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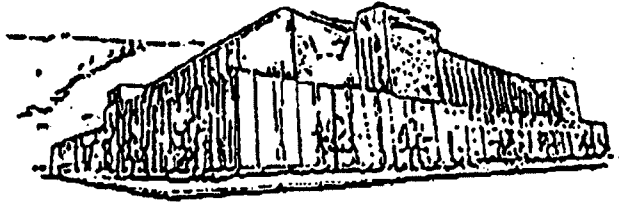
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THE BERLIN EMBASSY OF JAMES WATSON GERARD:
REFLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIC PARADIGM SHIFT, 1913-1917

by

Timothy Leo Lohof

B. S. Montana State University, 1986

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

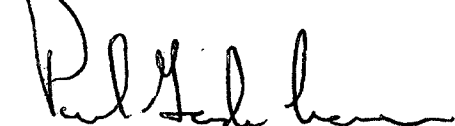
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The Berlin Embassy of James Watson Gerard: Reflections of a Diplomatic Paradigm Shift, 1913-1917
(179 pp.)

Director: Dr. Paul Gordon Lauren

PGL

American Ambassador James Watson Gerard's embassy in the imperial German capital of Berlin (1913-1917) directly reflected the remarkable paradigm shift in and professionalization of American diplomacy occurring around the turn of the century. Prior to the 1890s, domestic matters absorbed the nation, including post-Civil War reconstruction, settling the West, and building an immensely successful industrial society. Those priorities considered foreign relations unessential, and the nation, therefore, largely disregarded international affairs and neglected its diplomatic and consular services, allowing political patronage to populate them with unskilled amateurs.

Beginning in the early 1890s, however, developments compelled the country to leave its isolation and increasingly involve itself in world affairs. Explosive expansion of the national economy, a global revolution in communications and transportation technology, rise to world power status, alarm at perceived threats to her shores and her overseas markets, a lengthy economic depression, and loss of national confidence helped prompt a shift in the nation's foreign relations paradigm that would last into the early 1920s. The country's increasingly purposeful involvement abroad required competent, reliable foreign representatives to serve its widening interests, thus stimulating by the early 1900s initial, though uneven, moves towards the professionalization of the American foreign services. The First World War's demands--felt so keenly by the Gerard embassy--laid stark once and for all the inadequacies of a non-professional diplomatic service, and gave renewed urgency to reform, culminating with the Rogers Act's establishment of the United States Foreign Service in 1924.

Coming at the inflection point of these institutional and paradigmatic transitions, the Gerard embassy reflected the transformation of American diplomacy from nineteenth-century amateurism to twentieth-century professionalism. The embassy's personnel displayed both vestiges of the old paradigm and the rising careerism of the new. Gerard's trials in securing suitable housing for his embassy highlighted a glaring deficiency, even as embassy use of the telegraph, telephone, automobile, cinema, and other new technology accelerated modern diplomacy's pace and changed its very character. And, finally, the sharp increase in work quantity, and its quality abruptly expanding to include such novel issues as human rights, public relations, intelligence gathering, and propaganda, demonstrated the new diplomacy's growing complexity.

The Berlin Embassy of James Watson Gerard: Reflections of a Diplomatic Paradigm Shift, 1913-1917

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: AMBASSADOR GERARD AND HIS EMBASSY AT THE CROSSROADS, 1913-1917

There are at the present time two great nations in the world...I allude to the Russians and the Americans...Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.¹

--Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

As we would not put a ship into the hands of a commander ignorant of navigation, an army under the control of a general without military training...so we should not put the foreign affairs of our government into the hands of men without knowledge of the various subjects which go to make up the diplomatic science.²

--Herbert H.D. Peirce (1897)

Congressman Peirce's pronouncement the year before the seminal Spanish-American War, while eminently reasonable, stood very far from being foregone. Despite the prophetic Frenchman Tocqueville's early divination, young America's preoccupation with major domestic concerns absented her from world involvement for virtually the entire nineteenth-century. As the country maintained little real use for foreign representation, her consular and diplomatic services slipped into serious neglect, and even so late as Peirce's day largely remained despised havens for political patronage and amateur mediocrity.³ Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, however, a seachange occurred in American foreign relations and diplomacy. In a state of chronic neglect into the 1890s, the importance of foreign affairs to the United States' well-being began a steady resurrection in that decade in response to changing conditions and

¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Penguin Books, 1956), p. 142.

² In the "Arena" periodical, May, 1897, as quoted in Kenneth W. Thompson, American Diplomacy and Emergent Patterns (New York University Press, 1962), p. 77.

³ Before the Rogers Act of 1924 merged them, the "diplomatic service" and the "consular service" remained two, separate, often divorced components of America's foreign representation. This work focuses on the professionalization of the diplomatic service, but does make occasional reference to the consular.

perceptions. By Peirce's time the initial stirrings of America's coming dominance in world affairs had produced noticeable ripples. A shift in perspective had begun asserting itself in which Americans perceived a more deliberate and active role for their nation; a changing paradigm was setting the stage that would soon prove Baron de Tocqueville a shrewd observer. Its progress saw an initial marked upturn of American interest abroad starting in the early 1890s. An increased assertiveness in foreign involvement, the evolution of actual foreign "policy," and the transformation from amateurism to professionalism of the American diplomatic and consular services followed. Caught in the midst of this protracted metamorphosis which would continue into the 1920s, the Berlin embassy of Ambassador James Watson Gerard (1913-1917) mirrored the transition and highlighted the unusual difficulties, challenges, and successes of American diplomacy's twentieth-century debut.

After the War of 1812, the United States retreated into isolation and became preoccupied with internal development. A paradigm grew up, that filtered perceptions of what was important and unimportant in the minds of Americans. In this sense, "paradigm" refers to the predominant modes of thought, perception, and interpretation current among people and decision-makers at a given time; it refers to the prism through which they gauge their nation's interests, desires, and dangers. For most of the nineteenth-century, but particularly during its heyday between 1865 and around 1890, the governing paradigm's defining characteristic rested in popular confidence that isolated America enjoyed unusual, and virtually total, protection from outside threats. Exploring and settling the continent's West, fighting a civil war, and developing an industrial economy and mass urban society dominated a domestic agenda, as the nation withdrew from material international involvement for most the century.

In direct consequence, the foreign relations mechanism of the United States suffered serious neglect. The country had no need for foreign "policies" or for expensive, superfluous foreign representation. Republican simplicity stigmatized the services, especially the diplomatic, as elitist and unneeded. Consuls and diplomats were unnecessary to a nation eminently capable of self-sustenance and free of entanglements outside her borders. The services consequently stood chronically underfunded, ill-equipped, and rife with political spoilsmanship. Paucity of public funding ensured private wealth as a prime criterion for a candidate's selection and thereby contributed to "elitist" stigmas. A tendency to

change diplomats with every new presidential administration helped wreck any institutional continuity. And while seen as manifestly inconsequential, the prestige of foreign posts nonetheless conferred political-plum status and saw their ranks widely filled with amateurs, party hacks, and incompetents as a result. For its part, Washington exhibited a similar spirit of dereliction. In the broader scheme, the country's "foreign relations" remained uncomplicated, undemanding, and unimaginative. Isolated and left with no direction or policy, missionaries, ambitious military officers, bumbling consuls and diplomats often enough took unenlightened charge to create situations, which prompted a reflexive, and rarely timely or adequate, response from the sleepy capital. Far from any system of premeditated foreign policy, mere episodes composed America's relations abroad well into the latter-years of the nineteenth-century.

Beginning in the 1890s, however, the confluence of several internal and external developments challenged the "old" paradigm of nineteenth-century insularism and obliged its gradual replacement with a "new" paradigm of foreign engagement. These broad milestones combined to begin drastically changing Americans' perspective, altering their foreign relations paradigm, and, finally, provoking reform of the country's foreign service and foreign relations mechanism. Leading the way to change were three abrupt issues, in whose wake other contributing developments followed. The first, most intangible issue arose in the late 1880s and persisted well into the 1890s, when Americans generally slipped into a melancholy malaise and fearful foreboding over their nation's purpose and future. As final settlement of the frontier West symbolically closed a continent itself symbolic of opportunity, America lost focus and gained uncertainty soon to border on despair. For in close pursuit followed two crises to further plunge national confidence. Decades of post-Civil War reconstruction and industrialization brought phenomenal rises in total output of manufactured goods and stimulated equally breathtaking expansion of the American economy and foreign trade. In 1893, however, a sudden panic and severe economic depression turned promise into ash. Subsiding only in 1897, the depression became emphatic with a second crisis in its midst, as perceived threats to America's current and future markets abroad boiled over. By 1895, foreign trade buoyed high hopes for the nation's temporarily cooled, but otherwise white-hot economy. Soon, however, newly erected tariff walls in Europe and her colonies imperiled the country's traditional markets;

then China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War (1895) prompted a feeding frenzy amongst the victor and prowling European imperialists, which seemed direly to menace potential American markets there.

Other factors weighed in as well to push a new foreign relations paradigm. Despite economic difficulties and psychological uncertainty, Americans in the 1890s began understanding their nation's rising stature in the world community and increasingly looked to exercise her imminent status as a world power. At the same time, starting in the 1880s, the swelling tide of a technological revolution began making quantum gains. Modern steamships, airplanes, a global net of telegraphic and wireless links, and other innovations in communications and transportation technology rapidly reduced the effective size of the world and urged reevaluation of America's coveted old paradigm centerpiece, her immunity to external attack. Foreign trade prospects meanwhile married with technology to expand national interests abroad and encourage keener regard for developments beyond America's shores. Together, these several new developments antiquated old paradigm premises, altered American perspective, and rapidly mounted pressure for the development of more deliberate, security-minded, trade-protective foreign policy. The nineteenth-century's passing ushered in not only a new century, but also a developing "policy" approach to America's foreign relations and, eventually, a resolve to upgrade appropriately her foreign service through reform.

Beginning in the early 1890s, a series of episodes marked a new, rising trajectory of American involvement abroad. Relatively minor, but significant, assertions of American influence in Samoa, Chile, Hawaii, Brazil, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, served as prelude to the conflict that established the United States as a major world power. Accompanied by the mounting crisis over Chinese sovereignty after the Sino-Japanese War and followed by bestial combat in the Philippines (1899-1902), the Spanish-American War (1898) bequeathed an overseas empire as the spoils from Spain's defeat and marked a watershed in the waxing importance of international relations to America. Teddy Roosevelt rode up San Juan Hill and into the White House, meanwhile, to symbolically and practically embody America's new assertiveness. America's increasingly purposeful involvement in world affairs naturally required increasingly reliable and competent executors of policy. Thus, it was Roosevelt who inaugurated the first, substantial moves towards professionalizing the nation's amateur diplomatic service.

An initial stab at consular service reform by President Grover Cleveland (1892-96) marked the first, real effort since the Civil War to improve the quality of at least part of America's foreign representation. Cleveland's attempt, however, fell on sterile ground, as his successor, William McKinley (1896-1901), pulled up the still-noxious root and threw out its temporary advance. Roosevelt's rise (1901-1908) after McKinley's assassination, though, finally brought real change, which his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft (1908-12), helped make lasting. Important executive orders in 1904, 1905, and 1909 laid the initial, essential planks of reform, including removal of the consular service from spoils-based, political patronage and the establishment of the diplomatic service on a Civil Service-style, merit basis for the first time. Roosevelt and Taft thus midwived American diplomacy's birth as a career service. Simultaneously, their Secretaries of State proceeded with thorough-going overhauls to reorganize an out-dated State Department and better suit it for the demands of America's heightened foreign involvement. New, geographically-oriented divisions allowed focused expertise for increasingly voluminous and involved policy issues. Communications technology like the telephone and, particularly, the transoceanic telegraph, introduced new possibilities for improved formulation, coordination, execution, and control of policy dictates. And executive-supported legislation, like the 1911 Lowden Act, sought to begin long-over-due correction of the sorry state of permanent diplomatic housing abroad (namely that there was none).

The advances of the successive Republican administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft (1901-1912), however, suffered a nearly fatal reverse with the Democrats' return to the White House. Locked out of the highest office since 1896, the Democrats' victory in 1912 came only after years of accrued political debt, and the new administration of Woodrow Wilson opted for a significant return to the patronage system under his Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan. By that year, most of America's diplomats, consuls, and State Department staffers had entered service with Republican credentials. Men like soon-to-be-appointed Ambassador Gerard's First Secretary Joseph Grew, Second Secretaries Hugh Wilson, Willing Spencer, and Roland Harvey, as well as Gerard's Taft-appointed predecessor in Berlin, John Leishman, were all beneficiaries of Republican charity. They, along with their not inconsiderable experience and expertise, now stood to fall to resurgent spoilsmanship. Bryan

dispatched large numbers of them wholesale, particularly chiefs of mission in the field and department officials back in Washington. Replacing the retired Leishmans were diplomatic amateurs like James Gerard, whose financial and moral largesse had helped sustain the Democratic Party through its years of exile. As the turnover gained momentum, however, mounting political opposition, falling institutional morale, and pause at the growing loss of corporate knowledge and experience caused Wilson to finally harness his thoroughbred secretary--unfortunately, not before significant damage had taken toll.

In mid-1914, a disrupted American diplomatic service stumbled into the ultimate test of amateurism versus professionalism. Assuming his post in October, 1913, James Gerard spent the large majority of his ambassadorship representing a thorny American neutrality in the midst of the First World War. His Berlin embassy displayed a telling amalgam of old and new paradigm elements, as it stood midway between the Roosevelt-Taft initiatives away from foreign service amateurism and the 1924 Rogers Act's formal establishment of a professional United States Foreign Service. In its staff, housing arrangements, technology, quantity and quality of its wartime diplomatic work, and in the nature of its relationship with Washington, Gerard's embassy revealed a shifting diplomatic paradigm and shifting diplomacy in every important regard.

Especially in their backgrounds, methods of entry into service, attitudes, and careers, the ambassador and his professional staff collectively reflected the transition. As an amateur, political appointee selected largely on account of his considerable wealth and abiding support of the Democratic cause, Gerard represented the spoils system of Old Diplomacy patronage. The Wilson Administration that elevated him, itself harkened to the earlier paradigm in its assignment of the muddled William Jennings Bryan to the dimly viewed position of Secretary of State. The Old Paradigm could be seen especially in the Administration's repoliticization of American diplomacy with Bryan's return to party patronage. To the President's mind, the highest diplomatic post was the ideal place to tuck out of harm's way a dubious man who nonetheless required political accommodation; likewise, the department's irrelevance allowed a ready means to pay off political debts, as well, to men like Gerard. Wilson's appointment of Gerard nevertheless highlighted the waning spoilsmanship of a different era.

His long ambition for a prestigious ambassadorship satisfied, Gerard returned to his private life of leisure upon the break in relations with Germany in 1917. His professional staff, on the other hand, represented products of an increasingly professional, career-oriented diplomatic service. Despite the Wilson/Bryan setback, hardly a decade's worth of piecemeal reforms had initiated a distinct change in attitude, as the State Department's early, professionalizing efforts to adapt to the heightened demands of the New Paradigm took root. Political clout greased First Secretary Grew's entry into service. But nearly all the rest of Gerard's staff entered only after passing formal oral and written examinations instituted in 1904. Most of them arrived at their first post only after 30-days' initial training in the department's offices, also a new requirement. After a 1909 executive order and 1915 legislation, promotions became effectively merit-based and tenure increasingly protected. In consequence, the young Second and Third Secretaries in Gerard's embassy more and more considered the diplomatic service in terms of a career, rather than upholding the older secretaries' initial view of diplomacy as an exciting, but temporary, diversion before getting down to their life's "real" work. This notion slowly faded, even among the older staff like Grew. His early service extraordinary for its continuity in a time when political connections held sway, Grew's tenuous tenure definitively assumed career status during Gerard's embassy, eventually to span four decades and every rank in a professional American diplomatic service. Most his fellow diplomats in Berlin followed his vanguard, with three others also rising to ambassador-rank.

Reminiscent of the passing paradigm, however, Grew and his subordinate secretaries displayed drum-like consistency in their common, elitist backgrounds. Privileged upbringing in high society; nearly all Ivy League-educated and well-traveled; all largely secure in private fortunes--together they underscored the undemocratic, nineteenth-century residue of personal wealth, breeding, and connections as *sine qua non*s for recruitment and advancement in the diplomatic service. Only with the 1924 Rogers Act and subsequent legislation would true merit recruitment and promotions gradually replace wealth as arbiter and open the door for real democratization of America's diplomatic ranks.

One important reason wealth played so prominently had much to do with the almost total lack of suitable, permanent housing for American representatives abroad. Well into the twentieth-century, the United States stood aloof from European appreciations of housing as an essential tool for a diplomat's

work. With little offered in the way of official subsidies, diplomats and, particularly, chiefs of mission had to locate and pay out-of-pocket for whatever residential and embassy accommodations they could afford and/or find. Gerard's experience in Berlin demonstrated the heavy and distracting burden this posed for a new, American envoy. Quickly condemning his less-well-off predecessor's residence and offices as inadequate, Gerard embarked on a consuming, four-month odyssey before finally establishing himself and his embassy in satisfactory quarters. Options were scarce in a crowded capital, renovations expensive and time-consuming, the physical move disruptive in every way, the entire ordeal unnecessarily absorbing for a new ambassador feeling his way through the important, initial months of his post. Congress had deigned to lift a finger towards rectifying the situation with the meager housing provisions of the Lowden Act of 1911. Unfortunately, initial funding for the appropriations finally trickled out only in 1914 on the eve of the First World War. The war, of course, completely sidelined the lodging issue. A few, abortive, post-war attempts to revive the matter got nowhere until the Foreign Service Buildings Act of 1926 at last seriously restarted the move to fix so fundamental a deficiency.

Not only did the Gerard embassy struggle with what it lacked, but it also grappled ironically with what it possessed. For roughly between 1880 and 1918, a technological revolution initiated enormous changes to industrial world existence, even as it spilled over to recast the diplomatic milieu for Gerard and his embassy. Electric lights, elevators, typewriters, steamships, automobiles, airplanes, the cinema, telephones, telegraphs, wireless radio--these and other innovations strongly contributed to the changing paradigm. With feverish onset, much swifter means of mechanical transportation allied with a new, worldwide, virtually instantaneous communications web. Their remarkable synergism effectively shrank the earth's physical limits and radically compressed people's--including diplomats'--notions of time. Automobiles, steamships, and airplanes made the world vastly more accessible through faster, more versatile means of locomotion. The constraints of railroad lines and sailships began falling to the auto's quick mobility and the steamship's reliability and speed; airplanes literally overflew obstacles as they penetrated areas formerly accessible only by days of ground travel. News and information could be heard of events almost anywhere and almost as they happened; no longer were days or weeks required, but hours and minutes, for word to travel, decisions to be made. Developments might now be shared by people

everywhere, as the world of simultaneity, for the first time ever in man's history, rapidly embraced the globe.

The technology revolution's implications were direct for America's old diplomatic paradigm and diplomatic service. Events abroad assumed increasingly sinister hue, as Americans began reassessing the nation's interests and security in new circumstances. National safety came into question again, as speedy, transoceanic telegraph and wireless communications between foreign powers and their faster, steam-powered warships renewed fears of vulnerability to foreign attack. Pressures mounted in Washington for a more concerted, security-oriented foreign policy. Meanwhile, the same technology offered important potential for the capital's growing policy approach to foreign affairs, since diplomatic strategies might now be better informed, formulated, and coordinated in their execution by diplomats abroad. Also, the tighter link--read micromanagement--now possible between the home office and the field began revoking the wide latitude previously allowed formerly-secluded diplomats, although the State Department proved somewhat slow to exploit the possibilities. As with turn-of-the-century life generally, the picked-up pace of diplomacy compelled more hurried decision-making in response; under the pressure naturally arose a higher potential for gaffes, misunderstandings, or serious errors. The rapid-fire sequence of demands, counteroffers, and ultimatums that oiled the July 1914 crisis' slippery slope to world war demonstrated this in woeful degree. Finally, communications technology like the cinema and mass dailies made possible an unprecedented public treatment of world issues and developments, and thereby elevated public relations and propaganda as powerful components to modern diplomatic calculus. Caught up in the thickening environment of accelerating communications, complicated policy approaches, often difficult popular opinion considerations, and Machine Age diplomacy in high-gear, the Gerard embassy weathered a tempest made the more chaotic by old paradigm residues on the one hand and unparalleled diplomatic hurdles on the other.

The First World War represented a major inflection point for American diplomacy as it moved towards the new paradigm. "Occupying the pivotal diplomatic position," according to the London legation,⁴ the wartime experience of Gerard's embassy endured and reflected the nation's baptism to the

⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-16, A.E. Taylor to Gerard, 14 August 1916.

complexities of diplomacy in a new century. Just as the demands following the August, 1914, eruption of war strapped the State Department nearly to the breaking point, the conflict immediately inundated embassies like Gerard's and threw their staffs into chronic overtime. Thousands of trapped American travelers, especially those in the German Empire, suddenly required previously unnecessary passports. Access to emergency funds and arrangements for evacuation fell to the hard-pressed Berlin embassy, even as it sought to clarify the wartime status of agreements with the German government. On top of all, neutral America's assumption of the interests of belligerents like Great Britain, Serbia, Romania, San Marino, and Japan, made similar arrangements necessary for their nationals as well.

These early, though not necessarily unusual claims quickly fell to background noise, however, as novel issues highly unusual to American diplomacy forcefully advanced to engage the Gerard embassy. Matters of intelligence gathering, public relations, propaganda, and, most tellingly, human rights and humanitarianism initiated American diplomats in Berlin to the complexities of modern diplomacy. In assuming belligerent interests for Great Britain, Gerard and his staff soon were consumed with inspections of a *gulag* of British prisoner of war (POW) and civilian intern camps scattered across the German empire. They successfully protected the internees from maltreatment and neglect by ensuring basic needs were met and minimum standards and rights upheld by their captors. Gerard's diplomatic intervention opened the door for neutral, non-governmental agencies like the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) to gain and retain access to the camps for further, important, humanitarian work. In service as an intermediary, the embassy negotiated prisoner exchanges between governments and thereby secured repatriation for hundreds of men. On a scale orders of magnitude higher, its work on behalf of Herbert Hoover's Committee for Relief in Belgium directly helped stave off disastrous mass starvation for several million captives in German-occupied Belgium and northern France. Energetic diplomacy failed against similar conditions threatening millions more in Poland, but Gerard's continued engagement in the west forced the Germans to cease forced relocations of French civilians and halt deportations of Belgian males to Germany as slave labor. Such matters of human rights and humanitarianism deeply involved his embassy and directly introduced American foreign affairs to the widening purview of diplomacy in the new century.

Other extraordinary work expanded American diplomacy's scope even further. Persisting into the immediate pre-war years, a negligent deemphasis on information collection abroad reflected America's nineteenth-century insularism. The First World War's outbreak left Washington almost completely devoid of important intelligence regarding the main belligerents and the circumstances surrounding the conflict. Attempting in a virtual vacuum to formulate and then pilot major, national policies of neutrality immediately proved an impossible task. Details of official mood, war effort, domestic conditions, war aims, public sentiments, and countless other considerations became necessary grist for informing the nation's diplomatic initiatives and negotiating her neutrality. Information, then, took on vital importance. Its timely collection for national-level decision-making assumed shrill priority for strategically placed outposts like Berlin, and the Gerard embassy marshaled an impressive intelligence gathering effort in an admirable attempt to keep Washington informed. The ambassador and his staff industriously nurtured official and unofficial connections with German bureaucracy, newspapermen from both sides of the Atlantic, travelers, businessmen, politicians, and contacts throughout the capital's *corps diplomatique*. Domestic news sources they continuously monitored for broader developments, while resorting to spies and private investigators for more urgent or more specialized detail. General situation awareness and occasional tip-offs derived from frequent official travel for camp inspections, military observation, or courier duty. American consuls around the empire meanwhile remained keen to advise the embassy of sensitive news and to usher to Berlin potentially useful contacts. In its exploitation of information sources, the Gerard embassy sought to develop an accurate picture of wartime Germany, even as it established intelligence gathering as indispensable to twentieth-century American diplomacy.

