advance of the Bolsheviks closer to the borders of the Transcaucasian states, at the Paris Peace Conference the question of the need for assistance to the Transcaucasian republics and the possibility of their recognition was raised, but the discussion was conducted without resolving the issue of borders [9, p. 368]. The United States refrained from making a final statement on the territorial issue and the issue of de facto recognition of the governments of Transcaucasia, which was made by the European powers in January 1920. At the same time, US representatives in their correspondence again recorded interethnic clashes in the Zangezur district early in 1920. The main argument against recognition was that state boundaries were not finally described. US Ambassador to France H.C. Wallace voiced the second argument against: the Moscow government may consider the recognition as an attempt to dismember Russia [9, p. 387].

The allies in France began to discuss the question of the borders of Turkey and the republics of Transcaucasia in the spring of 1920. The United States distanced from the official discussion, however, US Secretary of State B. Colby, in his note to the French Ambassador to the United States J. Jusserand on March 24, 1920, put forward a number of proposals of a territorial nature. In particular, he made a demand to provide Armenia with access to the sea not through Lazistan, as was supposed in Europe, but through Trebizond [21].

During the II Conference of the Transcaucasian Republics in April 1920, the Armenian side turned to J. Wardrop for support, negotiated in London, i.e. the documents do not include an appeal to the United States, whose representatives were still in the territory of Transcaucasia. Against this background, on April 16, 1920, in Paris, representatives of the three Transcaucasian republics signed an agreement on the settlement of territorial disputes, with the determination of the time for resolving issues: 6 weeks. Otherwise, territorial disputes were

submitted to the arbitration of three commissions, and then to the decision of the Supreme Council of the Allies or the League of Nations. At the time when the conference ended, the army of Armenians occupied Karabakh, the Bolshevization of Azerbaijan began. The de facto recognition of the government of the Republic of Armenia, on the condition that territorial issues should be resolved later, made by Secretary of State B. Colby on April 23 did not change anything.

The Allies hoping for the Transcaucasian republics themselves would be able to agree on their borders clarified the terms of the mandate for the United States over Armenia (now it was describing only Turkish Armenia). In a note from the Supreme Council of the Allies to US President W. Wilson on April 26, 1920, it was proposed to determine "the exact borders in the west and south, which should be included in a peace treaty with Turkey." [9, p. 404]. At the same time, they called for a financial loan and a volunteer contingent of US citizens. Thus, when resolving the issue of a mandate over Turkish Armenia, the United States had to resolve the issue of the borders of the Republic of Armenia.

The issue of the US military presence in the area was coincided with the question of accepting the mandate. General J. Harbord reported to the US Senate in April 1920. He pointed out in 4 out of 6 points against the need to incur significant costs giving arguments for and against the mandate. W. Wilson's subsequent statement indicated that "American interference in Armenian affairs will require from 100 to 200 thousand soldiers. The United States can take on such a burden only after prior agreement with Great Britain and France, as well as after the express approval of Russia and Germany, especially on issues related to Turkey and the Transcaucasus. Intervention costs for the first year are reported as \$275 million." [27]. At the same time, for example, General J. Harbord estimated the number of occupying troops required at the first stage at 59 thousand people, which could subsequently be reduced by 50% [9, p. 403]. The Senate rejected the proposal to accept the mandate.

During these negotiations US public organizations continued to provide food aid to the countries of Transcaucasia, mainly to Armenia. These events were financed through the issuance

of bonds of the Republic of Armenia, which were distributed among the Armenians of the United States. Colonel W.N. Haskell carried out the coordination of charitable activities. H. Hoover informed Secretary of State B. Colby on July 26, 1920, about the resignation of Colonel W. Haskell and the end of support programs with the subsequent withdrawal of American military personnel from August 1, 1920 [9, p. 414–417].

While the US Senate was deciding whether to accept a mandate over Turkish Armenia, Turkey had two governments since April 1920: the administration of Sultan Mehmed VI and the government of the Grand National Assembly M. Kemal became the head of government and chairman of the presidium of the parliament, who did not recognize the international obligations of the Sultan's government. His government did not want to follow the Sevres peace treaty, the Armenian-Turkish borders of which were essentially determined by the United States, and was in no hurry to leave the territories in favor of Armenia, which led to new military clashes between Armenians and Turks. Involvement in hostilities, the beginning of the Armenian-Turkish war diverted the attention of the government of the Republic of Armenia from the borders with already Soviet Azerbaijan and led to the defeat of the Armenian forces with the signing of the Treaty of Alexandropol and subsequent Sovietization by the Red Army.

US President W. Wilson in his secret letter to the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers on November 22 spoke about the difficulties he encountered in determining the borders between Turkey and Armenia in the vilayets of Erzurum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis: "The clashing territorial desires of Armenians, Turks, Kurds and Greeks along the frontiers entrusted to my arbitration could not always be reconciled. In such cases, I believed that considerations of a healthy economic life of the future state of Armenia should be decisive. But where the requirements of a proper geographical boundary permitted, all the mountainous and valley regions along the frontier, which were predominantly Kurdish or Turkish, were more often left to Turkey rather than assigned to Armenia, unless trade links with particular market towns necessarily drew them into an Armenian state. Wherever information about tribal relations and

seasonal movements was available, an attempt was made to respect the integrity of tribal groupings and migrations to pastures". Further, he is giving a description of the border, emphasizing several times that the future Armenia is a country with a mixed population [9, p. 421–427]. The president's decision on the borders was to be made public on December 18, which indicates that neither Europe nor the United States knew about mutual assistance between the governments of Kemal and Lenin and Bolsheviks' success in an Armenian front. Only on December 16, having received information about the events in Transcaucasia, the Allies decided not to make the document public.

US President V. Wilson not yet aware of the Sovietization of Armenia in his telegram to the Chairman of the Council of the League of Nations P. Gimans on November 30 explained the reasons for refusing assistance to the Republic of Armenia and accepting a mandate for Armenia. The main arguments boiled down to the fact that the implementation of the mandate would require material contributions, which would require the approval of the Congress, "now not in session, and the actions of which I could not predict" [9, p. 428].

**Results.** It is difficult to unequivocally assess the role of the United States in settling territorial disputes in the Transcaucasus. Being geographically remote from the region, they did not have a full understanding of the relations in the region after 1917, just as it was not possible to deploy significant armed forces in the region. Despite repeated attempts to clarify the content of the very concept of "mandate" and to distance it from the colonial type of government traditional for that time, the US representatives themselves are gradually beginning to invest in it the meaning of not only self-sufficiency of external power over any territory, but also the question of profit. Geographically, the issue of a mandate over the area is gradually shifting towards Turkish Armenia, which can probably be explained by the unwillingness of a direct clash with Soviet Russia. An attempt to offer neutral rule over the disputed Armenian and Azerbaijan territory through the introduction of an American governor-general failed formally due to the lack of military support for Haskell's decision, but in fact because of a misunderstanding of the impossibility of applying an ethnic approach to defining local

borders. Setting the goal primarily to restore order in the region, US representatives did not connect it with the solution of the territorial issue, which was extremely important for local governments. US policy here provoked more conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanians.

US representatives having come to the Transcaucasus to resolve the Armenian issue, realized the interconnection of different ethnic groups in the area and that is why they introduced the neutral zone – the "governor general" as the coverage of a narrow ethnic sample, which they themselves proclaimed earlier. And for this reason alone, they contributed rather to incitement of local territorial arguements than to their settlement.

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