Two further, related factors emerged as serious considerations for American diplomats, namely public relations and propaganda. Mass communications yielded by the technological revolution directly sensitized public opinion, particularly in open democracies like industrial America. By the First World War, popular mood had evolved to a formidable force in domestic politics and the conduct of foreign relations. Both the Allies and the Central Powers discerned very early on that their public image in powerful, neutral America would be perhaps decisive in the conflict's outcome. Their ensuing media struggle colored much of the backdrop around the Gerard embassy's diplomacy. The embassy's

humanitarian work particularly turned on international public opinion in large degree. Prospects of condemnation over an avertable famine disaster in German-occupied Belgium leveraged Gerard's representations in Berlin on the CRB's behalf. Similar risk of bad press for Germany likewise helped him effectively negotiate other humanitarian issues as the Belgian deportations and the French relocations. Responsibility for the well-being of tens of thousands of British POWs and interned civilians compelled the embassy to closely play its influence on domestic, British public opinion. Gerard and his staff understood well the substantial effect that publication of their periodic camp inspection reports could wield. Unduly negative reports or ill-timed release might incite popular pressure on the British government for precipitate, counterproductive action, which easily could drive German retaliation in turn. The corollary, too, could brace Gerard's negotiations, that repercussions from public offense over needless maltreatment of English prisoners could frustrate German designs. Finally, Gerard's painful experience with a German government-supported, anti-Wilson, anti-Gerard front organization called the League of Truth exposed American diplomacy to propaganda's poisonous potential. Opposing American neutrality and its developing Allied bias, the Berlin-based League sought to defame the President and gain the ambassador's recall through a multi-pronged smear campaign. Gerard's vigorous, but ultimately ineffectual, defense employed newspaper editorials, counterespionage, legal action, a counter-League of Friendship, and even sketches of a proposed propaganda play.

Such were the new "subjects" coming to comprise modern "diplomatic science." Grappling with so many largely unprecedented demands on American diplomacy as propaganda, public relations, intelligence gathering, and humanitarian diplomacy, the experience of Ambassador James Gerard's Berlin embassy validated Congressman Peirce's earlier observation, as it helped chasten American diplomacy to the complexities of modern international affairs. That Gerard and his staff of professional diplomats found themselves at the twilight of old diplomacy in America had everything to do with a host of new pressures besetting the nation by the late nineteenth-century. An increasingly active and deliberate involvement in world affairs led to the actualization of America's enormous potential, as de Tocqueville predicted, and to her assumption of world power status. The transformation at once was caused by and contributed to an American diplomatic paradigm shift, which quickly urged the development of articulated foreign policies

and prompted moves towards professionalizing the country's diplomatic and consular services by the mid-1920s. Gerard's embassy (1913-1917) fell at the inflection point of this far-reaching institutional transition to the twentieth-century, and it could look back still with fresh eyes to the impetus hardly two decades before.

CHAPTER II

NEW PRESSURES AND OLD DIPLOMACY: AMERICAN WORLD POWER STATUS AND A FOREIGN RELATIONS PARADIGM SHIFT, 1898-1918

Something new and unexpected has happened--something which seems to presage important developments in world politics. For the first time in history, the United States of America is intervening in the affairs of Europe.¹

--French Ambassador Maurice Paléologue (1905)

The mere two decades between victory in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the conclusion of the First World War in 1918 witnessed momentous change in American diplomacy. Spain's defeat abruptly established America as a colonial power--a key prerequisite to world power status at the time--with new territories spread from the eastern Caribbean to the western Pacific. The world war marked the threshold to the nation's undisputed elevation as a world power. In between those years, the rise to the presidency in 1901 of the vigorous Theodore Roosevelt saw the initial exercise of the nation's newfound influence--the product of exploding industry, growing population, and changed perspective--as she sought to grow into a new, at first uncomfortable, global role. A domestic preoccupation, little to no foreign relations emphasis, and a neglected, spoils-ridden American foreign service characterized the old paradigm. Beginning in the 1890s, however, a new paradigm began asserting itself to bring about a decided outward focus; an emphasis on foreign trade and affairs, and mounting pressure for foreign service reform and professionalization. Roosevelt gave the first clear direction to America's changing international stature, as the country's response to a new foreign relations paradigm pushed her terminal rise to world power status.

¹ Maurice Paléologue, *Un grand tournant de la politique mondiale, 1904-1906* (Paris: Plon, 1934), p. 364, quoted in Paul Gordon Lauren, *Diplomats and Bureaucrats: The First Institutional Responses to Twentieth-Century Diplomacy in France and Germany* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), p. 42.

Across the Atlantic in 1905, European statesmen like Ambassador Paléologue had grown arrogant over their long unchallenged dominance of world affairs. That year, though, saw them reel at the news of Russia's military defeat at the hands of Asiatic Japan: For the first time, a non-European upstart had beaten one of Europe's great powers. But perhaps as important, symbolically, to the changing global balance of power was the source of the offer to mediate between the parties. It issued not from any European chancellery or European statesman. It came rather from the American capital. Around the globe, Roosevelt's offer hailed America's unquestioned arrival on the world power scene; across the European continent it gave earnest occasion for diary entries like Paléologue's; and back at home, meanwhile, it helped serve notice that the time had come for a mature and professional American diplomatic service equipped for the mounting demands of a new era.

THE OLD DIPLOMACY UNDER THE OLD PARADIGM

The change in America's attitude epitomized by the Roosevelt initiative is best understood by viewing it as a result of a shift in diplomatic paradigms. In this sense, "paradigm" refers to the constellation of beliefs, values, and axioms generally shared by the community of policy-makers at a given time. It represents the prism or filter through which they viewed and interpreted their world, and, therefore, the manner in which they considered the country's domestic and foreign priorities. The heyday of the old paradigm played out roughly in the quarter-century between the end of the American Civil War until around 1890. Historian Robert Beisner best describes its straightforward, insular character:

In these years the outlook of American policymakers was generally noninterventionist. Isolationist in spirit, they preferred acting in foreign affairs apart from other nations. Unpracticed in and ambivalent about the use of governmental power, their customary manner of conducting foreign affairs was passive and reactive and involved waiting in Washington for events to happen before responding *ad hoc*; their guidance of diplomats sent abroad, mostly rank amateurs, was minimal and vague. They did not equip their country's army and navy for serious warfare. Complacent congressmen exploited diplomatic issues for partisan ends, just as they did rivers-and-harbors bills and Indian agencies. High state department officials closed shop early and spent little time defining U.S. policy'...American officials all held to the core assumption of the Old Paradigm: that their

nation was safe, her security was threatened nowhere by anyone.²

Throughout the nineteenth-century, a national preoccupation with domestic priorities relegated foreign affairs to low priority. Her attention and energies consumed by a long civil war, settlement of the West, and the creation of an industrial society, America did not consider external developments of any real import. Blessed with protective oceans east and west, and inoffensive neighbors north and south, isolated, continental America also could afford to do so for the time being. In consequence, strong foreign policy never developed in the nineteenth century. The nation's foreign relations remained definable as more a series of incidents than a product of deliberated policies; as more a number of distinct events, not sequences of actions that moved from a source toward a conclusion.³ Between 1865 and the 1890s, political leaders under the old paradigm in the United States "showed a feckless disdain for diplomacy typical of the times."⁴ For example, just as Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps began his ill-fated interoceanic canal project in 1879, the State Department closed down its legation in Bogota. With such palsied decision-making, standing neglect of the department, and Washington's general disregard for foreign affairs, until the turn of the century a small staff handled the equally small and uncomplicated work load constituting America's matters of state.

Domestic political interests outweighed those of the nation often enough, particularly as officials' day-to-day preoccupations centered around rather mundane activities as protecting American citizens abroad--especially missionaries and naturalized citizens--who had gotten themselves into problems. Possibilities of an interoceanic canal perennially excited general interest in Central America, but only in an emotional sense. Fishing and sealing disputes with Canada were humdrum. America remained only very minimally involved in European developments, just as the diplomats of imperial Europe, who largely ruled the world, generally disregarded and dismissed her. Meanwhile, in the Pacific and Far East, while the United States (in Beisner's words again) "followed an assertive, sometimes adventurous course resulting in

² Robert L. Beisner, From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900 (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1975), pp. 37-38.

³ Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of 40 Years, 1904-1945, 2 vols., ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), 1: 2.

⁴ Beisner, Old Diplomacy, p. 69.

a sharp increase of activity in China, Japan, Korea, Samoa, and Hawaii, [it] took place...within the limits set by the Old Paradigm. American involvement was erratic and tentative; it was often amateurish and almost always initiated in the field rather than Washington.”⁵

“Normal confusion” consequently marked the period between 1865 and 1890, as the field took the lead in the face of Washington’s vacuum in centralized foreign policymaking. All too often, an overly-ambitious naval officer, zealous missionary, or isolated party hack-*cum*-diplomat provoked a crisis, which, once finally receiving news of it in the capital, officials would hurriedly set out to compose. Just as telling were the unusual actors in the field, who proved mature and intelligent observers of world affairs and urged more proactive policies. To their suggestions, Washington responded infrequently if ever and by default left them to their own initiative as well. Occasionally their actions resulted in significant advantages for the country. If lucky, these boons might find reluctant, *post facto* sanction--short-term “policies”--while other gains often died through official indifference and inaction. In any case, several things stood clear in nineteenth-century American foreign policy. Generally, almost no one on either end perceived American advances in any region of the world as essential to the national interest. “Policymaking” had little place in the halls of the State Department or White House; characteristically, neither kept track of developing situations elsewhere in the world, let alone exercised control over them. And initiative in this American foreign affairs vacuum more typically emanated from the field, leaving Washington acting impulsively more often than consistently in the realm of international relations.⁶

Neglect consequently characterized the diplomatic service between the Civil War and 1900. Occasional lukewarm attempts at reform set sail only to promptly founder on the stormy seas of spoils politics. Congress’ landmark Act of 1856 established salaries for envoys (whose meager allowances would stand well into the next century) and, among other lesser provisions, authorized presidential appointment of secretaries to various posts. Political influence, and not merit, still decided appointments, however, and subsequent bills failed to garner any interest.⁷ From the nation’s early republican roots stemmed many of

⁵ Ibid., pp. 60-64.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 60-64 and 70.

⁷ Graham H. Stuart, American Diplomatic and Consular Practice (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936), pp. 172-174.

the inadequacies that militated against a professional foreign service. A republican prejudice persisted against a permanent office-holding class. Along similar lines, concerns that public office was not for profit helped propagate an inadequate salary scale. Sentiments meanwhile predominated of the unnecessary of extensive diplomatic relations for isolationist America. The country's republican simplicity was felt to be threatened by returning consuls and secretaries contaminated with European aristocratic foppishness after extended stays abroad. And republican economy repeatedly frustrated attempts to improve the diplomatic service, in contrast to the consular service, which generally was held to be useful and necessary considering its direct business links. Diplomatic frivolities, it was felt, had nothing to do with one's duties as a public servant.

Altogether, these counts encouraged public and political approval of spoilsmanship and short terms in office, especially in the case of would-be diplomats. The services' ranks were filled with all sorts of party hacks and incompetents, which accurately reflected the extraordinary lack of official support and expectations. Mediocrity or worse became the order of the day, as rogues and misfits largely operated the American diplomatic and consular establishments abroad, placed there as reward--their "spoils"--for faithful service to the current administration's party. The services had to rely on annual, grudging congressional appropriations, which invariably involved tense debates and party deals and certainly failed to provide even the barest essentials. The shabbiest legation or consulate buildings in town hardly inspired confidence in them or in potential foreign customers for growing American commerce. Low salaries frequently required augmentation with income from a separate business. Barring that, overreliance on consular fees often happened, which only provided incentive for the agent to overcharge American merchants and shippers, or else use their official position to effect other money-making deals, all too often without scruple.⁸ Of the western nations, only the United States steadfastly refused to regard its diplomatic missions abroad as permanent and its diplomats as members of a career service. Altogether, two key elements of a later, professional service remained almost entirely absent from nineteenth-century American

⁸ David M. Pletcher, "1861-1898: Economic Growth and Diplomatic Adjustment," in Economics and World Power: An Assessment of American Diplomacy Since 1789, ed. William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 128-129.

diplomacy, namely security of tenure and promotion by merit.⁹ The collective logic behind these attitudes and conditions, however, began to fail around the turn of the century under the demands of America's sharply increasing foreign involvement and the pressures of a new paradigm.

A NEW PARADIGM AND WORLD POWER STATUS

Beginning in the 1890s, the state of affairs in America gradually began to change and with it, the foreign policy paradigm. Robert Beisner asserts a new era in American diplomacy dawned after 1890, caused by a shift in diplomatic paradigms. In this decade, "[t]he passivity and drift of American foreign policy began to give way to more deliberateness and consistency," according to Beisner. "[The United States] entered on a more aggressive and expansionist phase in its diplomatic history and reached out into the world in an increasingly determined and deliberate fashion."¹⁰ This emergence of America from its traditional isolationism was the result of a shift from the earlier old paradigm grown obsolete--the result of major economic, social, psychic, and technologic developments.

The Civil War had powerfully spurred on the economy. The rapid growth continued apace after the war's conclusion, making the period 1865-1898 one of unprecedented economic expansion in the United States. While its population more than doubled, America's gross national product nearly trebled during that time. If agricultural gains were considerable, industrial advances were downright explosive. Coal output expanded by 800%. A 523% rise in steel rail production directly fed a 576% increase in miles of railroad track in operation. Starting virtually from zero, the steel industry went from producing fewer than 20,000 long tons of ingots and castings to an impressive 9 million. And during the same period the petroleum industry's output soared from around 3 million barrels in 1865 to an astounding 55 million in 1898.¹¹ The economic boom did not fail to affect the nation's foreign trade, either, which also grew

⁹ Warren Frederick Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779-1939: A Study in Administrative History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 16.

¹⁰ Beisner, Old Diplomacy, pp. 2 and 30-31.

¹¹ For example, wheat production increased 256%, corn by 222%, and refined sugar zoomed up 460%. Altogether the "estimated true value" of taxable property in the country rose over 446%. Pletcher, "Economic Growth," p. 120.

rapidly between 1865 and 1898. American exports rose between those years from \$281 million to \$1,231 million and imports from \$239 million to \$616 million. As the decades passed, finished manufactured exports gradually pushed raw materials exports aside. Thus, towards the end of the century, cotton and cereals competed for first place, meat and meat products followed in third, iron and steel products fourth, and refined petroleum fifth place.¹²

The exponential growth of America's foreign trade had two-fold advantage. As it accelerated upward from just over \$1 billion in 1875 to nearly \$2 billion in 1898 to \$3.1 billion by 1908,¹³ foreign trade not only brought in raw materials, luxuries, and amenities unavailable at home, but more importantly it furnished an outlet for American production, which otherwise would have remained in the domestic market and further depressed already low prices. In 1890 America claimed a meager 3.9% of world trade in manufactured goods. By 1899, she had risen to fourth among the world's top manufacturers, now supplying 9.8% of the total. The next year America's production of steel and iron nearly equaled Germany and Great Britain's combined output. Per capita consumption of manufactured wares stood an estimated 50% higher than in Great Britain and 100% than in Germany or France,¹⁴ which by 1913 would translate into the nation's industrial production accounting for 11% of world trade in manufactures and a full one-third of the total world output.¹⁵ As a result, foreign trade assumed an inordinate place in the overall economy.

Continued expansion of American foreign commerce, then, particularly after 1890, compelled a foreign policy to take shape that would guarantee and protect private citizens' economic and financial endeavors abroad.¹⁶ But several other important factors swirled about the nation's economic boom to

¹² The nation's industrialization occurred so rapidly, that the glut of domestically produced goods forced imports of manufactured goods to fall by nearly half from 39.8% in 1870 to 23.9% in 1900. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹³ Rachel West, The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 11; and Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 2.

¹⁴ Pletcher, "Economic Growth," pp. 121 and 123.

¹⁵ Paul A. Varg, "The United States a World Power, 1900-1917: Myth or Reality?" In Twentieth-Century American Foreign Policy, Braeman, ed. (N.p.: Ohio State University Press, 1971), p. 208; and William H. Becker, "1899-1920: America Adjusts to World Power," in Economics and World Power: An Assessment of American Diplomacy Since 1789, William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 176.

¹⁶ Robert H. Wiebe, The Search for Order: 1877-1920, The Making of America Series, David Donald, General Editor (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. 232.

promote the change in paradigm. Shifts in any paradigm happen in consequence of both a change in conditions and a change in people's perception of those conditions. In the late nineteenth century, transforming domestic and international circumstances combined with a new regard for them to further prompt a shift in diplomatic paradigms. Three fairly sudden and interrelated shocks beset the old paradigm and joined with several other developments to drive the change.

Starting in the late 1880s and into the early 1890s, American society entered into a widespread malaise that cast a dark shadow of gloom and anxiety over the people. These doldrums were deepened by a second shock, the severe economic crisis and depression starting in 1893-94 and lasting until 1897. The third blow came from abroad in the form of threats, whether perceived or real, to America's export markets in Europe and China, a development exaggerated by the other two shocks.¹⁷ Together these upsets helped cast the old paradigm into crisis and stimulate the birth of a new paradigm.

In the final two decades of the nineteenth century, many Americans grew into a general uneasiness, marked by confusion over the present and fear for the nation's future. Its direct manifestation centered in a sudden decline in popular confidence. Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 pronouncement of the passing of America's frontier experience with the final settlement of the west lent further uncertainty to the future. The frontier safety valve had largely defined the country's national character, democratic government, and economic prosperity: Now it was gone. Many began doubting the efficacy of American institutions and suspecting a deterioration in the quality of the American "race." Many more began sensing American society had somehow found itself in a muddle, that the country had been somehow cast adrift. While Turner's words gave voice to their feelings, several concrete developments contributed to society's general unease. Very rapid population growth proved unsettling, particularly as demographic changes like rapid urbanization and the altered make-up of newer immigrants (shifting from the north and west of Europe, to the continent's south and east) seemed to threaten traditionally-agrarian America's social homogeneity and national solidarity. A mounting trust movement and labor unions' rising numbers and militancy proved unfamiliar organizations of economic power, which seemed to have suddenly closed the

¹⁷ Beisner, *Old Diplomacy*, pp. 72-73.

doors of opportunity to the common man. Then the boltlock slammed home in 1893. That year, the panic and subsequent economic depression of 1893-97 brought people's insecurity and desperation to their nadir. The violence and radicalism that followed them eroded any remaining optimism.

As the national malaise and economic depression set the domestic scene, the third major factor shifting the paradigm began asserting itself--a threat to America's traditional markets abroad. As the decade progressed, the export problem--finding new and sufficient markets abroad for the nation's exploding economy--went from being perceived as merely urgent to borderline desperate by the depression's last years, 1897-1898. In the face of America's industrial deluge, European nations had abruptly thrown up a protective curtain of raised tariffs against U.S. imports at home and in their colonies. Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) soon opened up vast China to the commercial predations of the victor and the vulture-like great powers of Europe. Territorial annexations and spheres of influence quickly seemed to endanger the very existence of the empire, as they cut off America's old markets and voided prospects of new ones. Widely shared domestic views grew up, that only decisive diplomatic action might blunt this threat and help prevent socioeconomic disaster in a market-less America. Thus, what historian Richard Hofstadter has termed the "psychic crisis" of the 1890s, sought out an antidote for the nebulous ills of American society and her economy. Compelled to reexamine the precepts of the country's foreign policy, the consensus settled on a new frontier to replace the expired West--one of export markets and colonies. Beisner observes that "interest in foreign trade now took on obsessive proportions. Trade could no longer be handled so casually but now demanded continuous and systematic attention at the highest levels of the state." To stave off an otherwise bleak future of shrinking opportunities amid increasing social unrest, the acquisition of new foreign markets became vastly more urgent.¹⁸

Finally, several other less acute factors weighed in to provoke the shift as well. A virtual revolution in transportation and communications technology effectively shrunk the globe. Steamships, railroads, and, especially, transoceanic telegraph cables made the world infinitely more accessible. Events

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 74-77.

abroad now seemed more likely to impinge on U.S. national interests. New steam-powered battleships, governments' new capacity to telegraphically dictate fleet or army movements, and other technology-driven changes in the art of warmaking made America seem unusually vulnerable to foreign attack. Together they helped conjure new interest in a more security-minded foreign policy. Rising awareness of the nation's growing might also helped reshape attitudes towards the rest of the world. Americans increasingly understood that the country's phenomenal economic growth inevitably translated into increased influence abroad. This fed an already rising nationalism, that began sweeping the country and manifesting in heightened sentiments of chauvinism, militarism, and imperialism--eventually to find live prey in 1898 with imperial Spain and with recalcitrant Filipinos the following year.

The net impact of these many developments was to change the prism of circumstances and outlook and reveal the world, the nation, and its interests in a very new light. America's traditional assumption, the heart of the old paradigm, that she faced no serious international threat, rapidly evaporated. Arguments for isolation and nonintervention lost their potency. The country's businessmen, politicians, and people began looking beyond her shores more and more for reassurance of the nation's strength, health, and purpose. By the mid-nineties the change had settled sufficiently, so that "American policymakers had begun to see foreign affairs from a new perspective, to confront the outer world with new assumptions and concerns, and to seek new objectives."¹⁹ A new paradigm began to emerge in a blurry, imprecise transition that would advance through Gerard's tenure in Berlin and into the 1920s.

Several features characterized the emerging new paradigm. With a growing consciousness of their nation's strength and importance, Americans began increasingly to consider America as a world power--and that she was now obliged to act like one. In consequence, they more and more viewed American interests as laying everywhere, and, alternatively, events everywhere as capable of potentially impacting those interests. Beisner asserts the most important result was the evolution of a "policy" approach to America's foreign relations--of an actual "foreign policy." "Abrupt and casual shifts" in U.S. relations gave way to more farsighted continuity, under mounting demands for more concerted,

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 2 and 74-84.

governmental backing to expanding markets and business contacts abroad, to protecting perceived American interests “everywhere,” to the nation’s new international ambitions. With the new policy approach came “a historic shift in initiative from the field to the center,” as “[p]olicymakers now identified specific and important interests abroad and designed definite plans to protect and advance them.” Washington took over the reins of the country’s foreign relations and “[s]ystem began to replace spasm.” Perhaps most telling, America’s traditional spirit of non-interventionism began to erode. Along with her increasing external involvement came a new willingness to intervene in other nation’s affairs and to use force in furtherance of policy. Beginning with a string of tense incidents in Samoa (1889), Chile (1891-92), Hawaii and Brazil (1893), Nicaragua (1894), and Venezuela (1895-96), America’s increasing assertiveness in international affairs finally broke out in earnest with the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the Philippine-American War in 1899-1902.²⁰

The two wars joined America’s booming economy to furnish dramatic, definite signals that a sleeping giant was rousing. As one authority described it, “A growing interest in foreign markets during the late 1880s and 1890s created a background or atmosphere--pronounced if not uniform or consistent--which encouraged Americans to play a greater role in international affairs, especially in those of the western hemisphere.”²¹ Formerly, commercial interests predominated in America, but by the turn of the century territorial and political interests had moved forcefully onto the diplomatic scene in the wake of Spain’s defeat and the Filipino conflict. In 1899, as the country assumed charge of Puerto Rico, Guam, Cuba, and the Philippines from Spain, Assistant Secretary of State John Bassett Moore acknowledged America’s changed status from a decade earlier. As a result of the war, he observed, the United States had

²⁰ In notable contrast to the relatively docile decades before, America quarreled with Germany and Britain, to the point of hostilities in 1889, over Samoa’s superb port, Pago Pago. Crisis flared in Chile over the assault and murder of several drunken U.S. Navy sailors in 1891-92. An aborted, post-coup attempt at annexing Hawaii (finally accomplished in 1898) and overt involvement with a civil war in Brazil followed the next year. Passive-aggressive support of Britain over Nicaragua’s 1894 attempt to absorb the Miskito Coast and another crisis over a border dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela in 1895-96 completed the run-up to tensions with Spain beginning in 1895. In contrast to the 379 U.S. combat deaths incurred against Spain in 1898, over 4,000 Americans were killed and 2,800 more wounded in action in the three years of forgotten war in the Philippines; 18,000 Filipino soldiers and 100,000 to 200,000 non-combatants died, as well. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-89 and 95-141.

²¹ Pletcher, “Economic Growth,” p. 165.

moved “from a position of comparative freedom from entanglements into the position of what is commonly called a world-power.”²²

For their part, Europeans recognized America’s rising stature, even as they entertained rising concerns over the United States’ future role in world affairs. Their growing esteem found reflection in the 1893 congressional provision authorizing the President for the first time to send envoys bearing the same rank as the representative from the government in question. Thus, for the first time Washington (under Grover Cleveland) appointed ambassador-level diplomats to London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Rome, and Berlin, who earlier had so-elevated their legations to the American capital.²³ But some trepidation also motivated the exchange, as they recognized industrial America obviously possessed the wherewithal to inundate European and world markets with its manufactures. U.S. acquisition of an empire in the wake of the war with Spain provoked additional fears over what might follow, as did the country’s puzzling nonconformity with traditional norms of world power behavior. America disapproved of any but natives controlling countries like China; and she refused to allow herself or any other power to materially intervene in South America. More disturbing yet was her apparent reproach of alliances, colonization and imperialism. In this light, America appeared unpredictable to the Europeans, even as they understood her new power status.²⁴ By early 1900, Kaiser Wilhelm and the powerful German Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz counted the four world powers as Germany, England, Russia, and the United States.²⁵

The nineteenth-century provided a final episode of America’s growing external involvement in 1899-1900, when a new paradigm exaggeration of the importance of the Far East to the national welfare produced the Open Door notes. Sensing her new world power status and the vast, promising Chinese export market at stake, America felt compelled to preserve her interests in the face of the post-Sino-Japanese War frenzy of seizures, leaseholds, and spheres of influence that began to partition the country in

²² Varg, “United States a World Power,” p. 207. Modern historians assert America’s rise as an indisputable world power came after her fight with Spain and began requiring of her nascent global foreign policies sophisticated military and diplomatic planning. See Walter LaFeber, The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), p. 230.

²³ Stuart, American Practice, p. 175. Tokyo received such elevation in 1906.

²⁴ Varg, “United States a World Power,” pp. 211-212.

²⁵ Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, My Memoirs, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919), 2: 161.

1897. In a series of diplomatic notes between the main parties--Japan, Germany, Russia, France, Italy, and Great Britain--Secretary of State John Hay gained multi-lateral, if grudging, endorsement of the so-called "open door" principle, essentially the maintenance throughout China of a nondiscriminatory trade environment. When the Boxer Rebellion threatened to touch off a new round of divisions in 1900, America dispatched 5,000 troops from the Philippines to help break the siege of Peking's foreign quarter.²⁶ With no troops beyond her borders in 1870, 1880, or 1890, American foreign policies had by 1900 sent tens of thousands of soldiers and sailors to occupy lands from Cuba to the Philippines to China. Those policies derived from the nation's changed perspective of the world, from its altered self-perceptions, from a shift in its diplomatic paradigm; what was unimportant in 1890 had become essential--or at least seemed so--by 1900.

While a few bolder patterns stand clear in late-nineteenth century United States foreign relations--the country's increasing dominance of the Caribbean, acquisition of an extraterritorial empire, growth of a sustained interest in the Far East, and rise to world power status, as examples--it is also equally apparent much disagreement surrounds these developments. The extent to which economic factors prompted and guided them, the magnitude of Washington's purposefulness in shaping them, even the chronology of these new patterns of foreign policy occasion disagreement still. What is not in dispute, however, is that a seachange in United States diplomacy began to appear around 1890. The transformation, in fact, represented according to Beisner, "a major shift in the manner of thinking about and executing American foreign policy: the old, reactive, unsystematic conduct of U.S. foreign relations was replaced by the making of a real 'policy' in international affairs and its more-or-less systematic execution."²⁷ In the 1890s, one American diplomatic paradigm began gradually supplanting an earlier one, in a muddy transition that was neither instantaneous nor ever entire. By Gerard's time in Berlin, evidence abounded still of both the old and the new paradigms. Indeed, starting in the 1890s, the process extended at least into the early 1920s, as it provided the backdrop and important impetus to a crucial, though lagging, transformation of America's diplomatic service.

²⁶ Beisner, *Old Diplomacy*, pp. 144-153.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE FROM AMATEURISM TO PROFESSIONALISM

The movement toward career diplomacy in the United States began in response to enlarging American world interests. Spoils politics effectively subordinated any moves in this direction at first. Between 1884 and 1896, the American presidency ricocheted between the Republican and Democratic Parties no less than four times. With each change in administration came wholesale upset throughout the diplomatic and consular services, as the new administration sought to replace the outgoing president's appointees with its own deserving supporters. The diplomatic service proved much the more spoils-ridden, however, and had to rely on consular reform to provide an indirect engine of change. President Grover Cleveland (1892-96) gave the initial kick-start.

Early in his Administration he issued an executive order attempting, among other tentative reforms, to bring the consular service under the merit system of the Civil Service Act of 1883, to include selection by examination and promotion based on merit with commensurate pay raises. Despite his good intentions, however, the spoils system persisted in actuality, particularly under the successor McKinley Administrations (1896-1901), which abandoned Cleveland's effort altogether.²⁸ By the late 1890s, this left the diplomatic service in particular "tied down by an antiquated system of appointments and a menacing inflexibility," historian Waldo Heinrichs explains. "It was chronically either shorthanded or overstaffed. No adequate salary scale existed. Members were not selected for their qualifications for diplomacy, and they, in turn, entered the service for reasons quite apart from desiring to serve the nation. The service was spoils-ridden and could offer no prospect of permanent tenure or promotion by merit."²⁹

Until 1898, the demands of American foreign relations remained such that their maintenance, however haphazard, hardly required the attention of the president and Secretary of State, assisted by a few

²⁸ Cleveland, however, did dispatch abroad in 1893 America's first ambassador-level envoys, to begin redressing chronic problems encountered by inferior-ranked ministers, a point taken up in Chapter III, below.

²⁹ Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy, p. 18.

experts and clerks.³⁰ While such modest arrangements sufficiently served the foreign policy needs of the country in the initial post-Civil War decades, as the century's end approached it became increasingly evident changing conditions were leaving the services less and less adequate, and Cleveland-like reforms more and more needed. The early, unpromising vacillation between Cleveland and McKinley at once ignored the growing pressures for reform, but also reflected the friction-filled transition to eventual professionalism. For beginning in the 1890s, the department's workload in Washington grew increasingly voluminous and varied, reflecting America's heightened diplomatic involvement, a doubling in immigration between 1898 and 1908, and the boom in her foreign commerce.³¹ By 1898, the department began expanding its operations quantitatively, however inadequately, to match demand with supply. But, as the volume and importance of American foreign relations and trade increased, mounting responsibilities--for example, to report local trade conditions or to defend American shipping and commerce against unfair impositions--paralleled rising pressures at home to occupy diplomatic and consular positions with reliable, competent men. A qualitative change was needed, as well.

Adapting so far to the new paradigm, however, would lag for the nation's diplomatic establishment. The Spanish-American War in 1898 effectively heralded the dawning of a different diplomatic paradigm in America, even as it signaled the country's rise to world power status. But the State Department would remain a neglected branch of the government well into the next century, with the ostrich-like proclivities of the old diplomacy hampering response to the new. Nevertheless, America's diplomatic service began slowly transforming and adjusting. Heretofore an essentially ragtag, amateurish institution, the State Department's reform and the diplomatic service's professionalization became imperative in the face of long neglect. Heinrichs captures well the setting which led soon to successful reform efforts after the turn of the century:

The expansion of American political and economic interest in world affairs towards the end of the nineteenth century, sharpened and symbolized by the Spanish-American War, gave new national importance to the work of diplomats and consuls. The glare of public

³⁰ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 2.

³¹ The number of daily messages flowing into the department, for example, rose from 36,925 annually in 1887 to 94,000 per year in 1907, a 156% increase with no commensurate increase in clerical help. West, *State on the Eve*, p. 11.

interest revealed them as hopelessly inadequate. Businessmen seeking new markets received little helpful information. American travelers were rebuffed or ignored by officials in dingy consulates and embassies located on back streets. Abroad this powerful nation appeared weak, inefficient, and corrupt. What looked to the muckraker like corruption looked to the businessman like inefficiency, and for both the solution was civil service reform...³²

Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1908) demonstrated early the degree to which proaction and deliberateness characterized the new diplomacy. The McKinley Administration inaugurated America's world power status, a key component to the new paradigm in diplomacy, but an assassin ended any future role for the unfortunate president. His successor, Roosevelt, would oversee America's "new wave of involvement in international affairs,"³³ as he became "the first president...to have no rest from complicated foreign issues, just as his generation of Americans was the first to pursue more than 'crisis diplomacy.'"³⁴ In 1903, after Colombia refused an initial U.S. proposal to take over the canal project in her northern province, Roosevelt deliberately fomented Panamanian independence and promptly concluded a treaty with the new government to finish the strategically critical Panama Canal eleven years later.³⁵ His 1904 proclamation of the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine further formalized America's new ascendance. And his offer to mediate an end to the Russo-Japanese War and subsequent Treaty of Portsmouth in 1906 further signified America's rising wave of foreign involvement, which by James Watson Gerard's time in Berlin (1913-1917) would begin cresting at unimagined heights.

The wave needed a deft helmsman in the shape of a competent mechanism for foreign policy formulation and able diplomats to execute it. So, in order to better handle the expanding volume and complexity of twentieth-century international affairs, around 1900 initial efforts began to impose a crude order upon the nation's disorderly foreign affairs environment. A basic, qualitative shift asserted itself, as

³² Waldo H. Heinrichs, American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966; paperback edition published New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 10-11.

³³ Paul Gordon Lauren, Diplomats and Bureaucrats: The First Institutional Responses to Twentieth-Century Diplomacy in France and Germany (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp. 41-42.

³⁴ Beisner, Old Diplomacy, p. 153.

³⁵ In contrast to the illogical 1879 shut-down, mentioned earlier, of America's Bogota legation at the moment the French Panama canal project got off the ground. The shut-down reflected the old paradigm, while Roosevelt depicted the new.

America sought to reorganize and reform the diplomatic service into a new diplomatic institution along more scientific and rational lines. With a growing desire for regularity and predictability and the increasing need for a government of continuous involvement, a new emphasis upon executive administration characterized the shift.³⁶ Beginning essentially with Roosevelt, American foreign policy grew increasingly flexible, largely through the introduction of the fundamentals of bureaucratic management.³⁷ From administration to operations, the broad roots of the State Department's reorganization rested in pragmatism and the establishment of the department, its operations, and its work along more practical, business-like lines. It was a "new diplomacy" based on scientific policy, and the new State Department was to be a machine capable of efficient coordination.³⁸

Only in the initial years of the twentieth century, then, did lasting diplomatic reform finally establish a beachhead. Tellingly, all the important developments during the initial decade came as a result of executive orders, not congressional legislation. Roosevelt issued the first, but only after overcoming much political resistance. The President listened sympathetically to voices like future career diplomatic officer, Joseph Grew, who exhorted his presidential patron soon after his 1904 appointment to the consular service: "We must develop a career. As a great nation with steadily expanding interests abroad we must, if only as a simple business proposition, develop and maintain a professional [diplomatic] service. Otherwise we shall be steadily handicapped in competition with other nations."³⁹ Grew's lowly voice joined a chorus of others in urging an already outwardly-disposed Roosevelt, but only the next year were the political winds finally right for action. In November, 1905, Roosevelt issued two executive orders returning the consular service to Cleveland's merit system and for the first time placing the diplomatic service on a Civil Service basis for all ranks below minister and ambassador. The second order also promulgated the filling

³⁶ This development paralleled a similar move in the increasingly industrialized American business community. Wiebe, Search for Order, p. 229.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

³⁸ The movement toward reform of American diplomacy and its apparatus fit into the period's broader concern with efficiency. Roosevelt perceived significant progress "in the introduction of labor-saving devices, with consequent industrial evolution." Roosevelt message to Congress, 8 December 1908, quoted in Jerry Israel, "A Diplomatic Machine: Scientific Management in the Department of State, 1906-1924" in Building the Organizational Society: Essays on Associational Activities in Modern America, ed. Jerry Israel (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 192.

³⁹ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 13.

of secretarial vacancies by transfer or promotion from within the diplomatic service or by appointment after oral and written examination for competence in international law, diplomatic usage, and modern languages. In April, 1906, Congress passed legislation to extend Civil Service grading and classification to consular officers (but not yet diplomatic secretaries), and to provide for the appointment of five inspectors of consulates to ensure at least biennial inspections of every consular location for efficiency. A new presidential order in June executed Congress' act and thereby effectively removed the consular service from the patronage system.

Meanwhile, no such inspection regime existed for the diplomatic branch and diplomatic secretaries remained tenuously protected by Roosevelt's earlier order--always subject to overthrow with a change in administration--even as Secretary of State Elihu Root at last managed to put through a major overhaul of the State Department. When Root took office in 1905, he likened himself to "a man trying to conduct the business of a large, metropolitan law-firm in the office of a village squire,"⁴⁰ a situation which he set out promptly to rectify. In addition to a major structural reorganization (discussed below), Root established an examining board to screen candidates for both services and instituted a variety of lesser reform measures, which were carried on in the administration of Roosevelt's hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft (1908-1912). Taft echoed Roosevelt's sentiments in holding industrial efficiency as the key to national economic health. Ballooning "nation-wide industries which combine to increase efficiency and to promote, not to restrain trade," were America's future, and a reformed, more efficient diplomatic (and consular) service would be essential in ensuring this "modern evolution of industrial efficiency."⁴¹ With Roosevelt's 1906 order as precedent, Taft very shortly brought appointments and promotions for all diplomatic ranks below minister and ambassador under the Civil Service Act through an executive order of November, 1909. Taft also established a new Board of Examiners, constituted with high-ranking officers of the State Department, to administer his order's provisions. Thus, in short shrift under Roosevelt and Taft, the rudiments of a merit-based diplomatic service were set up, gradually to be expanded by their successors. The perennial problem facing the consular and, especially, the diplomatic

⁴⁰ Quoted in Beisner, *Old Diplomacy*, p. 93.

⁴¹ Taft speech in Chicago, 18 October 1912, quoted in Israel, "Diplomatic Machine," p. 192.

services rested with recruiting and retaining quality personnel. Success ultimately depended largely on the services' ability to offer a convincingly worthwhile career. Roosevelt's and Taft's early efforts made significant headway in eroding the entrenched spoils system and saw the quality of the personnel begin improving materially in consequence. Their 1906 and 1909 reforms were the first important steps in the development of a professional American foreign service.⁴²

As America's external relations widened in both depth and scope, bureaucratic specialization within the State Department became necessary to handle the greater volume of work and to provide the heightened expertise required to adequately deal with American diplomacy's increasingly complex substance. Soon after the turn of the century, substantial reorganization of the State Department began, with bureaucratic specialization at the vanguard. In 1907 under Root, the department began requiring a thirty-day period of instruction to all new consular officers before proceeding to their posts. Two years later in 1909, the department began assigning newly-appointed diplomatic secretaries to a similar period of instruction in its offices. Despite wise intentions, however, the non-rigorous training for the most part consisted merely of reading reports and visiting various department divisions and bureaus. New diplomatic secretaries received no formal, let alone structured, instruction and would endure the haphazard arrangement until the Rogers Act of 1924.⁴³

The process of reorganization inevitably touched the department's information storage, retrieval, and communication flow. As the volume of despatches, cables, and memoranda expanded without end, the department sought ever greater systemization of its filing methods. Prior to 1906, documents were filed primarily alphabetically, which proved fatally inelastic as topics grew more multifaceted and interrelated. The Numerical File system superseded this archaic method in 1906, only to give way itself to the more comprehensive, efficient, and flexible Decimal File system after 1910.⁴⁴ As the storage and retrievability of information improved, its communication did as well. The accelerating pace of the industrialized world required more rapid decision-making, which in turn demanded speedier means of communication. During

⁴² Graham H. Stuart, The Department of State: A History of its Organization, Procedures, and Personnel (New York: MacMillan Company, 1949), p. 230-231; and Pletcher, "Economic Growth," p. 128.

⁴³ Stuart, American Practice, p. 153-154.

⁴⁴ Israel, "Diplomatic Machine," p. 186.

the initial years after 1900, various technologies were introduced to the department's operations, like the telephone and telegraph, which helped further transform the diplomatic service.⁴⁵ In 1909, a separate functional Division of Information came into being and used the new technology to handle information and data distribution to American diplomatic missions abroad. That same year, Taft's Secretary of State Knox sought to better coordinate departmental activities at the top through reorganization along functional lines with the establishment of the office of Counselor and the appointment of five Special Assistants to the Secretary.⁴⁶

Perhaps the most important example of the reorganization process came with the creation of geographic divisions in the State Department. Before 1900, questions of policy intermingled with those of administration, but so long as the department's work remained easily manageable, the small staff encountered no real problems. After the turn of the century, however, as the workload grew rapidly and the issues grew in complexity, mixing administrative and policy matters caused excessive confusion and hindered efficient treatment of the often delicate matters that increasingly arose. It soon became clear the State Department needed focused expertise. The solution appeared in erecting a policy-formulation mechanism separate from administrative lines, namely one of specialized divisions responsible for geographic regions of the world and manned by personnel suitably equipped by their training and experience in the field.

In 1908 Secretary Root established the first such division, the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, as a trial run of a plan submitted by Third Assistant Secretary of State Huntington Wilson. The Far Eastern Division was conceived of as a policy branch, not a mere geographical convenience, and reflected the department's basic, reorganization rationale of efficiency. The division's establishment was intended to provide "much better machinery" for overall policy coordination and "direction of the Far Eastern business."⁴⁷ Experienced diplomatic service officers staffed and directed the office, and now handled all

⁴⁵ See Chapter IV below for a much fuller discussion of this point.

⁴⁶ In 1921, its title became the Division of Current Information, with primary attention given to public relations. Stuart, *Department of State*, p. 182.

⁴⁷ Huntington Wilson to Willard Straight, 23 March 1908, quoted in Israel, "Diplomatic Machine," p. 187.

political correspondence to and from their region of responsibility.⁴⁸ The scheme proved so successful, that Root strongly favored its future expansion to other regions. His successor, Philander C. Knox, gained Congressional authority the following year for further reorganization on similar lines and issued two administrative orders in November and December, 1909, establishing the Division of Latin American Affairs and the Divisions of Western European Affairs and of Near Eastern Affairs, the latter of which included the German Empire.⁴⁹ In the course of the next several years, other new divisions would emerge for similar reasons and along identical lines. Due to increasingly difficult relations with Mexico during its revolutionary period, a Departmental order established a separate Division of Mexican Affairs in the summer of 1915.⁵⁰ In 1917, another created a section of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs for Russia and Romania, which became the Division of Russian Affairs two years later in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution and civil war, before expanding finally into the Division of Eastern European Affairs in 1922.⁵¹

The jurisdictional distinctions between the American geographic divisions seem arbitrary and, to the modern mind, peculiar. The Near East Division's area of responsibility was a smorgasbord that ran from the advanced nations of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; through the relatively backward countries of Russia, Turkey, Greece, and the Balkans; and into downright undeveloped states like Abyssinia, Persia, and Egypt. The small size of the Near East and Western European Divisions reflected the State Department's much greater interest in the Far East and Latin America, whose divisions enjoyed much larger stature right up to the war. Overseeing an area that included important France and Great

⁴⁸ Stuart, American Practice, p. 89. Knox's reorganization also established a Division of Information to disseminate information among the diplomatic missions abroad. The new division assumed responsibility as well for compiling and editing a new, annual State Department compendium, called Foreign Relations of the United States. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

⁴⁹ Stuart, Department of State, p. 182.

⁵⁰ Stuart, American Practice, p. 100.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67 and 102; and Stuart, Department of State, p. 182. In Berlin, the Germans also eventually implemented a similar *Regionalsystem* in the Wilhelmstrasse's operations, to replace an antiquated and rudimentary scheme based rigidly on functional separation of political, commercial, and legal affairs. Along with many other drastic and long-overdue reforms, however, the change (along with the rest of Germany's belated institutional response to twentieth-century diplomacy) had to await the purge of a much more tradition-bound foreign office elite after the empire's collapse in 1918. Drastic reform of her Ministry for Foreign Affairs occurred largely between 1918 and 1920 under the vigorous direction of Friedrich Edmund Schueler, whose extraordinary influence on the course of the internal restructuring saw the changes commonly labeled as "the Schueler reforms." See Lauren, Diplomats, Chapter 4, "The German Response: Reforms and Innovations for the Wilhelmstrasse."

Britain, the Western European Division counted a mere three staff and the Third Assistant Secretary of State as supervisor--when he was not preoccupied with his manifold other duties. While encompassing the German Empire and three other great European powers, the Near East Division made due with only a chief and his busy assistant.⁵² The divisions provided the first point of contact for missions abroad.

Correspondence and cables from the Berlin embassy, for example, were initially screened by an officer assigned to the Near Eastern Division before eventually arriving on Assistant Secretary William Phillips' desk through the opening months of the war, and on an Acting Chief of Division's desk beginning in 1915. The chief would then resolve the matter himself by reading the dispatch for his own knowledge before having it filed for future reference; or, if necessary, by drawing the matter to the attention of the Secretary of State for consideration. In this way did reorganization and specialization serve to facilitate administrative and executive flow between the department and the field. Unlike the consular service, the diplomatic service continued to lack an inspection system until the 1924 Rogers Act. In consequence, the new geographic divisions additionally served an important role in linking the State Department with its many posts and in allowing more responsive attention to the field's concerns by regional specialists--so went the theory, at least.⁵³

The Lowden Act of 1911 took the next significant, although ultimately modest, step towards professionalizing the diplomatic service. While the earlier executive orders had addressed issues of organization and personnel, this act moved on the serious matter of their lodgment at post. Previously, American diplomatic and consular establishments abroad possessed no permanent housing for their offices, let alone for agents' residences. For years Washington had heard chronic complaints over the issue, but had failed to find sufficient political resolve to do anything. Meanwhile, each minister and ambassador had to provide housing out of his own pocket and very often only after an arduous search in a crowded capital

⁵² West, State on the Eve, pp. 19-20. At first, the Division of Near Eastern Affairs fell under the direct supervision of the Third Assistant Secretary of State as an additional duty. The increased work entailed by the war, however, compelled the appointment of an autonomous Acting Chief of Division in 1915. After the first-appointed career officer William Walker Smith, Gerard's First Secretary, Joseph Grew, and then one of his Third Secretaries, Albert Ruddock, served in turn until 1921, when the first real Chief was appointed. Stuart, American Practice, p. 93.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

for something even remotely suitable. While the act signified continued official attention to the nation's neglected representatives abroad, it proved sadly lacking in both material provision and commitment. A very modest \$500,000 was earmarked annually for the purchase or construction of suitable living and working quarters. Unfortunately, over three years would pass before the first appropriations were made, when in 1914 embassy buildings were purchased in Tokyo and Mexico City. The war indefinitely ended any prospects of further acquisitions, leaving the housing problem very much alive, again until after the 1924 Rogers Act.⁵⁴

Against the persistent strains of isolationism, in the years leading up to the enormous catalyst of the First World War American diplomacy could only seek tentatively in fits and starts to accommodate the country's new world power status. In spite of the United States' larger role in world affairs since the late 1890s, Congress and the American public kept the domestic agenda in the fore even as late as the eve of the war. American newspapers seldom placed correspondents in Europe and developments there were either ignored or obscurely reported in the back pages. Grew sounded a hauntingly familiar plaint from Vienna in 1911, griping, "I have almost given up reading them now [American newspapers], for even the best of them are filled with page after page of murder and suicide accounts, while the most important political matters of world interest are given short paragraphs and sandwiched in where one can scarcely find them."⁵⁵ In 1913, Woodrow Wilson's choice of William Jennings Bryan as Secretary of State was linked to the continued neglect of foreign matters. Although Wilson once said Bryan had "no mental rudder," he conferred the position as an honorary reward for Bryan's long stewardship over the party. The domestically oriented Wilson regarded the office as peripheral and unimportant, and, as historian Wiebe puts it, "In an era of such speculative freedom in foreign affairs, Wilson believed he could afford a useless First Lieutenant." While Wilson retained the consular service on the merit-basis established under Roosevelt and Taft, he allowed Bryan to "turn [the diplomatic] portions of the foreign service into a junk heap of party patronage."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See Chapter IV below for a fuller discussion of the housing issue.

⁵⁵ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 2.

⁵⁶ Wiebe, *Search for Order*, pp. 254-255.

The government's insular orientation reflected the public's. In adjusting to her new world power status, consequently, America showed an unmistakable immaturity in her increasing ventures into foreign policy. Gerard's compeer across the Channel, Walter Hines Page, captured the struggle as late as October, 1913, when he bluntly told President Wilson, "We are in the international game--not in its Old World intrigues and burdens and sorrows and melancholy, but in the inevitable way to leadership and to cheerful mastery in the future; and everybody knows that we are in it but us. It is a sheer blind habit that causes us to continue to try to think of ourselves as aloof [from the rest of the world]."⁵⁷ The country persisted in using strictly domestic standards to interpret the globe and "remained remarkably undisciplined by an external reality [beyond her shores]," according to Wiebe.⁵⁸ America was a world power, yet she resisted involvement in world affairs. This became abundantly clear, when the system for gathering and assessing information from abroad abruptly proved itself utterly hollow. Once the war began, Washington realized its pre-war intelligence collection had not approached the nation's actual requirements, resulting in almost panicky demands for even basic data.⁵⁹

The outbreak of the First World War almost broke the State Department with the enormous workload that followed. Legations and embassies like Gerard's in Berlin assumed representation of belligerent states, which entailed among much else supervision of millions of dollars of assets and funds on their behalf. Prisoner of war (POW) camp inspections and reports through the State Department added to the new burden. Passports, previously not required of American citizens, now became essential for travel in or out of war-torn Europe and countless thousands had suddenly to be issued to stranded travelers. A deluge of over 60,000 inquiries regarding Americans traveling abroad flooded department in-baskets, as daily outgoing correspondence abruptly swelled from less than one hundred pieces to a thousand. The war's demands also spurred a jump in neutral America's foreign trade and investments, which added further to the department's work. Undermanned, the department had to expand quickly to meet the emergency. Experienced men were unavailable for the multitude of new duties, so the department resorted to all sorts

⁵⁷ Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 2 vols. (Garden City and New York, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), 1: 150-151, Page to Wilson, 25 October 1913.

⁵⁸ Wiebe, Search for Order, p. 225.

⁵⁹ West, State on the Eve, p. 59.

of expedients. The diplomatic and consular posts abroad were tapped to help fill its ranks. The spoils-oriented Wilson administration now asked back on a volunteer basis diplomatic officers it had earlier "retired."⁶⁰

The duress of war underscored the striking practical disadvantages of leaving America's foreign relations in the hands of a non-professional diplomatic corps. Wilson already had earlier begun heeding the political disabilities. His initial acquiescence to Bryan's controversial return to spoilsmanship quickly saw the State Department overturned with wholesale dismissals, which soon severely demoralized the diplomatic service. To deflect some of the persistent criticism, Wilson began stepping over Bryan's head to restore confidence in the service and disarm the administration's antagonists. Only with difficulty was Bryan brought over to the President's desire to hold examinations for secretaryship vacancies in November, 1913. Holding them implied Wilson's intent to honor the merit system, as applied first by predecessor Taft in the merit provisions of his 1909 Executive Order. In 1914, the resignation of overworked State Department counselor John Bassett Moore created a vacancy in the Assistant Third Secretaryship. Contrary to Bryan's wishes once again, Wilson decided to fill the opening with a "career" diplomat, William Phillips. Of much wider significance, however, Wilson furthermore sought to prepare legislation to codify Taft's merit provisions by making it Phillips' top priority. The result would be the Stone-Flood Act of 1915.

The First World War lent sudden urgency to the final drafting and passage of the Stone-Flood bill. The war's outbreak left every American mission in Europe entirely ill-equipped and undermanned to handle the deluge of demands that broke upon them. In Berlin, as in London and Paris, a volunteer staff of American travelers and expatriates immediately coalesced around the embassy to temporarily augment permanent staffs working exhausting hours. Heads of mission like Gerard resorted to paying for trained clerical assistance out of their own pocket. Ambassador Page in London required six additional secretaries alone to handle the workload, but, like Gerard, he needed them more urgently than the department could send them. One major obstacle to the ready availability of diplomatic secretaries lay with the anachronistic

⁶⁰ Stuart, American Practice, pp. 66-68.

restriction of their appointments to specific posts, instead of to generic classes. With embassies and legations service-wide variously and illogically over- and understaffed in August, 1914, the State Department legally could not move officers freely between posts as conditions warranted. This was a condition which Stone-Flood proposed to redress.

Assistant Third Secretary Phillips convinced Secretary Bryan early to grant his full approval to the bill, which by June, 1914, was introduced into Congress and received favorable reporting from the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Just after the war began, Bryan wrote Senators Flood and Stone of Wilson's hope the bill would "become law at the earliest possible moment." Bryan emphasized, "The President feels that the responsibilities of the American Government in its relations with the belligerent nations makes it essential that the staffs of our embassies, legations, and consulates in certain capitals should be enlarged and equipped so as to ensure the highest degree of efficiency..." In December, as the bill lingered, Wilson himself wrote Flood: "At the present time when so many responsibilities are thrown upon our Foreign Service not only in caring for the interests of many other governments but also in seeking new ways in which to enlarge our commerce; it seems to me that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of making both the diplomatic and consular services, thoroughly adaptable to the new and changed conditions" of the new century.⁶¹

Congress finally approved the bill on 5 February 1915, though the legislation did not emerge unscathed. Its explicit merit provisions were sacrificed to win better chances for passage and would have to wait nearly ten more years before finally becoming law. Still, the Stone-Flood Act relaxed administrative rigidity by promulgating diplomatic and consular appointments to five ranked classes (Class 1 through Class 5) based on such elements as length of service and, indirectly, merit. In Berlin, an optimistic First Secretary Joseph Grew considered its provisions to be "a tremendous step forward."⁶² The State Department thus gained unprecedented personnel mobility and now could quickly, responsively shift secretaries and consuls wherever needed.

⁶¹ Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy*, pp. 123-129.

⁶² Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 123, Grew to Albert Ruddock, 2 June 1914.

In this and other ways, the First World War elicited the response that directly led at last to the “strengthening and expanding of the concept of professional diplomacy” in America.⁶³ The volume and gravity of wartime responsibilities quickly overtaxed the State Department and prompted a period of rapid institutional expansion. A protracted process of “haphazard accretion” ensued, in which new desks, bureaus, and divisions blossomed as needs arose. As the structural lines already were largely laid, the changes were essentially matters of augmenting and adapting the superstructure as circumstances demanded. The war “marked a period of important metamorphosis” for the State Department, according to historian Graham Stuart.⁶⁴ It helped make clear, that the progress of the world, not just of America, flowed from a “coordination of forces” and, therefore, strongly encouraged an enhanced national efficiency for dealing with the new challenges of a chastened, post-war era. Further centralization of power in the government was felt to be a primary means to achieving better efficiency, and as foreign relations assumed new prominence, further reform of the State Department became imperative.

More practically, the war underscored the importance to America of competent foreign representation, skillful reporting of foreign affairs and conditions, and professional treatment of the many unprecedented issues arising as America emerged victorious. A year after the war, Wilbur Carr accurately blamed the department’s “inadequate equipment” for America’s unpreparedness at the conflict’s outset and asserted “the first essential in equipping the Government for the handling of these ponderous interests [of the post-war era], should be the reorganization of the Department of State, being itself the axis around which the entire machinery must revolve.”⁶⁵ Political, social, and commercial pressures emanating from the war conspired to define the modern, twentieth-century environment in which America’s diplomacy would operate from now on. The new century demanded a thorough reorganization and adjustment of the nation’s diplomatic mechanism to better serve her national interests; closure to the process would come shortly with the establishment of the United States Foreign Service under the Rogers Act of 1924.

⁶³ Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy, p. 186.

⁶⁴ Stuart, Department of State, p. 183.

⁶⁵ Carr statement, 4 December 1919, quoted in Israel, “Diplomatic Machine,” p. 193.

While the shift in American diplomatic paradigms occurred roughly between 1890 and 1918, the essence of the lagging institutional response by the country's diplomatic service, from nineteenth-century amateurism to twentieth-century professionalism, developed broadly between 1898 and 1924. Two wars marked either ragged end, and mid-point embassies like those of James Watson Gerard and Walter Hines Page reflected both the changing paradigm and a maturing American diplomacy. In the fall of 1914, the inevitability of professionalization impressed itself early upon Ambassador Page in London. In the second month of the war, he perceived a professional diplomatic service as the key to the nation's prominent role in twentieth-century foreign affairs: "The whole world is bound to be changed as a result of this war," the former newspaper editor divined for Woodrow Wilson's top advisor, Colonel House. "All of which means it is high time we were constructing a foreign service," one reorganized, he explained, in line with the best of other foreign offices, and which included permanent diplomatic housing for career representatives abroad and offered key positions and "dignified treatment" to them as professionals. "We've got to play a part in the world," Page concluded, "whether we wish to or not."⁶⁶ Two years later Gerard's new Second Secretary, Hugh Wilson, experienced acutely the shock wave of turbulence between two paradigms. By 1916, six years of diplomatic experience in sleepy Lisbon, Guatemala City, and Buenos Aires had steeped him well in the plodding nineteenth-century pace and manner. His arrival in Berlin that year, however, fast-forwarded him into the diplomatic demands of embassy work in the new century. "Those months were of the greatest educational value," he recalled later. "[I]t was as if a curtain had been rolled back from a world of which I suspected the existence, but where I had never before entered."⁶⁷ There, in the tense, complicated milieu of wartime Berlin, Wilson encountered along with Ambassador Gerard, First Secretary Joseph Grew and the rest of the Embassy staff, twentieth-century diplomacy.

⁶⁶ Hendrick, Walter H. Page, 1: 334-335, Page to House, 22 September 1914.

⁶⁷ Hugh R. Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), pp. 185-186.

CHAPTER III

THE EMBASSY AND ITS STAFF

I shall be very much surprised if before the end of Wilson's Administration none of us secretaries is promoted to...minister...and I still optimistically feel that within the next ten years, the Diplomatic Service will be established on a permanent basis which no succeeding administration will dare tamper with...[American diplomacy] is in the making, with the outlook for the future a thousand times brighter than it was a year ago...¹

-Joseph Clark Grew (April, 1914)

These words of April, 1914, give poignance to how far American diplomacy had come by the first year of James W. Gerard's ambassadorship in the German capital of Berlin. Gerard's First Secretary of Embassy penned them to his father-in-law in the glow of the promise of the American Diplomatic Service in transition. That Grew could record them after nearly a decade of continuous foreign service was testimony in itself to great strides towards professionalism. When he joined in 1904, entrance examinations were a thing of the future; amateurism not nearly a thing of the past; and job security always a present concern, with the dagger of rampant spoilsmanship pointed at its heart. By 1914, administrative guidelines for recruitment, retention, promotion, and assignment of American diplomatic officers had helped largely safeguard American diplomacy as a legitimate career field and had populated the Diplomatic Service with increasing numbers of professionals. Grew's new boss, Gerard, however, was not among them. Ten years later, the creation of the United States Foreign Service by the Rogers Act of 1924 proved Joe Grew a prescient observer. As the first Chairman of the Foreign Service Personnel Board, and Chairman of the new Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service, Grew could reflect back on two decades of active duty and point to his time in Gerard's embassy as the watershed.

Variouly described as "the first city in Europe,"² "the most important post next [to] England and in some respects more so,"³ "the centre of diplomatic Europe,"⁴ "one of the two most important American

¹ Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of 40 Years, 1904-1945, 2 vols., ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), 1: 121, Grew to his father-in-law, Thomas Sargeant Perry, 6 April 1914.

² Gerard Papers, Folder 5-3, Carroll to Gerard, 16 July 1913.

diplomatic stations,”⁵ and “that most intricate of posts,”⁶ the capital of the German Reich vied with London in 1913 as the preeminent American diplomatic assignment. A vital, industrial nation feverishly pushing its *Weltpolitik* in pursuit of Great Power status, the Empire received that year a curious, yet telling, legation from the United States of America: A wealthy, wide-eyed amateur, Gerard, as ambassador; his able first assistant, Grew, an anomaly by way of uniquely long tenure in a volatile, spoils-ridden diplomatic service; the Second and Third Secretaries, Spencer, Harvey, and Ruddock, all recent products of a service belatedly making its final, grudging steps to professionalism. Collectively and individually, these men and the rest of the staff eventually to serve under Gerard embodied in almost every regard the opposing elements of the old and the new diplomacies. Like a geological rift, the shift of the diplomatic paradigm can be recognized and read through their experiences. Through them, one can witness the American diplomatic service’s pivotal transformation to maturity, catalyzed by the conflict that would end the past century and, finally, their embassy in Berlin.

JAMES WATSON GERARD: AMBASSADOR

Only in 1893, a bare twenty years before James Watson Gerard first arrived in Berlin, did the United States first begin dispatching abroad ambassador-level envoys. Called a “landmark in the development of American diplomacy,” the 1893 law providing for such high-level appointments gave the beginning administration of Grover Cleveland authority to appoint full ambassadors to Berlin, Paris, London, Rome and St. Petersburg for the first time in the nation’s history. Previously, mere ministers were deemed sufficient, a view as much a product of America’s insularism as of the stigma surrounding the diplomatic service as undemocratic and elitist. By the early 1890s, however, the handicaps of the inferior rank in the capitals of the major powers had become intolerable. Frequently outranked by ambassadors of lesser countries, American ministers like her final one in Berlin, William Walter Phelps (1889-93), often

³ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-22, Lanier Winslow to Gerard, 18 July 1913. Winslow quotes to Gerard these words of Colonel House from an interview with House two days earlier.

⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-12, McCarthy to Gerard, 27 June 1913.

⁵ Arthur S. Link, *Wilson: The New Freedom* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 102.

⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-5, Spencer to Gerard, 19 October 1916.

labored at great disadvantage to effectively represent U.S. interests. Junior rank before the foreign courts of Europe restricted their ability to assume the prominent position and access, to which America's growing power should have entitled them. Cleveland's appointments not only helped rectify the trouble, but served as the first major change to the U.S. diplomatic and consular services since before the Civil War.⁷

Like half his ambassadorial predecessors in the post, James Watson Gerard possessed scant diplomatic experience prior to his appointment.⁸ His most material claim stemmed from a month-long stint as a Special Commissioner of the United States in Mexico City, where with the rank of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary he ceremonially represented America during the Republic's first centenary celebration in September, 1910.⁹ His maternal grandfather Angel had been Ambassador to Sweden in the mid-1800s and travels abroad had naturally introduced Gerard to America's foreign representatives. But otherwise, unlike most his underlings and most his predecessors, he had no prior diplomatic exposure before his arrival in Berlin. In 1913, he well represented the quintessential "amateur diplomat" of America, courtesy of nineteenth-century spoilsmanship.

Born in Geneseo, New York, in 1867, Gerard graduated from Columbia University with a B.A. in 1890, an M.A. in political science the next year, and Columbia Law School in 1892, the same year he was admitted to the New York Bar. He went to work for the law firm Platt, Bowers, and Sands, a partnership established in 1812 by another grandfather.¹⁰ His family was wealthy, connected, and politically involved. From the year of his initial two hundred dollar donation upon joining the Democratic Party in 1888 until

⁷ Hugh Robert Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), pp. 229-230.

⁸ Six ambassadors preceded Gerard in Berlin, three of whom had little to no diplomatic background: (William Walter Phelps, Minister to Vienna, 1881; Minister to Berlin, 1889-1893.) Theodore Runyon, Minister to Berlin, 1893-1894, then Ambassador, 1894-1896. Edwin F. Uhl, Ambassador to Berlin, 1896-1897. Dr. Andrew Dickson White, Attaché in St. Petersburg, 1854; International Commissioner, 1871 and 1878; Minister to Berlin, 1879-1881; Minister to St. Petersburg, 1892-1897; Ambassador to Berlin, 1897-1902. Charlemagne Tower, Minister to Vienna, 1897-1902; Ambassador to Berlin, 1902-1908. Dr. John Jayne Hill, Ambassador to Berlin, 1908-1911. John G.A. Leishman, posts in Switzerland, Turkey, and Ambassador to Rome, 1897-1911; Ambassador to Berlin, 1911-1913. Compiled from Henry E. Mattox, The Twilight of Amateur Diplomacy: The Foreign Service and Its Senior Officers in the 1890s (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 147, 151, 153, and 156-157; and Graham H. Stuart, American Diplomatic and Consular Practice (New York, London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936), p. 492.

⁹ James Watson Gerard, My First Eighty-Three Years in America: The Memoirs of James W. Gerard (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1951), pp. 155-160.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

his death in 1951, Gerard proved a very generous financial supporter of the party, which would be key in his ambitions for an ambassadorship. He morally supported the party as well, serving as a poll watcher in the 1892 presidential election; a defense attorney for Democrats accused of illegal or faulty registration;¹¹ chairman of New York's Tammany Hall campaign committee in 1902;¹² and active promoter of fellow New Yorker, Alton B. Parker's Democratic presidential nomination in 1904. Otherwise working tirelessly for the Democratic cause, by 1907 Gerard found himself in a position to secure Tammany's backing in a successful bid for the position of Justice of the New York Supreme Court.¹³

The Republicans' iron grip on the White House since 1896 finally ended in the presidential election of 1912. Dutiful Democrats like Gerard, who had donated an estimated \$130,000 to the Democratic cause, had stood hopeful of victory and, now, of the expected rewards that would follow.¹⁴ "It had always been my ambition to be an ambassador," Gerard once remarked, and with Woodrow Wilson's accession his desire would become reality.¹⁵ Wilson selected as his Secretary of State, the man whose repeated bids for the Presidency in 1896, 1900, 1904, and 1908 had failed, William Jennings Bryan. Bryan had accrued a great deal of political debt through those years. Indeed, copper-king Marcus Daly, the father of Gerard's wife, Molly, had contributed more than \$300,000 to his campaign of 1896.¹⁶ Now Bryan found himself positioned as head of the very department of government most suited to pay them off. Immense clamoring ensued, as thousands of office seekers deluged Wilson and Bryan for positions in the consular and diplomatic services. Most administrative posts in Washington were changed. And abroad, within six months of its inauguration the Wilson Administration changed no less than twenty-nine of some forty diplomatic chiefs of mission. Many "career men" found their services no longer required, with men like the politically-connected James Gerard replacing them. The changes applied essentially only to ambassadors and ministers, but many like Gerard's future deputy, Joseph Grew, feared that secretaryships might next be on the auction block.

¹¹ Theodore R. Berthold, "Assignment to Berlin: The Embassy of James Watson Gerard, 1913-1917" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1981), p. 7.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

¹⁵ Gerard, *Eighty-Three Years*, p. 168.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Wilson generally gave Bryan *carte blanche* with respect to appointments to lesser posts, while reserving ambassadorships and major department positions for his own final decision. Occasionally, Wilson's selection came with help from the same political shrewdness which tempered all Bryan's decisions. The secretary fretted, for example, that there be an American diplomat from every state. And he felt it appropriate, perhaps with an eye to the important hyphenate vote, to recognize naturalized American citizens by accrediting them to their erstwhile homeland. A disgusted Ambassador White wrote afterward, that "it never occurred to him [Bryan] for a moment that the slightest training was necessary, or the interests of our Government should be in any way hampered...by the substitution of a 'good Democrat' possessing no knowledge whatever of the intricacies of European diplomacy for the man who spent many years of his life in close contact with all these questions."¹⁷

While Bryan ultimately preserved most of the secretaryships, his otherwise thorough-going reshuffle of diplomatic appointments to "deserving Democrats" incited wide criticism.¹⁸ Wilbur Carr, Chief of the Consular Bureau for very many years, described the new Secretary of State Bryan as "cold-blooded about it--speaks not of efficiency, fitness or long service, but merely of places for Democrats." Bryan's attitude toward the diplomatic chiefs of mission, the ambassadors and ministers abroad, rightly caused real anxiety since those positions stood unprotected under Roosevelt's order. In 1906, Bryan had told then-Ambassador to Italy, Henry White, that once in office, the Democrats would send only Democrats to occupy these positions. By July, 1913, Bryan's attitude had only hardened, telling Minister to Panama, H. Percival Dodge, that career diplomats should expect no favoritism by his State Department.¹⁹ Wilson went along with Bryan's pronouncements generally, for both desired sincerely to democratize the diplomatic service. The two men regarded the service, populated largely with Roosevelt and Taft appointees, as representing a virtual aristocracy of Republican wealth and exclusivity. Even so, Wilson finally balked at the Secretary's request for the President to revoke former President Roosevelt's Executive Order of 1906, which had classified consular officials and diplomatic secretaries according to merit.

¹⁷ Raehel West, The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 31.

¹⁸ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 101-102, editor Walter Johnson's preface to Grew's Chapter VII, "Return to Berlin, 1912-1914."

¹⁹ West, State on the Eve, p. 30.

Along with other political considerations, then, personal wealth continued to operate, *a la* old paradigm, as an important criterion for selection to an ambassadorship. An ambassador's capacity to entertain stood as a widely regarded essential in the fundamentally social diplomatic milieu in which he functioned. The more money at his disposal, the more impressive quarters he might let, the more lavishly he might entertain. In 1890, the American envoy to Berlin received \$12,000 per annum salary, which climbed in 1894 to \$17,500 with the post's elevation to ambassador-level.²⁰ No further raise would materialize until some years after Gerard's time in the capital, and across the board the pay remained entirely inadequate. In March, 1908, "rumor reached print" that Germany viewed the appointment of Dr. John Jayne Hill to succeed American Ambassador Charlemagne Tower as unacceptable. Doubts allegedly had been expressed over Hill's financial wherewithal to execute to the Kaiser's satisfaction his attendant social responsibilities.²¹ Walter Hines Page at last found his costs in London so burdensome that he felt constrained to resign--but not before the President could arrange a surreptitious \$25,000 annual subsidy from the wealthy Mr. Cleveland Dodge. For fear of a similar indignity, numerous of an exasperated Woodrow Wilson's other nominees declined for financial reasons. Among their ranks stood Wilson's first choice for Berlin, Henry Fine, an old friend from Princeton who declined, even once offered a Dodge subsidy like Page's.²² The President publicly mourned this unfortunate reality of American diplomacy: "The sacrifice of time, of means, and of opportunity at home is very serious for any but men of large means and leisure, and the diplomatic service is necessarily hampered."²³

Gerard's Second Secretary towards the end, Hugh Wilson (no relation to the President), encountered similar doubts during an earlier tour in Buenos Aires. Wilson had been "really apprehensive" over the pending arrival of America's first ambassador to the Argentine, Mr. Frederic Stimson. Considered a man of great distinction, among the capital city's great wealth his moderate income could likely land him

²⁰ Mattox, Twilight of Amateur, Appendix C, "Annual Compensation of Chiefs of Diplomatic Mission and Consuls General, Selected Posts, 1890, 1899," pp. 162-163.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64 and Footnote 6, p. 64. On 29 March the German Government officially withdrew any objection to Hill's appointment. Grew wrote his mother on 6 February 1910 and described how very well Hill had acquitted himself nevertheless.

²² Berthold, "Assignment to Berlin," pp. 21-22.

²³ As quoted in Berthold, "Assignment to Berlin," pp. 19-20, from The New York Times, March 24, 1913, p. 1; and Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House, 4 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1926-28), House Diary, March 20, 1913.

“in embarrassment and difficulty.” Perhaps Wilson put the situation most directly: “Great fortunes are a comfort to an Ambassador. They ease his contact with the people of the country where he is living, and if he can afford constant and generous entertainment, he has a wide opportunity to bring to his house men and women of interest and value to his work.” Stimson’s great spirit, character, and graciousness averted any problems and convinced Wilson that wealth only eases the path and does not make it. Still, Stimson was an exception. An ambassador in the early diplomatic service could, according to Wilson, “seldom live on his salary alone in a way that is dignified, nor can he on his salary pay the many unavoidable obligations that accrue to his position.”²⁴

Wilson’s solution advocated a state-provisioned entertainment allowance over any salary increase. Official entertainment of other countries’ officers and diplomats simply could not be avoided in the conduct of business. “[I]t is as indispensable to [an ambassador’s] tasks as is the entertainment that a salesman gives his customer, and no employer in business would fail to recognize the necessity and make allowance for it.” For all the observation’s self-evidence, Wilson could recount how non-elitist Americans could still be “startled” to discover that all other great nations and most the smaller ones of the day had long recognized and provided for this state of affairs; and he could tell of foreigners’ surprise that the mighty United States did not and left the ambassador to his own devices.²⁵ As late as World War II, barring suitable salary increases or special embassy allotments for entertaining, America’s “great democracy [had to] rely on an undemocratic criterion [namely, wealth] when choosing its representatives.”²⁶

After Henry Fine’s refusal on financial grounds, then, the President next sounded his second choice, Rudolph Spreckels. Spreckels made his fortune in sugar, but evidently saw no comfort in draining some of it into a pricey ambassadorship and, so, also demurred.²⁷ Gerard, then, was Wilson’s third string for the Berlin post with money and politics playing arbiter. Wilson detested Gerard as a wealthy partisan

²⁴ Wilson, Education, pp. 120-121.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁷ Berthold, “Assignment to Berlin,” pp. 21-22. The amateur Spreckels was later considered for St. Petersburg, but failed to get the position as Colonel House considered him “too opinionated, too dictatorial, and altogether too uncertain” for a diplomatic appointment. West, State on the Eve, p. 52.

with hardly more than his money and Tammany to recommend him, and determined "...that he would not appoint Justice Gerard or any man who was conspicuous for his money."²⁸ But Gerard's long and generous financial and moral backing to the Party had made their mark on key Wilson advisors and allies. Several influential senators joined Colonel House, who felt Wilson underrated the candidate,²⁹ and Bryan, who of course stood eager to acknowledge the party's political debt with Gerard, to decide the reluctant president in at last appointing the New Yorker.³⁰ Any other qualifications aside, an approving Count Johann von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador to Washington, aptly considered "...that Mr. Gerard would be welcome in Berlin for social reasons alone. Everybody knew that the Kaiser liked to have Ambassadors who entertained on a lavish scale." Besides, Bernstorff concluded, "an American Ambassador in Berlin really never had any political business to transact, for it was the tradition with the United States Government to conduct all negotiations almost exclusively with the Diplomatic Corps in Washington."³¹

Bernstorff's words would soon be given to test. At the outbreak of war, the ambassadors serving in America's most important posts in Europe were all Democrats (except, temporarily, Herrick in Paris), generally wealthy, long-involved in American domestic politics, and all amateurs. The State Department provided Gerard and his fellow chiefs of mission with almost no instructions before their departure. By law the department regarded as an "instruction period" the thirty days after the appointee took his oath of office. Although Gerard possessed virtually no prior diplomatic experience, however, the department subjected him only to a cursory exposure to his post before leaving. Gerard was duly requested to take the oath in late August/early September and then visit Washington shortly thereafter, but only "to remain for a few days receiving instructions and in conference with officials of the Department" before embarking.³² Once there, he "had some difficulty finding out what my ambassadorial duties were" and cringed at the oft-heard response to his entreaties, "Oh, just go over and be an ambassador!"³³ The Department did provide him a copy of its printed "Instructions to Diplomatic Officers" and the latest issue of the "Diplomatic and

²⁸ Seymour, House Papers, House Diary, 13 February 1913.

²⁹ West, State on the Eve, p. 52.

³⁰ Berthold, "Assignment to Berlin," pp. 16-23.

³¹ Johann H. Von Bernstorff, My Three Years in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 407.

³² Gerard Papers, Folder 7-15, J.B. Moore to Gerard, 31 July 1913.

³³ Gerard, Eighty-Three Years, p. 171.

Consular List.”³⁴ Along with whatever advice could be gleaned from the surviving embassy staff, Ambassador Gerard’s ingenuity would otherwise have to suffice in discerning his responsibilities and the manner of their execution.³⁵

Gerard’s diplomatic career for the present purpose really begins, then, with his appointment as Ambassador to the German Empire. His appointment and experience as a new, amateur envoy from the United States serve to well illustrate a transitioning American diplomacy. His embassy tells a story repeated in London, Paris, Rome and elsewhere, each similarly an example of the curious amalgam of old amateurism and new professionalism, each a milestone of the State Department’s adolescence. On 28 July 1913, enroute to Europe on the first eastern voyage of the German liner Imperator, Gerard received a wireless message announcing his selection to the Berlin post.³⁶ Almost forty-six years old, Gerard had achieved a life-long ambition still essentially denied all his professional subordinates in the embassy.

JOSEPH CLARK GREW: FIRST SECRETARY OF EMBASSY

As “the model professional diplomat of his generation,” First Secretary Joseph Clark Grew represented of all the embassy staff the quintessence of the diplomatic transition figure.³⁷ Entering the service against the advice of many in 1904 and straining his relationship with his father, Grew’s distinguished career would stretch through the end of World War II and see him rise to become Ambassador to Japan during the crucial 1930s and Special Assistant to the Secretary of State in 1942. Before retiring in 1945, Grew’s impressive career included two ambassadorships, two undersecretaryships, and every junior rank in the service. He truly stood as a founding father in the professional development of

³⁴ United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31, John E. Osborne (Acting Secretary of State) to Gerard, 6 September 1913.

³⁵ Gerard, at least, also had the benefit of outgoing Ambassador Leishman’s parting counsel “about the German court and officials,” derived from a quick visit to Berlin during the Gérards’ vacation. Gerard, Eighty-Three Years, p. 171.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

³⁷ Waldo H. Heinrichs, American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966; paperback edition published New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. ix.

the American diplomatic service into the United States Foreign Service. His observations of the transformation consequently count as among the most insightful and deserve attention at length.

Grew came into the world in Boston, Massachusetts, on 27 May 1880. His family possessed considerable wealth and sent him to Groton School before Harvard University, whence he graduated in 1902. After eighteen months traveling around the world in 1902-1903, Grew developed an unshakable *Wanderlust* which gave foreign service its initial, lasting appeal for him. As with many of his peers, he experienced the tribulations of entering a field which his father and his generation held in great contempt, for the diplomatic service at this early time lacked all the characteristics which would later mark it as a true professional organization, like entrance by examination, tenure, and merit promotions. In the end, an imbued Grotonian emphasis on public service, a Harvard influence towards international affairs, and an unslaked yen to travel together outweighed his father's disapproval. Like so many others who with him would compose America's first generation of diplomats, Grew opted for a line of work which promised at least temporary adventure, if no legitimate profession, and which only later would develop into an actual career.³⁸

He first "entered" foreign service for his country as Deputy Consul-General at Cairo, Egypt, in July, 1904, at a salary of \$600 per year. Also occasionally levied with *chargé d'affaires*, Grew's principal jobs included, among other duties and ample leisure time, "making out invoices and superintending the disinfection of evil-smelling hides."³⁹ Nevertheless, early on Grew exhibited professional dedication to his new work. The summer he first arrived in Cairo, he spent his evenings studying Arabic and, on his own initiative, "bring[ing] some order out of chaos in our archives." The chancery's records being "filed" strictly chronologically, all documents relating to a given issue were effectively lost. Grew card catalogued, with cross references, every document of the previous decade--a task finished through three months of night work. An accurate sign of the times came with the arrival that autumn of Grew's new boss, American Agent and Consul General at Cairo, Mr. Lewis Iddings. Iddings took one look at Grew's

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 7-10.

³⁹ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 17-18.

filing system before chiding and abandoning it.⁴⁰ Innovation and originality generally were regarded by the unprofessional cadre as threats or as otherwise unnecessary.

Grew's early "schooling" in American diplomatic method left much in the way of thoroughness. In preparing to take Grew to his first audience with the Khedive in Cairo, Abbas Hilmi Pasha, American Vice Consul General Fred Morgan "guessed at the appropriate costume without inquiring and we were a little chagrined to find ourselves quite inappropriately dressed." As for another of his supervisors, American Diplomatic Agent and Consul General John W. Riddle ("...one of our first career officers, if the holding of several successive posts could in those days be so construed..."), Grew said bluntly, "In the way of instructing the aspiring neophyte in the intricacies of diplomacy, he did very little."⁴¹

In 1906, Grew moved from the consular to the diplomatic service. The biographic Register of the Department of State pronounces that after Cairo, Grew was "appointed after examination, Third Secretary of the Embassy....," but the actual details of the circumstance belie the statement's solemn ring.⁴² Regarding his entry, Grew once confessed, "My appointment was, I think, the last under the old political system, and I was certainly the last to slip through without examination. Heaven knows whether I could ever have passed one!"⁴³ For him, not some recognized mark of competency opened the door to foreign service, but personal connections--and good ones. "This is what counted in those days--political pull," he later reflected. So, through Alford Cooley, a close family friend and Roosevelt's Assistant Attorney General, Grew sought to gain a diplomatic appointment from the President. But, repeatedly, Grew heard of Roosevelt's response: "Too much political pressure. I can't do it [appoint Grew]." The stonewall persisted until one day Cooley recited to the adventurous, active President the tale of Grew's thrilling kill of a ten-foot tiger in China during his world tour. Teddy so appreciated Grew's evident brave heart, that a Third Secretaryship was found for him in Mexico City effective 1 March 1906. "That tiger-shooting was the only examination I ever took."⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1: 21.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1: 18.

⁴² Register of the Department of State, December 19, 1917, p. 99.

⁴³ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 1: 12-13. Two decades later, as chairman of the newly organized Foreign Service Examining Board, he would kid candidates about the "easy" entrance requirements they endured: "All you have to do is answer a few questions. I had to shoot a tiger."

With his transfer from the consular to the diplomatic service, Grew now doubled his salary to \$1200 per year--a sum still entirely inadequate. Supplementation from a private income and allowances from his mother raised his annual income roughly to a substantial \$15,000, which alone made it possible for Grew and his wife to meet the social demands of the post.⁴⁵ As for the diplomatic demands, Grew's workload at Mexico City was "steady but not exhilarating." He handled some of the incoming miscellaneous correspondence, but mostly he found himself tasked merely to typewrite copies of outgoing documents for the permanent file. The document was "moistened and impressed on tissue pages in a copybook and then again typed for the bound archives," and admitted "tremendous waste of time and labor," with "the risk of errors in typing...ever present..." Forgetting the original reason for not using carbon paper, he surmised that its smoochiness was unacceptable, or that it

was due just to the old conservatism which looks askance at any change in the system. I remember very well that one British Ambassador in Paris absolutely refused to allow a typewriter in his chancery at first, insisting that every document must be written longhand according to sacred tradition, but even he had had to give in at last although, as I remember it, he strictly limited this infamous intrusion of mechanized diplomacy to a single machine. How I wish he could have seen, and heard, the big ballroom in our Embassy in Berlin along about 1915 which sounded something like a boiler factory with thirty or forty typewriters banging away at the same time.⁴⁶

From Mexico City, the State Department transferred Grew to his next assignment, Third Secretary at St. Petersburg, Russia, in May, 1907.⁴⁷ There he kept the same sparse hours at the embassy as was characteristic of the pre-war period. He walked the very long distance from home between nine and ten o'clock in the morning and then returned about three in the afternoon. With lunch squeezed somewhere in between, Grew reminisced, "We didn't have to keep very long hours in the office in those comparatively idle days."⁴⁸ In the Russian capital, "there was little enough official work" and Grew's duties, as in Mexico City, centered largely on miscellaneous correspondence and typing permanent records. He retained his conscientious approach to his diplomatic work, however, and experimented with ways to facilitate the work. After several months in the embassy, Grew won over the ambassador, his former chief

⁴⁵ Heinrichs, American Ambassador, p. 16.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁷ Register of the Department of State, December 19, 1917, p. 99.

⁴⁸ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 41-42.

in Cairo, John W. Riddle, to the advantages of the carbon-copy system. The savings in labor and the accuracy conferred by direct copies of an original promised much greater efficiency in rather boring work and Riddle ordered the system to be instituted the first of the year. But, Grew's official diplomatic "career" being not yet three years old, he had inadvertently committed a blunder. In gaining the ambassador's approval, he had gone over the head of the First Secretary, his immediate superior. The latter caused such a furor over the transgression that Riddle rescinded his order and the embassy retained the "old, old system" of transcription, "which must have accorded with diplomatic usage ever since Noah made out his inventory for the ark."⁴⁹

Hardly a year had passed before the State Department promoted Grew to Second Secretary, entailing a salary raise to \$2,000 per year, and transferred him to his first tour in Berlin in June, 1908, where he met again the prevailing attitude in the diplomatic service. Here, "in the good old times when our chanceries generally closed at one o'clock for the day," Grew embarked on a project to compile and graph data on the embassy's success in securing the release of naturalized American citizens from the German Army. Caught one afternoon on the task, a pitying colleague advised him, "Cut it out. Work won't get you anywhere. Only politics count in our Service. Better enjoy yourself while you're in it." Unconvinced, Grew reflected later, "That was the guiding spirit in those days...I felt differently. I had no political backing. I enjoyed work and it seemed to me that a reputation for hard work could not come amiss if we were to develop a professional Service."⁵⁰

With the election that November of Roosevelt's hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft, Grew's unusual tactic would be put to the test, as he and the rest of the diplomatic corps girded themselves for the inevitable political game of musical chairs that attended every presidential accession. Work hours in Berlin demanding a 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. daily regimen, they were availed of ample leisure time to fret.⁵¹ But, as the months after Taft's inauguration passed, it became clear he did not mean to ransack the diplomatic service, but, instead, to strengthen it even while still paying off his political debts. In June, 1909, Grew received unofficial intelligence from the circle surrounding Secretary of State Philander C.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1: 42.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1: 20-21.

⁵¹ Ibid., 1: 89, Grew diary entry, 31 March 1911.

Knox and relayed it to his friend, John Van A. MacMurray, assigned to the U.S. embassy at St. Petersburg. With great relief, Grew reported, that, "Although Mr. Taft has been obliged to put in a good many rank outsiders as chiefs of mission, they are all determined in Washington to keep on the efficient secretaries, promote them duly and make them chiefs of mission when the time comes. But [now] it's *heraus mit the loafers*."⁵²

In Berlin, Grew experienced the most extensive reorganization of the State Department in nearly four decades. On 26 November 1909, President William Taft issued an Executive Order promulgating far-reaching improvements in the department's structure in the interests of better meeting current and projected diplomatic demands placed on the country's foreign service. Under the direction of Secretary Knox and Assistant Secretary Huntington Wilson, new offices were constituted, like Counselor of the Department and Resident Diplomatic Officer. New department divisions of Latin American, Near Eastern, and Western European Affairs were established.⁵³ Taft's order also made explicit the fields to be tested in the department's entrance examination. Topics now included international law, diplomatic usage, American history, U.S. economic resources, a foreign language, and modern history of Europe, Latin America, and the Far East. An oral portion of the exam would determine a candidate's general knowledge, ability to think, and overall suitability for the diplomatic service.⁵⁴ Of these changes, Grew wrote his father-in-law the next month, "Every new Executive Order of [this] kind...will make it just so much harder for a new administration to overturn things and reclothe the Service in its former character of a Congressional plum orchard. This is very gratifying." A few weeks later in January, 1910, Grew wrote his friend, Edward Bell, Vice Consul General in Egypt. Bell had hoped to transfer from the consular to the diplomatic service, but Taft's order now prohibited such moves without examination, as was accepted before. But while Grew sympathized that the department had "stiffened" the entrance examination before his friend could take it, he proclaimed, "as a principle it is a splendid thing" and urged Bell to gain entry into the diplomatic service soon, "for once this house-cleaning is over and the rotten boughs are all weeded out, there won't be

⁵² Ibid., 1: 76, Grew to MacMurray, 11 June 1909.

⁵³ Ibid., 1: 61.

⁵⁴ Register of the Department of State, December 28, 1909, pp. 107-108.

so many vacancies occurring.”⁵⁵ To another friend, Secretary Paxton Hibben at The Hague, he observed, “On the whole the Service has taken big strides in the right direction and I think it has a great future...”⁵⁶ Indeed, the Taft Administration would go far in establishing some permanency to America’s diplomatic machinery.

During his next assignment, to Vienna on in January, 1911, Grew’s experience served as a reminder that the service had still much road to travel in escaping the onus of amateurism. Promoted to First Secretary at \$3,000 per annum, he met his new ambassador, railroad builder and Republican politician Richard C. Kerens. While suitably impressed with the man, Grew remembered very well how Kerens “began at once and continued during our subsequent walks in the Schwarzenberg Gardens to tell me of the state of affairs in Vienna, namely that he had come last spring without experience or knowledge of diplomatic usage of any kind...” That the embassy itself would shortly prove substandard in the view of the professional Grew, came as no surprise then either. A veteran of four previous posts and their methods of business, Grew’s learned eye quickly surmised, “There are very many reforms to be made in the Embassy...if it is to be made an up-to-date office; a very brief examination of the chancery showed me that the system was hopelessly antiquated and that much useless labor is expended. My suggestions must come slowly and by degrees [remember St. Petersburg!].” But the ambassador recognized the real boon in his competent, new secretary and of Grew’s suggestions, the “few which I ventured to take up with the Ambassador at once [were] met by him in the most friendly manner possible and I hope eventually to have the place running as it should.”⁵⁷ Despite his giving wide latitude to facilitate change, however, the amateur Kerens still posed a burden. Several weeks later, a gala Hapsburg court ball in Budapest provided a poignant opportunity. “The Ambassador did his best to present me to everyone; to those who spoke only French or German I had to act as interpreter which shocked me and made me realize the handicap which Mr. K[erens] is under in his diplomatic relations.”⁵⁸ In his efforts to bolster the embassy’s operations to professional standards, Grew came across uncomfortably telling evidence of the extent a neglected post’s

⁵⁵ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 62-63, Footnote 4.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 79, Grew to Hibben, 8 October 1910.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 81, Grew diary entry, 3 February 1911.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 84, Grew diary entry, 23 February 1911.

shoddiness might descend left unchecked. He detailed in his diary how he “found the [financial] accounts in a very much muddled condition, and discovered errors in simple addition...after five minutes examination; also cleaned out the safe which had apparently not been orderly arranged for many years as there were important documents there which nobody in the Embassy knew existed.” Only a few weeks earlier, similar laxness in the embassy staff manifested, “when [a staff member’s] failure to read a letter-- because it was in German--kept a wretched American in prison a week longer than was necessary.”⁵⁹

The staff exhibited their unpolished ways more publicly, too, much to Grew’s chagrin. Attending, on the spur of the moment, a regal mass to celebrate the Prince Regent of Bavaria’s 90th birthday in March, 1911, he and the rest of Vienna witnessed a real comedy act by the embassy’s military attaché. Major William Allaire “pushed in ahead of me, though he is my junior in rank, and tried to wedge himself into the front pew next to Mr. Kerens and the other Ambassadors who occupied the first two rows, but he was immediately shown out by an usher and obliged to move back several rows.” Grew related the episode as an illustration of

how our Embassy here makes itself the laughingstock of the place. The Ambassador and I should have been in full evening dress, no matter how unpleasant that may seem..., the frock coat [in which they dressed], which is regarded by all Europeans as less formal, is on such occasions incorrect and frequently gives offense as showing a lack of due courtesy. [Private Secretary to Ambassador Kerens, Philip] Hoefele had no possible right to be there at all as he is not officially accredited and does not appear in the diplomatic list. Thus much for the *savoir faire* of the Embassy,⁶⁰

he concluded.

During a Congressional recess, in September, 1912, the Taft administration appointed Grew First Secretary at the Berlin embassy. Happiness to once again reside in Berlin abruptly denatured, however, with the news of a reconvened Senate’s refusal to confirm his and many other of Taft’s eleventh-hour diplomatic nominations. And Wilson’s defeat of Taft the next month put the Republican-appointed Grews firmly into a deep gloom, much worried now over the “prospect of walking the plank” once the new administration was installed in March. Concerns over job security cast a long shadow. Because of the Senate’s inaction, Grew and his compatriots would “automatically lose our jobs at the end of the present

⁵⁹ Ibid., 1: 85, Grew diary entry, 7 March 1911.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 1: 87-88, Grew diary entry, 12 March 1911.

session of Congress. Whether Dr.[President] Wilson will reappoint us to the same post seems very uncertain, even if he retains most of those already in." Even if not outright ousted in the shuffle, the Grews could not financially afford reassignment to a lesser-grade post, nor to an equal post for reasons of the great expense involved in moving yet again. The U.S. government for a few years more would still require its diplomats to pay their own travel and moving expenses. To Grew, the dismal outlook was "sad...after eight interesting years of work in the Service, which, as a Service, has been very close to my heart." Expecting the worst, he advised a friend just before Christmas, "I may come home in February and see if we can do anything to get reappointed, but I have no connecting links with [the new Democratic president] Mr. Wilson whatever and I'm afraid that nothing we could do would be of any use..."⁶¹

America's diplomatic service stood to lose an experienced, competent, and proven representative in First Secretary Grew, on the grounds of domestic political expediency. As it turned out, an old friend of Grew's at Groton and Harvard, named Franklin Delano Roosevelt, had been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy by Wilson. Elected in 1910 to the New York State Senate and from the beginning a strong supporter of Wilson's Democratic presidential nomination two years later, Roosevelt posed the ideal conduit of influence for Grew. He expressed interest in Grew's plight and promised assistance towards retaining him in the diplomatic service. Grew, in turn, conveyed his appreciation and a gentle alarm in late February, that "You must not embarrass yourself in any way...with the new Administration, but you may be sure that I shall be exceedingly appreciative and deeply indebted to you for any word of recommendation that you may be able to say. I have found this old Service intensely interesting in the last nine years and should be sorry to leave it if that could be avoided." Whatever weight Roosevelt's backing carried in the outcome, the Senate at last voted to confirm Grew's appointment to Berlin on 1 March 1913.⁶² But this temporary decision only anticipated the final, rockiest shoal, that of an executive decision to once and for all retain Grew.

Wisely, the future ambassador kept a wary eye on the patronage squall-line looming ahead over the extent and depth of diplomatic personnel changes to be initiated under the Wilson regime. As indicated

⁶¹ Ibid., 1: 103-104, Grew to Armour, 21 December 1912.

⁶² Ibid., 1: 106, Grew to Roosevelt, 25 February 1913, and Footnotes 7 and 8.

above, Wilson's Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, sought assiduously to repay prominent political supporters from the spoils of coveted diplomatic positions abroad, positions like Grew's. Consequently, Bryan threatened to turn upside down all the progress that had been accomplished in the previous decade by ignoring the earlier executive orders and returning the State Department to an amateur footing. To protect himself, Grew immediately began garnering whatever formal support he could of his incumbency. He explained to his mother a few weeks later, "...You say that I seem to have several strings to my bow and this is true, for I have made a point of getting as many endorsements sent in to the new Administration as possible. If there is any question of overturning the Service they will come in useful." At least five different influential Democrats had already made overtures on his behalf, despite his reluctance to play the patronage game. As it had to be done, Grew rationalized, "I don't like to blow my own trumpet, but have no objection to others doing it for me at this critical period, and if we should be turned out while others were kept in, I should always regret having left any stones unturned..."⁶³ Later in the fall, he also procured Ambassador Gerard's support, who wrote Bryan to plead against Grew's removal from the embassy. Explaining "his presence is absolutely essential, and will be for some time, to the smooth running of the Embassy," Gerard's letter perhaps combined with the influence of Roosevelt and other prominent Democrats to finally dissuade Bryan from targeting Grew.⁶⁴ He would remain in Berlin unmolested and prove a central figure throughout Gerard's embassy until the break in relations in February, 1917.

(HUGH ROBERT WILSON: SECOND SECRETARY

Hugh Wilson's was the diplomatic career that almost never was. After boldly entering the service against the advice of the family patriarch, he not only weathered the transition to a professional corps, but eventually rose to become himself Ambassador to Germany in 1938 and a Special Assistant to the

⁶³ Ibid., 1: 106-107, Grew to Mrs. Grew, 13 March 1913.

⁶⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 4-47, Gerard to Bryan, undated but surely between late October and early December, 1913.

Secretary of State in 1940.⁶⁵ Like Gerard and Grew, Wilson hailed from a monied family. Born in Evanston, Illinois, in 1885, he grew up among Chicago's wealthy elite, spent four years at the elite Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and finally graduated from Yale in 1906.⁶⁶ Ivy League connections naturally developed and he soon counted as friends Kermit Roosevelt, the President's son, and Hugh Knox, offspring of succeeding President Taft's Secretary of State, Philander Chase Knox. They would prove useful later to his final decision to enter American diplomacy.

Wilson's initial exposure to America's representatives abroad came during a year's traveling around the world in 1906. Pondering a few years later his own entrance into the diplomatic service, his views of the cadre reflected the popular perception of them. "Political hacks" populated the large majority of posts abroad. Since the Civil War, American envoys had been "largely...the failures at home," often "the relatives and friends of those in authority who had been unable to make a living for themselves of whose absence gave their families a momentary relief." His first-hand experience during his year of travel provoked in him "indignation" towards these incompetents, and whether his emotions moved or dissuaded him from ultimately joining the service, he does not say. After his travels in any case, it took Wilson three-and-a-half unsatisfying years with the family shirt-making business in Chicago before finally resolving to try his hand as a diplomat. Entering America's diplomatic corps represented a "temporary enjoyable means of passing a few years...a pleasant interval only" for the young Wilson newly made independently wealthy thanks to an inheritance from his mother. Both parents now dead, he turned to his father's friends, who "without exception" saw in his plan a foolhardy and ill-advised move. "They declared with reason that diplomacy in the United States was the football of politics; that there was no money in it and usually ended by saying that 'frivolous society in Europe was no place for a young American.'" Echoing the commonplace perceptions of American amateur diplomacy, Wilson's well-meaning advisors "had no belief whatever in the prospects of the youthful [diplomatic and consular] services...[and] were sure the services would be wrecked by succeeding Presidents." Wilson's uncle, the family patriarch and president of the

⁶⁵ Register of the Department of State, October 1, 1940, p. 208.

⁶⁶ Register of the Department of State, January 1, 1928, p. 217.

family corporation, expressed unreserved disapproval as well and gave Wilson to clearly understand he would be “remiss in [his familial] duty” should he really act on his plan to join.⁶⁷

Suitably cowed if not disillusioned, Wilson journeyed to Washington, D.C., to more clearly sound out the service’s prospects. Young diplomat Arthur Orr advised his childhood friend of the service’s future, explaining, “You won’t get anywhere, but you will have a lot of fun going there.” On the train east Wilson encountered none other than old Yale friend Hugh “Hootie” Knox, who took him to meet his father, the Secretary of State. The elder Knox “didn’t think much of the diplomatic service,” and Wilson next sought advice of the First Assistant Secretary of State, Huntington Wilson (no relation). The Secretary gave Wilson “my real advice as to how to prepare for the examinations,” steering him away from the “cramming school” that had cropped up in the wake of the introduction of entrance examinations hardly four years before. Instead, Wilson ought to study at the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* in Paris, an institution well regarded as a polishing school for ambitious American Ivy Leaguers and hopeful diplomats wishing to prepare for the examinations. An encouraged Wilson took the other’s advisement and in 1910 began an idyllic year of study, refining his French and sharpening his intellect with two of his future Berlin peers, Albert Ruddock and Alexander Kirk. In the end, however, he did not graduate and instead opted for practical experience in diplomacy. In 1911, Wilson declined further study at the *Ecole* to accept the position of private secretary to Mr. Edwin V. Morgan, U.S. Minister to Portugal, to whom a mutual friend had recommended Wilson. In Lisbon, Wilson’s duties “certainly weren’t arduous” and allowed motor trips every weekend over Portugal’s “abominable” roads in Morgan’s automobile, “one of the few in the country at the time.” Wilson also found ample time to prepare for the coming examinations.⁶⁸

Late that autumn, Wilson regretfully left his paradise and in early December, 1911, took the written and oral examinations in Washington. He found the written “exhausting,” but “only different in degree from what I had become accustomed to in school and university.” The orals, however, proved “a real ordeal” and, to Wilson’s surprise, required responses “that demanded thought and careful presentation,

⁶⁷ Wilson, *Education*, pp. xiii and 6-7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10, 21-22, and 179.

rather than a knowledge of fact.” His preparation stood him well in the end and a telegram followed him home to Chicago advising the new diplomat of his appointment as Secretary of the Legation at Guatemala City. He returned to Washington in January for his month of instruction at the Department, which amounted to “rare fun” as Albert Ruddock and he reveled in “[a] feeling of partnership in the organization” with “companions in my profession.”⁶⁹

Arriving at his post the next month, Wilson soon took unlikely charge as acting-minister. Assuming responsibilities which he ultimately carried nearly two years until another minister arrived,⁷⁰ his duties were not especially onerous meanwhile, being primarily “protection of interest” cases on behalf of private U.S. citizens. Wilson conducted his quiet work in a virtual vacuum. One boat weekly arrived from New Orleans at Puerto Barrios on the Caribbean coast, the mail pouch from which would arrive at the legation by Monday morning. Any travelers typically called with their business, if any, by Wednesday, and Wilson, pushing hard, could have all work and visitors resolved by Thursday afternoon, in time to begin a long weekend of adventure across the idyllic countryside. Washington’s remoteness helped ensure little chance of interruption: cables were rare, correspondence only once per week, no telephones, no airplanes.⁷¹

With his arrival in 1913, the new minister, Dr. Leavell, provided Wilson’s “first experience of a non-Service Chief” and occasioned a display of the more professional inclinations of this first post-*fin de siècle* generation of American diplomats. The secretary, a product of a transforming American diplomatic service--formal entrance exam, periodic fitness reports, expectations of promotion--found himself “startled by the difficulties with which [Leavell] was faced” as an amateur diplomat enjoying the spoils of the new Woodrow Wilson administration. Secretary Wilson worked diligently to get the doctor and his family “as comfortable as possible, as independent [from the veteran Wilson] as possible, as quickly as possible,” in order to facilitate his early departure. He not only desired to escape the unsatisfying burden of a clueless new boss, but also sought to get back to Washington to see the new regime’s State Department.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 27-28 and 31-32.

⁷⁰ Register of the Department of State, January 1, 1928, p. 217.

⁷¹ Wilson, Education, p. 51.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 85-86.

While traveling in the summer of 1914, Wilson and his new wife received simultaneous telegrams in Como, Italy. His, from the department, explained he had been assigned as Third Secretary of Embassy in London. Hers, from a friend, expressed congratulations over their new post. Wilson suspected “unwarranted interference” on his behalf and, possibly feeling the tug of professionalism, he resented this remnant of patronage. Expecting the London position to mean only menial duties on top of all, Wilson consequently complained to the department and found reassignment to Buenos Aires--his penultimate post before Berlin.⁷³ For two years in sleepy Argentina, Wilson watched the war unfold from afar, his time punctuated only by his promotion in February, 1915, to Secretary of Embassy or Legation of class three.

On 2 June 1916 while on vacation, Washington suddenly notified him of his next assignment as Second Secretary of Embassy under Ambassador James Ger ard in Berlin.⁷⁴ The news of adventure excited the Wilsons. News from the German capital was “scant” and “information vague and contradictory,” making the city seem “then the centre of a great fortress,”⁷⁵ “in a state of siege by the whole world.”⁷⁶ Enroute they visited his hometown of Evanston and Wilson discovered a distinct shift of attitude amongst family friends and business acquaintances. Previously disparaging of the diplomatic service, even men of his father’s generation had adopted during Wilson’s five-year absence “a more tolerant attitude towards my profession than they had” before his entry in 1911. “Their tolerance,” he found in some cases, “even reached the point of sympathetic interest. They had been deeply stirred by the foreign events of the past two years. They had learned a lot of [U.S.] policy, some geography and even traces of history...[and] they recognized our own country’s interest in alien events, so their interest grew in a service which was destined to administer our interests and look out for them.” From that moment on, Wilson felt convinced “the business men of America believe in the Foreign Service [since a] trained service represents to their minds the normal and logical way of going about the nation’s business.” Armed with renewed conviction in his noble duty and with scant authentic news emanating from Central Europe, Wilson and his wife boarded their ship in the summer of 1916 “to plunge into the unknown” of wartime Berlin.⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

⁷⁴ Register of the Department of State, January 1, 1928, p. 217.

⁷⁵ Wilson, Education, p. 162.

⁷⁶ Hugh R. Wilson, Diplomat Between Wars (New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1941), p. 4.

⁷⁷ Wilson, Education, pp. 162-164.

OTHER SECRETARIES

While Hugh Wilson served as Gerard's Second Secretary towards the end, Willing Spencer occupied the position during the initial months of the ambassador's tenure in Berlin. In echoing Wilson's personal and diplomatic background, Spencer's represents, almost *ad nauseum*, the leitmotif among the personnel ultimately to pass through the Gerard embassy. Born of wealth, Spencer spent much of his younger years in private schools in Philadelphia, Massachusetts, Switzerland, and Germany. A year at the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* in Paris followed Harvard in 1899 and led to a *Juris Doctor* degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1903. Several years' practicing law then preceded successful negotiation of the diplomatic service entrance examinations in March, 1910, and subsequent posting to St. Petersburg as Third Secretary. In August of the next year the State Department transferred Spencer to Berlin's vacant Second Secretary position, where he would remain into the early months of Gerard's embassy before his reassignment to Caracas in February, 1914.

Replacing the outgoing Spencer as Second Secretary, forty-three year old Roland B. Harvey arrived in Berlin in early 1914 to begin work at the fourth, and last, post of his short career. Private schools in Baltimore; tutors in Switzerland, France, and Germany; Johns Hopkins University; University of Maryland Law School; thirteen years' lawyering--Harvey's pre-diplomatic life held no surprises. Passing the entrance examinations in May, 1909, he held various posts in the Balkans, Lima, and Santiago, until finally called to Berlin on the eve of the war.⁷⁸ Harvey's misfortune there helps highlight the State Department's residual, nineteenth-century torpor inadequate to twentieth-century, wartime demands. For the strain of the coming conflict exacerbated a nervous condition, which soon developed into a full-fledged and, finally, fatal insanity.

Under Gerard, Harvey performed well enough to warrant promotion to Secretary of Embassy or Legation of class three in February, 1915. But as the year progressed, Harvey began developing symptoms

⁷⁸ Register of the Department of State, December 15, 1916, p. 98; and December 19, 1917, p. 102.

of a nervous condition, including loss of knee jerks, sluggish pupils, and ataxia.⁷⁹ By November, Gerard reported to Colonel House, that he had requested Secretary of State Lansing to remove Harvey, as he “is too sick to be of any use and there seems no chance of improvement.”⁸⁰ But the State Department proved remarkably nonresponsive to the situation and Harvey lingered on in wartime Berlin. By spring, 1916, his condition progressively worsened until his forgetfulness, lack of concentration, and general carelessness in his work had become unacceptable and something absolutely had to be done. In early June, 1916, while on leave in America, First Secretary Grew met with Third Assistant Secretary of State William Phillips. Phillips already had received from Colonel House a letter indicating Gerard’s opinion that Harvey “was unfit to remain in Berlin,” but it took Grew’s personal visit to finally convince Phillips of an immediate transfer. Together they settled on Harvey’s effective elevation to Buenos Aires and on Hugh Wilson as his Berlin replacement.⁸¹ The department had required a mere eight months and personal intervention to at last respond to a potentially incendiary personnel problem.

Back in Berlin, news of his “promotion” amounted to more than Harvey’s diseased mind could handle. As embassy medical attaché, Dr. Karl Ohnesorg, described it to a colleague; “The amount of mental elation over this change of duty was in his case out of all proportion to the degree of advancement [in light of it constituting a promotion]. This, instead of subsiding, has progressively increased and has during the past week been associated with a pathological...exaltation of the ego, a decided perversion in his character in the nature of obscenity, both as to action and conversation.” Already a very loose cannon on Gerard’s deck, Harvey furthermore “developed a delusional attitude in connection with his voice, thinking God has recently given him a wonderful voice, and acts upon this not only while alone but also in public.” In exercising his new-found vocal talents, it seems Harvey also set to “talking wildly lately of the most confidential matters of Embassy; telling German friends of his garbled reports of [Gerard’s] conversations with Emperor [Wilhelm] etc., and mixing these up.”⁸² Gerard consequently felt compelled by mid-month to write the German Secretary of Foreign Affairs von Jagow to explain Harvey “is in a bad mental

⁷⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 15-42, Dr. Karl Ohnesorg (unsigned) to Dr. Hugh Young, 14 June 1916.

⁸⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 2 November 1915.

⁸¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 15-39, Grew to Gerard, 5 June 1916.

⁸² Gerard Papers, Folder 16-25, Gerard to Lansing, 14 June 1916.

condition” and, pending his imminent return to America, should be excused and disregarded for any “undiplomatic” behavior he might display as a result.⁸³ The strained ambassador also complained frankly to his superior, Lansing, that he was “[s]orry the Department left him here so long after my request for his removal to another post. I do not know what may turn up after he leaves, or what he may have said of confidential matters.”⁸⁴ Harvey left Berlin for America in mid-June, 1916, and never recovered. The department “unassigned” him that September and retired him in October, 1917. The next month former Second Secretary of Embassy Harvey died at home in Baltimore.⁸⁵

The senior Third Secretary, Albert Billings Ruddock, claimed Chicago as his home and origins rooted in wealth and prominence. Hopkin’s Grammar School in New Haven, Connecticut, prepped him for eventual graduation from Yale in 1907 and a master’s degree from Columbia in 1910. At the *Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques* the next year, he became close friends with future Berlin diplomat-in-arms, Alexander Kirk, whom Ruddock’s sister later married. Hurdling the entrance examinations that December (1911), Ruddock left for Berlin the next February as a new Third Secretary.

As with the rest of the largely Republican-appointed cadre in America’s diplomatic service, Ruddock felt concern over the Democratic takeover after the 1912 elections. Like First Secretary Grew and Second Secretary Spencer, he discerned the dangers of the Phoenix-like rise of spoilsmanship under the Wilson administration, especially once the axe fell on their boss, the experienced Ambassador Leishman. In due course, the Third Secretary’s hedge made its arrival, as letters extolling him reached his new boss, Gerard, hardly a month after his confirmation. Close family friend and Chicago attorney, Roger C. Sullivan, wrote of his “very great interest” in Ruddock’s “success and future.” Emphasizing the Secretary’s eminent background, education, and wealth, Sullivan suggested Albert “[n]aturally...would like to be 2nd Secretary, or even higher, if this be possible.” Such lauding reflected 19th century methods of discourse and contrasted with the more modern element of professionalism with which Sullivan concluded his commendation, namely that Ruddock “stood high in the [diplomatic service entrance] exams...”⁸⁶

⁸³ Gerard Papers, Folder 16-17, Gerard to von Jagow, 13 June 1916.

⁸⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 16-25, Gerard to Lansing, 14 June 1916.

⁸⁵ Register of the Department of State, December 15, 1916, p. 98; and December 19, 1917, p. 102.

⁸⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-10, Sullivan to Gerard, 9 September 1913. A few days later, Ruddock’s very wealthy uncle and Gerard acquaintance, C. K. G. Billings of New York, wrote to congratulate Gerard on

While a word from Gerard could only help Ruddock, the influence of connections slowly was waning, for Ruddock's advancement, in contrast to even a decade earlier, now depended more and more on less subjective criteria. His performance on the entrance examination, periodic fitness reports from Gerard to the department, and other factors increasingly shaped a diplomat's future. The State Department sought now to assess its personnel more with an eye toward performance, placement, and promotion potential. For example, in December, 1914, then-State Counselor Robert Lansing requested from Gerard "for the confidential information of the Department a detailed report [using enclosed forms for the purpose] on the ability, fidelity to duty and efficiency" of Grew, Harvey, and Ruddock. Lansing expected the reports promptly and that they would be "so complete, frank, definite and just in character as to be of real value to the Department in the keeping of a satisfactory record of the merits, qualifications and demerits of the personnel of the diplomatic service below the grade of minister."⁸⁷ Thus, letters of recommendation from high personages carried less and less weight, as the diplomatic service pressed to escape the clutches of patronage and professionalize its ranks.

Once the war began, the work load for foreign service personnel quickly grew unbearable and required urgent remedies. One natural avenue was to boost the number of diplomatic secretaries. In 1914 the American diplomatic service boasted seventy embassy secretaries, up from a mere twenty-four in 1898. By war's end in 1918 the number rose to a record 122, as the service sought to meet workload with manpower.⁸⁸ Gerard's embassy, probably the busiest in all the service, received six Third Secretaries of the fifty-two who entered during the war years, or more than one-tenth the total (11.5%). Alexander Comstock Kirk, Lithgow Osborne, Oliver Bishop Harriman, Robert McGregor Scotten, Lawrence Lanier Winslow, and Charles Howland Russell, Jr., ultimately populated the embassy's lowest professional rank. Except for the striking similarity of their backgrounds, their biographies are unremarkable. The leitmotif of elitism established by their superiors Grew, Harvey, and Ruddock, applied without exception. All hailed from wealthy families. Each received an Ivy League education, with two graduating Yale and five ultimately

his appointment to Berlin and took the opportunity, predictably, to endorse his nephew. Gerard Papers, Folder 4-50, C. K. G. Billings to Gerard, 11 September 1913.

⁸⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 9-29, Lansing to Gerard, 12 December 1914.

⁸⁸ Kenneth W. Thompson, American Diplomacy and Emergent Patterns (New York: New York University Press, 1962), p. 79.

having some affiliation with Harvard (Winslow's single year at Columbia was the exception). In each case, some prior overseas or diplomatic experience prefaced their entry into diplomatic service. Scotten taught at Yale Mission School in Changsha, China, for one year; Kirk served a short while in Washington as private secretary to Third Assistant Secretary of State Phillips; Harriman served as private secretary to the American ambassador to Chile; Winslow proved himself Ambassador Gerard's "*chinesische Mauer*" as his private secretary for the first two years of his embassy;⁸⁹ and Osborne and Russell worked 1-1/2 and two years, respectively, in Berlin as non-commissioned civilian attachés in Gerard's embassy. Finally, perhaps of most significance, all of the six entered the American diplomatic service after formal examination and directly began reaping the benefits of graded rank, regular promotions, assignments and transfers, and other gains from legislation, like the Stone-Flood Act of 1915. While the State Department's slow evolution towards democratizing and professionalizing its ranks would mature only after a few more decades, these men, along with Ruddock and Wilson, represented really the very first generation of American diplomats raised under the new paradigm.⁹⁰

Ultimately, because of the bureaucratic slowness of recruiting and examining potential candidates, and because such men invariably were without badly needed experience, other sources of manpower were pursued. As another means to quickly augment the chronically short staff, the State Department also eventually attached four Special Assistants (or the equivalent) to Gerard's embassy. In November, 1916, a newly-appointed novice, the wealthy Herman Oelrichs, journeyed from America to work in the embassy for the final few months,⁹¹ only to disappear thereafter from the diplomatic scene. Caught in Germany at war's outbreak, the independently wealthy, Harvard-educated Ellis Loring Dresel volunteered to assist the embassy staff as a civilian attaché, whereupon he began an eight year diplomatic "career" of distinction. Dresel's naturally great aptitude for diplomatic work earned a formal commission the next year as a State Department Special Representative. While this exempted him from any examination requirements, it also

⁸⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 5-19, Fenske to Gerard, 15 November 1913.

⁹⁰ Their biographies can be found in Register of the Department of State, 1 October 1945, p. 162 (Kirk); 23 December 1918, p. 148 and 1 May 1922, p. 164 (Osborne); 1 January 1927, p. 213 (Harriman); 1 April 1949, p. 344 (Scotten); 1 January 1928, p. 218 (Winslow); 23 December 1918, p. 158 and 1 May 1922, p. 174 (Russell).

⁹¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-17, Phillips to Embassy, telegram dated 17 November 1916.

meant he was ineligible for any career benefits and protection, like tenure, afforded secretaries in a professionalizing diplomatic service, though promotions proved no problem in the meanwhile. After the break in relations in 1917, Dresel served in a variety of diplomatic capacities, including Special Representative to the American minister in Berne, U.S. Assistant Commissioner in Berne to the American-German and American-Austro-Hungarian Prisoner Conferences in Berne, attaché to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace in 1918-19, and attaché with the rank of Counselor to the embassy in Paris, where he headed the German section of the American delegation to negotiate the war settlement. In January, 1920, the department sent him as American Commissioner to Berlin, where he proved popular and gained great standing with the Germans, with whom he negotiated a treaty of peace in 1921. Dresel stayed on as *chargé d'affaires* until America's first post-war ambassador, Alanson B. Houghton, arrived the next year, whereupon to Dresel's great disappointment, and his friend Hugh Wilson's dismay, the Department withdrew its commission and abruptly put his immense talents to pasture.⁹² Dresel's "career" served as a telling illustration of how America's diplomats might still be directly commissioned, yet ultimately remain outside the developing professional diplomatic framework.

In contrast to Oelrichs and Dresel, the embassy's two other Special Assistants, John Brinkerhoff Jackson and George Barclay Rives, were highly experienced, older, former diplomats. Their entry and exit from America's diplomatic service illustrated well the vagaries of the old paradigm and the professional urgency of the new. Born into old New England society, Rives' life traced a not unusual course for a turn-of-the-century American diplomat. Private and Ivy League schools and law studies preceded his 1902 appointment without examination as Third Secretary at Berlin. His "career" continued with quick promotions to Second, then First Secretary and *chargé d'affaires* at Vienna, and then transfer to Rio de Janeiro in early 1911. But an altogether promising diplomatic career of eleven years abruptly ended in August, 1913, when the new, patronage-minded Wilson administration "retired" Rives without fanfare.⁹³ Only the exigencies of the war allowed him a fitting cap to his diplomatic pursuits, when he "volunteered"

⁹² Wilson, *Education*, pp. 176-177; *Register of the Department of State*, May 1, 1922, p. 113; and January 1, 1924, p. 119.

⁹³ *Register of the Department of State*, December 15, 1916, p. 126; and December 19, 1917, p. 132.

his considerable expertise to Gerard. The desperate State Department appointed him Special Assistant in April, 1915,⁹⁴ and Rives served dutifully until the final break in February, 1917.

John Brinkerhoff Jackson's roughly parallel experience proved somewhat more galling. Born in 1862, Jackson enjoyed what his close friend Hugh Wilson called "a rather remarkable career in those days when even the Secretaries of Embassy were political appointments,"⁹⁵ a career which culminated between 1902 and 1913 with a string of Balkan ministerships in Greece, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Persia, broken only by a twenty-two month hiatus as minister to Cuba in 1909. Jackson's "retirement" in 1913 came directly in the wake of the new Wilson administration's ravages on ministerial positions. Just three of fourteen career ministers survived, while Jackson and ten others were unceremoniously ousted. The standard practice of the day obliged all chiefs of mission to tender their resignation to a new president as a matter of courtesy, which Jackson dutifully did in March, 1913. Accompanying the document went his expression of earnest desire to continue his nonpartisan service to America in the region that in hardly a year would provide the spark to world war. The Third Balkan War (June-August, 1913) continued a year-long spat of violence, which kept the Administration chary of removing the veteran Jackson. In mid-August, however, within days of his reporting a signed peace his latent resignation quietly was accepted by Secretary of State Bryan. Despite his extraordinary and long service, despite understanding the region perhaps better than any other American, Jackson, the *diplomate de carrière*, was dropped to be replaced by Democratic Party supporter and Chicago brewer, Charles Vopicka.⁹⁶ The action, of course, returned a year later to haunt the Administration. With the outbreak of war, Bryan shamelessly stooped to the expedient of requesting former career ministers "retired" by the administration to return to service without compensation. Only Jackson and three others accepted,⁹⁷ and in January, 1915, the Department appointed

⁹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 19 April 1915.

⁹⁵ Wilson, Education, pp. 173-174.

⁹⁶ Warren Frederick Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779-1939: A Study in Administrative History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 121-122; Register of the Department of State, December 15, 1916, p. 103; and May 1, 1922, p. 137.

⁹⁷ Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy, p. 133. The others included H. Percival Dodge, John W. Garrett at Paris, and Lewis D. Einstein at Constantinople.

him a Special Agent to assist Ambassador Gerard in Berlin, from where Washington “retired” him again in February, 1917.⁹⁸

Gerard’s embassy also retained a great many military, naval, medical, commercial, and civilian attachés on its staff, who came and went like the tide. Among the military attachés assigned to the embassy were successive U.S. Army Majors J.A. Ryan, George Langhorne, and Joseph E. Kuhn. Commander Walter R. Gherardi, USN, served as Gerard’s Naval Attaché throughout the duration of his embassy. Among these otherwise unremarkable officers stands an interesting account of nineteenth-century trickle-down spoilsmanship surrounding Gerard’s cousin, U.S. Navy Ensign Charles Fitzhugh Angel. A Naval Academy graduate, Ensign Angel found himself aboard the U.S.S. Rhode Island at the beginning of the war.⁹⁹ Many friends and relatives urged “Hugh” to seek assignment with his cousin in Berlin and in the fall of 1913, Gerard’s close friend and advisor, Thomas McCarthy began efforts to procure Angel’s assignment as Assistant Naval Attaché to his cousin’s embassy.¹⁰⁰ The youthful Angel wrote Gerard in September, 1914, to introduce himself since their “last meeting” twelve years previous, when Angel was a mere “youngster of ten in knickerbockers.” Angel expressed his “desire to be detailed to Berlin as Asst. Naval attaché [sic] during the remainder of the war,” primarily on account of “the present professional advantages and experiences to be gained from such close contact with the war.” He cited as qualifications, “a fairly good speaking knowledge of French and a smattering of German, which could be very readily improved;” dubious familiarity of Berlin and German customs derived from a cruise to Europe several years previously; “International Law” as one of his “chief hobbies” at the Academy; and confidence. It is unclear whether such qualifications, or the fact of their common antecedents persuaded Gerard to eventually pursue the matter as he did.

In late 1915, Gerard pulled high-level strings to arrange a meeting between Angel and Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, which produced only warm promises.¹⁰¹ Further proddings eventually pushed Daniels in the fall of 1916 to direct, but then rescind, Angel’s assignment to Berlin. Initially

⁹⁸ Register of the Department of State, December 15, 1916, p. 103; and May 1, 1922, p. 137.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, December 15, 1916, p. 70; and Gerard Papers, Folder 7-34, Angel to Gerard, 17 September 1914.

¹⁰⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-12; McCarthy to Gerard, 28 October 1913.

¹⁰¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-13, Daniels to Gerard, 29 December 1915.

inclined, the Secretary felt persuaded by the Navy's Chief of Bureau of Navigation, who argued that "unfavorable comment" would surely arise over the appointment of so young and inexperienced officer to "such an unusual assignment." On grounds of Angel's greenness and because of his delay in completing the Navy's requisite five-years' sea duty before an initial shore duty post, the Chief tentatively convinced Daniels that the disadvantages would too greatly prejudice Angel's chances for future promotions.¹⁰² Gerard, however, renewed his request and at last prevailed on Daniels, who, once the German Foreign Office relayed the Kaiser's approval, ordered the assignment in late November, 1916.¹⁰³ But meeting Angel for the first time in years just before sailing from New York on 5 December 1916 (Gerard had returned to America for several weeks' vacation and consultations in October), Gerard "noticed [Angel] talked like an ass on the ship coming over" and once back in Berlin prudently delayed presenting the young officer to the Imperial court and German officialdom. As the days passed, Gerard's caution proved justified as Angel's condition grew increasingly serious, until finally in early January, 1917, the ambassador had to declare him "violently insane" and reported Angel "strapped to his bed in a sanitorium."¹⁰⁴ Gerard's nepotism had ironically amounted to a symbolic rejection of patronage.

Angel's late arrival nevertheless contributed to the dramatic wartime expansion of the Gerard embassy. In December, 1913, the amateur Gerard's professional diplomatic staff counted six total.¹⁰⁵ As the work load expanded with the war, additional Third Secretaries and various attachés augmented the core professional staff of a First, Second, and Third Secretary, and military and naval attachés. Commercial attaché Erwin W. Thompson arrived in the fall, 1914, to join several volunteer civilians like later-Third Secretary Charlie Russell and later-Special Representative Ellis Loring Dresel.¹⁰⁶ By December, 1914, the

¹⁰² Gerard Papers, Folder 15-14, Daniels to Gerard, 13 October 1916; and Gerard to Daniels, 31 October 1916.

¹⁰³ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-32, Winslow to Gerard, undated note; and Register of the Department of State, December 15, 1916, p. 70.

¹⁰⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to Lansing and Colonel House, 10 January 1917.

¹⁰⁵ Author's assessment. As a political appointee, Gerard himself does not count as a "professional." Lawrence Lanier Winslow, Gerard's private secretary for the first two years, is counted as a professional, as he nevertheless performed the diplomatic duties of a Third Secretary, even though not passing the diplomatic entrance exams until November, 1914, and receiving the following July formal assignment to Berlin as a Third Secretary.

¹⁰⁶ As a consular officer, Thompson had to pass a formal examination process for entry into a service that had earlier set the pace for the diplomatic service's reform towards institutional professionalism. Because Russell essentially performed the same POW camp inspections and other duties which were the primary

number had risen to ten and then to thirteen a year later. The course of 1915 brought onboard State Department Special Agent John Brinkerhoff Jackson, Special Assistant George Barclay Rives, and two Third Secretaries, Alexander Kirk and Lawrence Lanier Winslow.¹⁰⁷ During 1916, in addition to three further Third Secretaries, Robert Scotten, Oliver Harriman, and Lithgow Osborne, several medical attachés came to the embassy as well, including Doctors Jerome Webster,¹⁰⁸ Alonzo Englebert Taylor, Karl Ohnesorg of the U.S. Navy, and others, for the purpose of inspecting belligerent POW camp sanitation, rations, and general conditions.¹⁰⁹ And late that year on the eve of the break, Lieutenant Angel's arrival as assistant naval attaché and Herman Oelrich's appointment as Special Representative brought the professional staff to its numerical acme of twenty, a 233% increase in four years.¹¹⁰

THE EMBASSY'S CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE

As a group, the embassy's eleven secretaries and four special assistants faithfully bore out the State Department's stigma of elitist wealth.¹¹¹ Like the unofficial criterion of wealth for ambassadors,

purview of the embassy's Third Secretaries, and as he finally entered the service as a Third Secretary in June, 1917, he is considered a "professional" for the purpose of this analysis. Likewise, despite his non-professional recruitment, Dresel also is included based on his subsequent "career" as American Commissioner and *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin.

¹⁰⁷ Jackson's and Rives' extraordinary diplomatic careers before their "retirement," subsequent rehabilitation, and final departure under Wilson conferred professional status on them.

¹⁰⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-26, Reverend Lorin Webster to Gerard, 11 October 1916.

¹⁰⁹ In March, 1916, four American doctors arrived at Gerard's request, including a Dr. Irwin, a Dr. McCarthy, and Dr. Webster. Despite Gerard stipulating on 16 February that the men sent be over 30 years old (for maturity reasons) and conversant in German, he found it necessary to ask for Irwin and Webster's recall on grounds that one was a gynecologist (there being, of course, no female POWs), both were under 30, and neither could speak German. Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 28 March 1916.

¹¹⁰ While the absolute numbers of non-professional clerical staff are unknown, their ranks, too, rapidly expanded, quadrupling by late 1916 as the professional staff more than doubled by that time. Gerard Papers, Folder 13-35, Gerard to The London Morning Post, date unknown, but late 1916. Prior to the war, the full-time clerical staff consisted of two appointed clerks, British subject Laurence Harwood Hoile (appointed 1903) and Harvard-educated Charles Bowker Dyer (appointed 1906). The non-professional staff also included various native service workers, as a chauffeur, an automobile washer, handy-man "old" Wilhelm Knoth, a French chef, and the new embassy's Hausmeister, Herr L. Vanderk. With diplomatic secretaries, naval, military, and civilian attaches, special representatives and agents, and the household staff, Gerard's embassy personnel numbered perhaps over thirty at its height. Of these, roughly half were "professionals."

¹¹¹ One First Secretary (Grew), three Second Secretaries (Spencer, Harvey, and Wilson), and six Third Secretaries (Ruddock, Kirk, Osborne, Harriman, Scotten, and Winslow) constitute the bulk of the group. The group excludes the military, naval, medical, and civilian attachés, none of whom counted as a foreign

private income applied for secretaries for the same reason and perhaps to a greater degree. The historically inadequate wage scale of the diplomatic service meant poor pay in comparison to other diplomatic services and would change significantly only after the Rogers Act in 1924 and the Moses-Lithicum Act in 1931.

An American First Secretary in 1914, for example, received half the pay (including housing and representational allowances) earned by his British counterpart. Put another way, a Secretary of Legation in Bucharest, having to pay for the sundry, but significant, expenses of his diplomatic position, earned \$2,800 per year compared to “the lowest living wage in New York City for a day laborer’s family” of \$2,600 annually. Like for ambassadors and ministers, the meager pay secretaries received did not nearly suffice to cover the necessary costs of diplomatic high society. The natural solution lay in reliance on men of independent wealth used to the graces of the *haut monde*. Consequently, almost without exception diplomatic service secretaries possessed private income derived from families of fortune and stature.¹¹²

The inherited wealth of every one of Berlin’s secretaries served as the key to what one observer called “a national, inter-city metropolitan upper class,” that was emerging by the turn of the century and that found its mold largely by the common experience of boarding schools and Ivy League institutions. “Service spirit bound the secretaries closely together. In a sense they knew each other before they ever met. The career only deepened and circumscribed existing ties. They possessed a common background, common experience,” and a common elitist outlook.” One amateur ambassador once snidely referred to their ranks as a “Secretaries’ Union;” and Hugh Wilson called them “a pretty good club,” as it was indeed.¹¹³

Service-wide, the majority of the professional secretaries and attachés were well-educated, rich, and had attended preparatory schools, a characterization which fitted all at Berlin. Exclusively, every man had been born into the purple, hailing from the monied upper stratum of New England and Mid-west society. Six originated from the New York City area; three from Chicago; two from Boston; and one each from Detroit, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. Most the service’s secretaries were graduates of Ivy League

service officer subject to the service provisions under the various executive orders and the Stone-Flood Act of 1915. Although the Wilson administration “retired” Rives and Jackson in 1913, they are included in the group total along with Dresel, since their commissioning as attachés hardly two years later counted as the real terminus of their careers. The group, therefore, includes thirteen men for its analysis.

¹¹² Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy*, pp. 167-168.

¹¹³ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, p. 97-98.

colleges. Of sixteen First Secretaries in 1914 Europe, six were Harvard (including Grew) and two were Yale graduates. Of 29 secretaries of all ranks, all but 10 were Ivy League. With a sole exception, every man at Berlin enjoyed a privileged private education, though three (Winslow, Osborne, and Harriman) did not graduate. Represented were Harvard (six), Yale (four), Princeton (two) and Columbia University (one), while a mix of private and state-supported schools graduated Second Secretary Harvey (A.B. Johns Hopkins, LL.B University of Maryland). Four held law degrees (two more studied law), one earned a master's degree, and one had both--all advanced degrees from Ivy League institutions again, except Harvey's *Juris Doctor* from the University of Maryland.¹¹⁴ For further preparation, many in the service had attended Eton or the *Ecole des Sciences Politique*; at Berlin evidently none attended Eton, but four of fourteen studied at the *Ecole*. Finally, perhaps needless to say, all were male caucasians.¹¹⁵

It seems clear Gerard's professional staff preserved a significant remnant from earlier days in their uniformly elite backgrounds, even as it mixed with the developing careerism of a new age. In 1917, the older embassy hands like Grew, Wilson, and Jackson might recall a time when political preferment ruled the American foreign service. Even still, they might genuinely marvel at the odd American statesman able to claim long, continuous service. The newer generation, however, experienced a different kind of diplomatic service. Reform efforts since the turn of the century had transformed the service along more professional lines. All the younger secretaries in Berlin essentially entered after Taft's executive order further supplemented Roosevelt's in 1909. By 1913 over 50% of all secretaries of embassy and legation had passed the examinations; by 1917 Gerard's embassy could claim 90%.¹¹⁶ Also, since 1909 all

¹¹⁴ Grew evidently sought Harvard men for the Berlin post, and especially those who had also attended Groton, as he did. In the course of the war, Berlin received nine Harvard graduates, four of them also from Groton; that Harvard alumnus William Phillips handled the service's personnel affairs as Third Assistant Secretary of State probably did not hurt. West, *State on the Eve*, p. 118.

¹¹⁵ Under unusual circumstances, the extraordinary ex-slave Frederick Douglass proved an early, and sole, exception to this rule. In 1871, he served as secretary of a commission dispatched to examine the possibility of annexing the Caribbean island of Santo Domingo. Later, in 1889, Washington appointed him Minister to Haiti and charge d'affaires to Santo Domingo until his resignation in 1891. The rule retrenched until Lucile Atcherson passed the entrance examinations in 1922 and became the first woman foreign service officer. William Jennings Bryan left the service a more positive legacy, when his daughter, Ruth Bryan Owen, became the first woman chief of mission, serving as Minister to Denmark from 1933 to 1936.

¹¹⁶ Entering the service in 1890, 1902, and 1904, respectively, Jackson, Rives, and Grew avoided the entrance examinations instituted under Roosevelt's executive order of 1904. Directly appointed a Special Assistant in 1915, Dresel thereby uniquely escaped the exams, also--as well as any job security. The other

new secretaries had undergone training at the State Department, limited as it was. In 1913, despite a regrettable backslide into patronage for high level posts, the Wilson administration nevertheless stood firm on maintaining the lesser secretaries on a Civil Service footing. With the Stone-Flood Act in 1915, "The reclassified diplomatic service...was administered to stimulate career aspirations; advancement in [the consular and diplomatic branches] of the diplomatic service now reflected "service" to the nation, not to any political party."¹¹⁷ American diplomacy increasingly offered unprecedented opportunities for merit advancement through established ranks; promised security from the vagaries of domestic politics; and more and more sought further incentives designed to attract the highest quality of men. After rigorous, formal examinations, young Third Secretaries like Kirk (1914), Winslow (1914), Harriman (1915), Osborne (1916), and Scotten (1916) now entered what quickly was establishing itself as a *bona fide* career field. Whereas Grew (1904) and even Wilson (1911) initially perceived entry into service as a mere hiatus before pursuing "real work," these new men arrived with more-or-less legitimate aspirations for a career in American diplomacy.

Evidence of the new diplomatic paradigm taking hold came in the careerism that abounded among Gerard's staff. The politically-appointed ambassador, of course, left diplomatic service once developments liquidated his position. Three of four tenuously appointed Special Assistants were decommissioned with the dissolution of Gerard's embassy in 1917. The fourth, Dresel, survived until 1922 after helping compose the peace and war settlement, and very successfully serving first as American Commissioner, then *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin pending new Ambassador Houghton's arrival. In particular contrast, however, all the embassy's ten secretaries essentially continued their foreign service careers after leaving Berlin. Harvey's strange insanity, of course, led initially to his reassignment to Buenos Aires, then "unassignment" from active service, and, finally, death in 1917. At his post in Copenhagen, Harriman's unexpected death ended in 1926 an eleven-year career otherwise destined for high office. Three others left the service for unknown reasons. After four post-Berlin years, Osborne retired in 1921. Eleven years of active duty

nine of the group, however, were obliged to pass them. The 50% figure from Werking, *The Master Architects*, p. 240; 90% statistic calculated by author.

¹¹⁷ Richard Hume Werking, *The Master Architects: Building the United States Foreign Service, 1890-1913* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), p. 240.

promoted Ruddock to Secretary of Embassy at Peking by his unassignment and retirement in 1924. Winslow rose to First Secretary at Havana, when thirteen years of diplomacy ended with his departure in 1927. The new careerism, however, found best expression in the surprising number of ambassadors to emerge from the group. No less than four of the eleven secretaries eventually secured ambassador-level, or higher rank in the 1930s and 1940s--Grew (Turkey, Japan, Special Assistant Secretary of State), Wilson (Germany, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State), Kirk (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Italy), and Scotten (Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Ecuador, New Zealand)--before retiring with pension.

A successor to Ambassador Gerard would not be appointed until almost exactly five years after his 1917 departure. Only in February, 1922, with a formal peace finally negotiated, would Alanson B. Houghton arrive to reestablish U.S. representation in Weimar Germany. His embassy would be America's first in Berlin whose spirit would be largely of the new diplomatic paradigm. Gerard's tenure in Berlin between 1913 and 1917 marked the point of inflection in the American evolution of a career foreign service. His time in office illustrated the mounting efforts being made towards professionalizing the recruitment, promotion, administration, and retention of the service's personnel, while still evidencing yet the dangers of lingering nineteenth-century-style patronage. This process shifted into high gear under the impetus of the war period and, more and more, informed opinion considered the great advantages afforded with professional statesmen. The Stone-Flood Act of 1915 temporarily patched the more glaring deficiencies under the exigencies of wartime. Together, the act's legislation and the demands of the conflict and its aftermath largely set the course leading directly to the Rogers Act of 1924 and the formal establishment of the United States Foreign Service. In 1914, the year of Grew's hopeful remarks prefacing this chapter, not a single American mission in the great capitals could boast a professional diplomat as its chief. By 1939, twenty-five of over fifty-one chiefs of mission were career Foreign Service officers, including Ambassador to Germany Hugh Robert Wilson.¹¹⁸ Strong winds of change had carried the service so far and would not leave untouched other grave deficiencies left over from the closing century. Obstacles to professionalism had more concrete manifestations as well, as Gerard's housing crisis upon his

¹¹⁸ Thompson, American Diplomacy, p. 87.

appointment in 1913 helped further spotlight the pressing issue of permanent diplomatic residences and embassy buildings abroad.

CHAPTER IV

THE EMBASSY AND ITS TOOLS

[It is] a palace in far the prettiest part of Berlin. The house [sic] is surrounded by a huge garden with ivy growing on the walls, and best of all the bridle path to the *Tiergarten* comes right to the door. Altogether it's an enchanting spot...¹

--Harriette Post (July, 1914)

In the mid-summer of 1914, the Gerards' youthful visitor regarded the new American Embassy rightly as a blissful sanctuary in the heart of the Imperial German capital. But while Miss Post's fanciful description certainly conveyed its truth, in other, more discerning eyes the imposing manor impressed something arguably much more meaningful. For from the view of Berlin's *corps diplomatique* and German officialdom, to behold the palatial, three-story, carved-granite structure at Wilhelmsplatz 7 was to behold the United States itself: a sturdy, imposing edifice to proclaim the world power status of America. One might wonder, however, to judge otherwise from the country's standing neglect of proper, permanent housing for its representatives abroad, including at Berlin up until Gerard's arrival. In glaring contrast with the major nations of the world, the United States in the years up to World War I was peculiar--and alone among the European powers--in not providing such essentials to its diplomats. By the turn of the century, every other nation represented in Berlin and the other large European capitals either owned outright or held a long lease on a residence suitable for respectable diplomatic receptions and entertainments.² The United States government, however, considered this necessity to be the ambassador's problem and simply left him to his own devices and, for the most part, his own finances. Well into the twentieth century no provisions were made by Congress to house and furnish delegations abroad with offices. As the end of the Edwardian Era fast approached, Ambassador Gerard's new residence and embassy exemplified the first, fundamental,

¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 10-29, Post to Gerard, undated but certainly in July, 1914.

² Andrew D. White, Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White (New York: The Century Company, 1905), p. 142.

and consuming task for virtually every incoming American ambassador, namely finding--and paying for--a place in which to live and a place from which to conduct his diplomatic work.

Straight off upon arrival, new American ministers and ambassadors typically had to consider their predecessor's housing and work accommodations. Decisions had to be made whether they sufficed in location, suitability, and, particularly, whether they excessively strapped the new man's personal resources. More often than not, the last factor determined the others. Exacerbated by the low salaries offered American diplomats, the situation helped encourage the early practice of appointing wealthy men. In 1906, Representative Nicholas Longworth complained to his fellow Congressmen:

No one but a very rich man...can be an ambassador of the United States in any European capital, and no man who is not at least comparatively wealthy...can be a minister of the United States at any important diplomatic post. In other words, these offices, among the most dignified and important in the gift of the American people, are for rich men and rich men alone. This republic...has today an officeholding aristocracy...an aristocracy purely and solely of the dollar.³

Such observations were commonplace among not only the nation's politicians, but also its populace. The diplomatic service felt the disdain for its "elitism" in all kinds of neglect, not least of all in proper housing arrangements.

While personnel comfort and lost efficiency counted among the casualties, more fundamental and serious damage emerged in the loss of American prestige and dignity. The State Department heard chronic complaints over the shabbiness, indignity, and vagueness of accommodations overseas as wholly inadequate for an aspiring world power as America. But despite, or in spite, of these pressures, official moves to provide larger housing allowances or invest in permanent buildings consistently proved politically unpopular and, so, made the Lowden Act an aberration. Passed in February, 1911, it represented Congress' first act in recent memory to address the increasingly serious issue. The act authorized the Secretary of State a very modest \$500,000 annually to acquire suitable living and working quarters for U.S. diplomats and consuls abroad. By Gerard's arrival at his post, the United States owned

³ Hugh R. Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), pp. 280-281. Quote of 23 May 1906 from Tracy H. Lay, The Foreign Service of the United States (NY: Prentice-Hall, 1925).

only four embassy or legation structures, two of which were deemed adequate--Constantinople's \$150,000 embassy and Peking's \$60,000 legation--and none of which stood in Berlin.⁴ With no more ambitious provisioning expected, new administrations like Woodrow Wilson's had no choice but to rely on a newly-appointed ambassador's private wealth to suitably establish the embassy and his residence.

As noted before, the sheer expense of high diplomatic office on top of innumerable and considerable other costs made Wilson's ambassadorial recruitment a painful process. His first pick for Berlin, Henry Fine, could not afford the post even with a \$25,000 annual subsidy from Cleveland Dodge. Wilson did find a benefactor for Dodge in his ambassador to London, Walter Hines Page, who as early as April, 1914, wrote Wilson that he must resign unless an honorarium might be found. Harvard's Charles Eliot and the head of the Young Men's Christian Association, John Mott, both declined China for reasons of solvency. Cleveland Dodge himself, while sufficiently wealthy to provide at least \$50,000 per year for the support of ambassadors of lesser means, refused to take any foreign post at all on financial grounds.⁵

For those like Gerard who might afford an embassy on the other hand, capacity to impress naturally stood in direct proportion to the man's resources. Limited funds meant equally unimpressive housing, while independent wealth allowed accommodations more closely meeting the par of the European diplomatic community. Money or no, the task required extended and distracting searches immediately upon the ambassador's arrival. Even with respectable means, suitable housing very often proved nearly impossible to find in the cramped capitals--a perennial contingency for no foreign diplomat in Berlin but the Americans. A predecessor of Gerard's, the second ambassador to Berlin, Andrew D. White, once explained the urgent pressure to quickly secure proper housing:

On his arrival [the new ambassador] is expected to visit the Emperor and the princes of his family, the imperial chancellor, and the minister of foreign affairs, but all others are expected to visit him...ministers of the crown, the diplomatic corps, the members of the Imperial Parliament, the members of the Prussian legislature, the foremost men in the army and navy..., hence the most pressing duty on my arrival was to secure a house, and, during three months following, all the time that I could possibly spare, and much that I ought not to have spared, was given to excursions into all parts of the city to find it. No house, no ambassador.⁶

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 281. The consular service stood in even worse shape.

⁵ Berthold, "Assignment to Berlin: The Embassy of James Watson Gerard, 1913-1917" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1981), p. 19.

⁶ White, *Autobiography*, pp. 141-142.

A NEW EMBASSY BUILDING

Walter Hines Page, Gerard's amateur colleague in London, encountered the classic case upon his arrival to assume his duties in 1913. Residing at the Coburg Hotel for the first three months of his tenure, Page complained of the "indignity and inconvenience--even the humiliation--of an ambassador beginning his career in an hotel, especially during court season, and a green ambassador at that! I hope I may not die before our Government does the conventional duty to provide ambassadors' residences."⁷ He wrote President Wilson in October, that "[The British] commiserate me on having a Government that will not provide an Ambassador's residence--from the King to my servants."⁸ Indeed, after his initial introduction and welcome on the occasion of Page's official presentation to the King of his diplomatic credentials, the latter "immediately proceeded to express his surprise and regret that a great and rich country like the United States had not provided a residence for its ambassadors. 'It is not fair to an ambassador,' said he; and he spoke most earnestly." All Page could muster in defense was a tactful suggestion that America's "so many absorbing domestic tasks and...so few absorbing foreign relations" had delayed her developing until now "what might be called an international consciousness."⁹

Despite never having been in an American embassy and having only ever visited a single (British) embassy before in his travels, Page's initial sortie to the Chancery at 123 Victoria Street made his "heart s[i]nk." He entered "between two cheap stores--the same entrance that the dwellers in the cheap flats above used." After passing "immodest looking women" in the corridors,¹⁰ he arrived to find his new office "dingy with twenty-nine years of dirt and darkness, and utterly undignified." The flat's bedrooms, kitchen and other rooms served as the "offices" for the secretaries and attaches. Of the "cheap hole," he declared "the offices of the United States Government...ought at least to be as good as a common lawyer's office in

⁷ Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 2 vols. (Garden City and New York City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), 1: 133.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146, 25 October 1913.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁰ Rachel West, The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 82.

a country town in a rural state of our Union. Nobody asked for anything for an embassy: nobody got anything for an embassy. I made up my mind in ten minutes that I'd get out of this place."¹¹

While Page would struggle almost another year to move his chancery to the much more respectable No. 4 Grosvenor Gardens, Gerard began assessing his options even before he had departed America officially on 9 September 1913. He understood early the inadequacy of the existing embassy and ambassador's residence in Berlin. The Gerards happened to be embarked on a European vacation when they received confirmation in late July of the judge's nomination to Berlin. Since Gerard was on the continent, Ambassador John Leishman invited him to visit incognito "...to see the house and familiarize yourself with the business of the Embassy and matters generally,"¹² and Gerard made a "flying trip" in early August "to look into the house question." There he found Leishman living pleasantly situated in a small, two-family apartment house-turned-villa, but two miles from Berlin's center.¹³ Leishman had felt constrained to keep the place upon his predecessor David Jayne Hill's departure, despite that "while the present place is pleasantly located[,] the house is not at all suited for an Embassy and affords no room at all for guests."¹⁴ Gerard agreed directly and declared it "entirely unsuitable for an Embassy."¹⁵ Likewise, the current embassy offices in the Rauchstrasse suffered in "rotten and inadequate quarters,"¹⁶ and the new ambassador condemned them as well. The wealthy Gerard thus quickly settled, that Leishman's house must be abandoned and the embassy quarters enlarged, if not relocated.¹⁷

In pondering how best to proceed, Gerard found it impossible to neglect the public dimension in resolving his housing dilemma. As he began shopping around for a suitable property within his means, diplomatic peer pressure vied for influence against a sensitive American public. On the one hand, the Kaiser's imperial sentiments for pomp and decor led him to "expect something of [all foreign envoys in

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 133-134.

¹² Gerard Papers, Folder 6-9, Leishman to Gerard, 30 June 1913.

¹³ James Watson Gerard, My Four Years in Germany (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1917), pp. 18-19.

¹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-9, Leishman to Gerard, 27 September 1913.

¹⁵ Gerard, Four Years, p. 19.

¹⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-19, Wile to Gerard, 29 September 1913.

¹⁷ Leishman's lease Gerard allowed to lapse and he advised Grew from Paris on 20 September to not exercise the renewal option of the lease on the embassy building at Rauchstrasse 16. See Gerard Papers, Folder 5-25, Grew to Gerard, 22 September 1913.

Berlin],” as he considered he did more for them than any other sovereign. If Gerard’s embassy were to be successful and of greatest use to his country, he ought to procure appropriately imposing, dignified quarters satisfactory to the Emperor’s taste.¹⁸ And as for German high officials and the rest of Berlin’s diplomatic community, a majestic embassy counted for much in the way of prestige and honor, intangibles which brought untold favor in their wake.

On the opposite horn of Gerard’s dilemma, however, fumed democratic egalitarianism back in now-Democratic America. Americans, steeped in Jeffersonian values and Franklin simplicity, despised anything that smacked of elitism and riled at any sign of ostentation. Unfortunately, the trappings of just such qualities essentially defined an embassy building’s capacity to impress. Whatever his decision, Gerard had to consider ticklish public opinion at home. Hardly had he arrived in Berlin, when New York Times correspondent Louis Wiley sent him a clipping from the paper of a report cabled from Berlin, which announced Gerard was “anxious to make a proper selection, as he tells his friends that he and Mrs. Gerard attach great importance to the maintenance of social representation of a character which will enable the American Embassy in Berlin to rank with those of the other great powers.” Wiley’s friendly advice reminded the ambassador of the imprudence “to emphasize by publication the fact that social display is necessary for representation of our interests abroad.” “Possibly you are misquoted,” he suggested, but “I hope you will avoid any indication that you are becoming undemocratic...”¹⁹ Friend Don C. Seitz of the New York World seconded Wiley, when he admonished, “I do not think I would agitate the house question much [regarding a more permanent structure for the Berlin embassy]. There is still a live American prejudice against Embassies, foolish as it is.”²⁰ Indeed, so sensitive was the issue, that when German newspapers disclosed the considerable rental cost for 7 Wilhelmstrasse, over which negotiations had just collapsed in late October, Gerard grew furious.²¹ But, as his brother Sumner made clear at one point, “Of

¹⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 5-23, Sumner Gerard to James Gerard, 10 August 1913. Sumner relays to Gerard, Wilhelm II’s views from a family friend, Mr. George L. Meyer, who had recently luncheoned with the Kaiser in Berlin.

¹⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-20, Wiley to Gerard, 13 October 1913.

²⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-1, Seitz to Gerard, 10 November 1913.

²¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-40, Schmidt to Gerard, 28 October 1913.

course, with an imperial court on one hand and a Jeffersonian democracy on the other, you will be criticized no matter what you do.”²²

Four options suggested themselves for consideration: Building an addition to Rauchstrasse, constructing a new structure on vacant land, leasing a wing of the luxurious Hotel Esplanade, or renting another more suitable building--if one could be found. Initially Gerard considered constructing an annex to the existing structure at Rauchstrasse. An investigating architect, American expatriate A.F.M. Lange, reminded Gerard of the structure's "decidedly German, and at that, very bad architecture" and warned it would require a new, expensive facade in any event. Lange otherwise broadly condemned the old building as insufficient, pointedly contrasting its mediocrity with Germany's planned \$500,000 new embassy in Washington on 300 feet of prime frontage. "There are better [property] plots to be had [in Berlin] for our embassy than that of the present building,"²³ Gerard finally concurred. Meanwhile, the option to outright build a new embassy involved its own fatal frustration, namely cost. Lange estimated \$200,000 and one year to construct an entire new building on excellent land available in the Drakestrasse.²⁴ Bryan and the State Department supported Gerard's efforts to determine costs involved in bringing America's diplomatic presence in Berlin up to permanent par, for at this time the Wilson administration began contemplating legislation to deal with the "building crisis" in Berlin and elsewhere.²⁵ But while some relief was promised in what would become the Stone-Flood Act of 1915, in the meantime political will in Washington remained lukewarm and inordinate personal expense helped Gerard ultimately dispense with the annex and new construction options.

From his arrival in Berlin on 5 October 1913, Gerard took up temporary residence in the courtly Hotel Esplanade until he resolved his housing matter. Running into difficulties finding an acceptable building, Gerard seriously considered a third option of collocating the embassy and his official residence in a separate, new wing of the grand hotel. In mid-September, he initially discussed the propriety of such a

²² Gerard Papers, Folder 5-23, Sumner Gerard to James Gerard, 10 August 1913.

²³ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-10, Lange to Gerard, 6 August 1913.

²⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-10, Lange to Gerard, dated September, 1913 (actual day is torn through and missing).

²⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-10, Lange to Gerard, 5 October 1913, p. 1; and Lange to Gerard, 6 October 1913.

plan with New York Times journalist and confidante, Frederic William Wile.²⁶ Wile sounded out several influential Germans, Americans and others, and advised Gerard strongly against what the acting British ambassador in Berlin ambiguously termed “an [American] diplomatic innovation.” While the embassy would stand separately from the Esplanade, Wile concluded, its dignity would inevitably suffer by its sure inability to escape being known as “American Embassy, care of Hotel Esplanade.”²⁷ Still, the ease of the solution, the savings in living expenses and furnishings, and the Kaiser’s unaccountable approval all kept the idea alive until Gerard’s final decision.²⁸

A fourth option existed, of course, to lease an entirely different and more suitable building elsewhere. By early September, embassy servant Herr Grassmücke informed Gerard enroute in London, that realtors armed with prospective properties had been “thick as flies” at the Embassy and that he would continue to put them off until Gerard’s arrival.²⁹ Gerard considered an endless stream of properties but due to poor location, prohibitive cost, inadequate facilities, ostentation, failed negotiations--for whichever of numerous reasons, all the properties were passed up. Former Ambassador Andrew D. White once cautioned of Berlin’s difficult housing market, explaining, “Such a thing as a large furnished apartment suitable for a foreign representative is rarely to be found in Berlin. In London and Paris such apartments are frequently offered, but in Berlin hardly ever.” Ten years earlier, White had occupied a large apartment as the better of two mediocre houses. The one stood nearly three miles from Berlin’s center, so White opted for the otherwise less suitable residence located more centrally--only then to have it purchased four years later “from under my feet by one of the smallest governments in Europe as the residence for its minister.” An ambassador in Berlin, he wrote, was “not infrequently obliged to take up his residence in unfit apartments and in an unsuitable part of the town,”³⁰ and America’s latest ambassador teetered on becoming the latest case in point.

²⁶ Wile, an American, was additionally correspondent in Berlin for the London Daily Mail and several other American newspapers.

²⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-19, Wile to Gerard, 29 September 1913.

²⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-23, Gerard to Wyvell, 23 October 1913.

²⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 5-26, Grassmücke to Gerard, 10 September 1913.

³⁰ White, Autobiography, pp. 142-143.

It was not until very late October, that Gerard would at last settle on a final solution and be able to move on to the real reason he had come to Berlin. An initial offer of Wilhelmsplatz 7 came in August, but Gerard had preferred to establish all his options first. Upon his arrival the first week of October, the ambassador quickly took up keen interest in the property. Originally built as a palace for the Princes Hatzfeld, the structure now stood unoccupied and somewhat dilapidated. It most recently had passed to the ownership of the von Schwabachs, a prominent banking family, and its elderly owner now used it only for occasional entertaining.³¹ Aside from the building's respectability, Gerard also enthused at once at its excellent location in Berlin's heart: He and the staff would need only to cross the square and Wilhelmstrasse to conveniently arrive on the doorsteps of the German Foreign Office and the German Chancellery.³²

On the debit side, however, tallied the great costs of renovation. Just after his arrival, Gerard received from architect Lange an assessment of the property. The building, he reported, possessed several deficiencies, including a single entrance for all traffic, very limited heating by a stove and small heater, a rather small dancing hall, and only a single bathroom on the ground floor and "an apology for one" on the second. Only the ballroom and 20 of the building's many rooms would be useful for office and living purposes, the remainder fit only for servants' quarters. Several rooms required extensive redecoration (e.g. tapestries, picture panels, statues). Finally, the house lacked hot water and functional electric fixtures. Lange estimated "three months [*sic*] time and a big sum of money to make the house habitable."³³

The palace was "nothing but a shell" in Gerard's eyes, but in the end a variety of factors conspired to win him over. Wilhelmsplatz 7's location certainly could not be beat. The structure's potential grandeur assured a very respectable diplomatic presence for Gerard and America. The \$15,000 annual rent would be largely offset by a generous \$9,500 allowance from Washington. And, like a deft fly, White's utterance, "no house, no ambassador," perhaps buzzed an insistent background noise. Together these looming prospects helped overshadow the monetary cost to Gerard. The untold thousands on the other hand spent paying the architect Lange, replacing the missing gas and electric light fixtures, upgrading the hot water

³¹ Gerard, Four Years, p. 19.

³² Wilson, Education of a Diplomat, p. 171.

³³ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-10, Lange to Gerard, 5 October 1913.

and heating systems, furnishing all three floors “from top to bottom,” and a host of other expenses were absorbed by Gerard himself and hardly to be recouped when he finally left.³⁴ Even considering Gerard’s success in arranging with the department to rent a larger embassy building, the entire venture had sunk his \$17,500 annual salary “far [past] the minus point.”³⁵ By late November, the contractor Gebrueder Hammer had completed the detailed kitchen improvements³⁶ and the next month Gerard hired the company of Herr Gustav Knauer to move the embassy’s contents to the new quarters.³⁷

The ambassador and his staff now endured the remainder of the common experience of virtually every American post, past and present, after a change in the presidency: Survival of the service’s spoils-driven plundering, followed by the removal of the embassy to a new location. To pack up and move the entire embassy--its furniture, its records, its reputation--virtually every time a new ambassador came to town proved immensely disarranging. Gerard’s move to Wilhelmsplatz merely repeated what his predecessor, Leishman, did when he first moved the embassy quarters to the Rauchstrasse in October, 1910. Leishman’s First Secretary, Grew, described the event’s upset to his mother, writing,

We moved our chancery to Rauchstrasse this week and for the last three days have been working in the midst of the most awful confusion you ever saw...All our furniture is heaped in clumps and piles in the middle of the various rooms, while the workmen work at the walls, and we have somehow set up our desks in the midst of this confusion and try to compose diplomatic Notes and Dispatches as on a battlefield amidst the “trump of war.” I fear it will be a month or six weeks before we are settled...³⁸

Considering the unavoidably frustrating impact on the embassy’s diplomatic work, for former-Ambassador White the perennial ordeal of moving amounted to “a labor and care to which no representative of the United States or of any other power ought to be subjected.”³⁹ Certainly, White’s words applied to Grew’s move with Gerard barely three years later, as the disruption came heaped onto the staff’s lingering agitation over the Wilson administration’s earlier far-reaching personnel changes.

³⁴ Gerard, Four Years, p. 20.

³⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-19, Wile to Gerard, 29 September 1913. The State Department gave allowances for an ambassador’s residence only if it were large enough to accommodate the embassy offices as well. See Gerard, Four Years, pp. 19-20.

³⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 5-37, Gebrueder Hammer to Gerard, 28 November 1913.

³⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-6, series of three letters from Knauer to Gerard, dated 6-9 December 1913.

³⁸ Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of 40 Years, 1904-1945, 2 vols., ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), 1: 78, Grew to Mrs. Grew, 2 October 1910.

³⁹ White, Autobiography, p. 143.

In any case, with renovations finalized and the move complete, Gerard could confide to Secretary Bryan the impressive, new embassy was such, that his “successor will be very well off.” There still appeared exaggerated accounts of the “extravagance” of Gerard’s lease and the building’s furnishing, particularly from one “very anti-[Wilson] administration” correspondent, but the majority of observers, in Germany at least, acclaimed the new American embassy building.⁴⁰ Finally, after over three months’ distraction, a relieved Gerard at last opened the new embassy to business in January, 1914. Just in time for Berlin’s busy social season, not to mention that August’s global wake-up call to the new century, Gerard had to appreciate former ambassador to Paris, Henry White’s appraisal. Wishing every success to Gerard’s tour of service, “in marked contrast to [those] of your...immediate predecessors,” White advised him, “I cannot but feel that the solution of the house question is a very important step towards that end.”⁴¹ America’s latest envoy to the German Empire had, indeed, brought closure to, as one native newspaper described his housing problem, “a long burning...question for the capital city and for the [American] Union.”⁴² But best of all, Ambassador Gerard now had some place to sleep and work.

Washington was indeed aware of the difficult issue of permanent diplomatic housing abroad. Over ten years earlier, Ambassador White insisted acquisition of suitable housing was “the very first thing to be done” with regard to reforms in the diplomatic service.⁴³ Despite meager gains from the Lowden Act in 1911, a lack of political resolve continued to hamper any real progress towards resolving the housing crisis. Three years after the act, a chorus of Gerard’s peers repeated White’s complaints. Ambassador Thomas Nelson Page in Rome intended early to raise the permanent and suitable housing issue with Washington.⁴⁴ Walter Hines Page (no relation) in London, of course, made his housing experience the subject of many letters back to Colonel House and President Wilson. And while Gerard himself seems conspicuously silent

⁴⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 4-47, Gerard to Bryan, undated, but sometime between late October, 1913, and January, 1914.

⁴¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-24, H. White to Gerard, 26 October 1913.

⁴² Gerard Papers, Folder 7-19, Wile to Gerard, 11 October 1913. Encloses a clipping, entitled “*Amerikanisches Botschafts-Hotel in Berlin*,” from an unknown German newspaper dated 11 September 1913.

⁴³ White, *Autobiography*, p. 364.

⁴⁴ West, *State on the Eve*, p. 104.

on the issue, his painful experience in Berlin provided only so much more grist for Washington's parochial mill. Something clearly had to be done.

The Wilson administration assumed an early interest in possibly procuring permanent housing in Berlin and elsewhere to begin resolving the housing crisis. Not until 1914 were the first appropriations finally made under the Lowden Act to purchase embassy buildings in Tokyo and Mexico City.⁴⁵ In mid-1914 Grew reported Secretary Bryan's enquiry of the prospects of purchasing the new embassy building in Berlin,⁴⁶ but the war immediately made its consideration moot. While the conflict gave great urgency to the diplomatic and consular services' other shortfalls and hurried preparation and passage of the Stone-Flood Act in early 1915, no further efforts at rectifying the housing problem came until after the war. In 1921 Congress appropriated \$300,000 to acquire embassy, legation, or consular accommodations in each of fourteen cities, including Berlin, Rome, and Vienna, but a special oversight commission succeeded only in gaining a legation site in Christiania, Norway. The Rogers Act of 1924 authorized the commission to secure a maximum of \$500,000 worth of property in each of six capitals, including Berlin, Rome, Paris, Madrid, Buenos Aires, and Tokyo; and no more than \$200,000 each in Lima, Vienna, Brussels, Hankow, Tientsin, and Canton. By 1925, however, only eight additional embassies and legations had been procured, one being a gift and Berlin still on the waiting list.

But political resolve continued to mount and the Foreign Service Buildings Act of 1926 created the Foreign Service Buildings Commission, consisting of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and Commerce, and the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Senate and House committees on foreign affairs. The Commission would use no more than \$2,000,000 in any one year of a \$10,000,000 Foreign Service Building Fund to oversee acquisition, alteration, repair, and furnishing of suitable buildings for diplomatic and consular establishments abroad. The State Department's new Foreign Service Buildings Office would supervise, coordinate, and administer the diplomatic and consular housing acquisition program. With the Depression and the international tumult of the 1930s hindering acquisitions, the Commission did manage to grudgingly procure new residences in several capitals, including London,

⁴⁵ Graham H. Stuart, American Diplomatic and Consular Practice (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936), p. 155.

⁴⁶ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 123, Grew to Ruddock, 2 June 1914.

Paris, Rome, Tokyo, Santiago, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Mexico City. Land for eventual construction of a residence was purchased in Berlin, Moscow, Lima, and Havana, as were excellent sites for chancelleries in Berlin, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Havana.⁴⁷ Through the end of World War II, America's Foreign Service would expend roughly \$25 million, as it gradually and belatedly sought to rectify a permanent housing problem too-long-delayed. Not until after that war would any real momentum mount in finally resolving an issue that bedeviled Ambassador Gerard in 1913.⁴⁸

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND NEW DIPLOMACY

In January, 1914, the Gerards, the Grews, the Ruddocks, and the rest of the small staff rushed to ready the new embassy. As in countless years past, January marked the start of yet another social season in Berlin and Wilhelmsplatz 7 stood now to prove its mettle. Outside the embassy's temporary bustle, time ambled along as it always had; to its occupants, "[c]hange in the world was inconceivable...[and] [w]ar between civilized Western Powers was an absurdity," as Second Secretary Wilson later reminisced of this *belle époque* before the Great War. "We lived in the illusion of immutability, but we had unquestioning faith in the illusion."⁴⁹ For Gerard and his diplomatic colleagues, the social calendar ordered their lives and all was yet well, even as the cataclysm of the coming world war swirled just beyond the horizon, invisible and unimaginable to their Edwardian repose.

Wilson's words notwithstanding and the war's immense change impending, however, all was not so "immutable" in the world of the new occupants of Wilhelmsplatz 7. For they were, paradoxically, playing passive witness to a virtual revolution in the offing--an unprecedented technological *Putsch* that was transforming their world and the nature of diplomacy before their eyes. The progress of technology in the few decades before the war had brought vast innovations in communications, travel, entertainment, office equipment, and a host of other tools and amenities. Beginning roughly around 1880, the revolution stood in full swing by the turn of the century as such diverse novelties as the automobile, the cinema, the

⁴⁷ Stuart *American Practice*, pp. 156-158.

⁴⁸ Wilson, *Education*, p. 281-282.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

telegraph, the telephone, and electricity quickly became commonplace and dramatically altered the pace and character of modern life, as well as the tempo and nature of twentieth-century diplomacy.

Before the First World War, notions of time were viewed everywhere as more or less eternal. Time's passing subject only to slow change, people remained confident that the future would naturally resemble the past. The rapid march of technology in the preceding four decades, however, had nevertheless profoundly modified such notions. While temporal senses of "past" and "future" resembled the previous modes of experience, it was the sense of the "present" that became most distinctively altered. Technology profoundly compressed people's experience of the present, which combined with an unprecedented spatial expansion "to create the vast, shared experience of simultaneity." As Stephen Kern explains,

The present was no longer limited to one event in one place, sandwiched tightly between past and future and limited to local surroundings. In an age of intrusive electronic communication "now" became an extended interval of time that could, indeed must, include events around the world. Telephone switchboards, telephonic broadcasts, daily newspapers, World Standard Time, and the cinema mediated simultaneity through technology.⁵⁰

An age of simultaneity was born, in which people separated by great distance could experience events together, virtually as they happened. A telegram or telephone call prompted an immediate response and, along with fledgling wireless (radio) technology, introduced an unheard-of compression of time between the occurrence and the news of an event. The circumstances of Gerard's ambassadorial appointment vividly dramatized the point. In early July, 1913, the State Department received a cable from Berlin advising the embassy there had just received a telephone call from the German Foreign Office, which reported the Kaiser had wired his approval of Gerard's appointment.⁵¹ A few weeks later, delayed only by the final deliberations of the Wilson administration, a wireless telegraph message flashed to Gerard, then in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on board the modern German steamliner, Imperator, to notify him of his official selection as the new ambassador to the German Empire.⁵²

⁵⁰ Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 314.

⁵¹ United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31, "Gerard, James," Leishman telegram to Secretary of State [Bryan], 1 July 1913.

⁵² James Watson Gerard, My First Eighty-Three Years in America: The Memoirs of James W. Gerard (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1951), p. 169.

Whereas communication and transportation were limited previously to the speed of a horse and the velocity and direction of a capricious wind, now telegraphs, telephones, new steamships, automobiles, and airplanes completely transformed people's sense of distance and spatial proximity.⁵³ More to the point at hand, technology's innovations were wielding likewise momentous impact on the conduct of diplomatic work as well. The rapidity of communication and transportation induced two particular changes characteristic of twentieth-century diplomacy. One occurred in the power of plenipotentiaries. Enjoying nearly instantaneous communication, foreign ministries could exercise greater control over their envoys abroad. Sir Horace Rumbold, British ambassador to Vienna, bemoaned in 1902 "the telegraphic demoralisation [*sic*] of those who formerly had to act for themselves and are now content to be at the end of the wire."⁵⁴ Micromanagement had come of age in international diplomacy.

The second change came with the accelerated pace of diplomacy, which no longer allowed the ameliorating effect of delay to soothe and cool tempers. An age of slow communication and its common assumption that "time alone is the conciliator" had given way to greatly "shortened elapsed time between transmission and receipt of diplomatic dispatches," which, in turn, stole away "the relaxed luxury of contemplation and careful judgment [previously] enjoyed" and "necessitated rapid [increasingly impersonal,] and often ill-considered responses."⁵⁵ Certainly the failure of diplomacy counts as one root of the First World War, but one principal cause of that failure was the inability of diplomats to "cope with the volume and speed of electronic communication." The flurry of telegrams and telephone calls that largely constituted the diplomatic communications of the critical post-Sarajevo July crisis exemplified the accelerated, technology-driven tempo of the new diplomacy. With implied or explicit threats of war hanging in the balance, between 23 July and 4 August 1914 parties issued five ultimatums with

⁵³ One sign of technology's shrinking of the world appeared a few years before Gerard's appointment, when Theodore Roosevelt personally visited the Panama Canal's construction in 1906, in doing so becoming the first American president ever to leave the United States while in office. Walter LaFeber, The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad Since 1750 (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), p. 230.

⁵⁴ Daniel R. Headrick, The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1981), p. 132.

⁵⁵ Paul Gordon Lauren, Diplomats and Bureaucrats: The First Institutional Responses to Twentieth-Century Diplomacy in France and Germany (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp. 38-39; and Kern, Culture of Time, pp. 274-275.

unprecedentedly short time limits. Snap judgments and hasty reactions jumped before the hot breath of unbending mobilization timetables fixed to the second. Daily press and the new technology of mass communication, including the cinema, “directly accelerated popular response to the already frenetic diplomatic activity.” The unique temporality of the twentieth-century “Age of Electricity” had introduced a pace unfathomable to people and diplomats of the expired “Century of Steam,” complete with crossed messages, transmission delays, unexpected surprises, and unpredictable timing, which “supercharged the masses, confused the diplomats, and unnerved the generals.” When on 28 July the Austrians finally declared war on Serbia and precipitated the crisis into cataclysm, they did so like no nation ever before: by telegram.⁵⁶

Gerard’s embassy in Berlin directly experienced the accelerating impact of the new transportation and communications technology. Telegraphs allowed nearly instantaneous communication between Berlin and Washington. Speedier intelligence on important issues now might better inform the picked up pace of relations, public and foreign, and the rapid decision-making they increasingly compelled. Better coordination of policy became possible, though not necessarily exploited. Telephones and automobiles made embassy work more efficient as labor-saving devices. Steamships introduced more timely and reliable transatlantic mails, for some time to come the preferred method of communication due to relative inexpense. The diplomatic paradigm shift in the early twentieth-century had a technological dimension as well, that played an important role in shaping the manner in which the Gerard embassy went about its business. For Gerard and Wilhelmsplatz 7, as indeed for every diplomatic service, the technological world of the new century helped compel a further shift in the diplomatic paradigm in which, as one recent scholar explains it, “Ambassadors who only a short time before had calculated correspondence time in terms of days and weeks now thought of hours and minutes.”⁵⁷

Because of the relative inexpense, the Berlin embassy relied primarily on the mails for the bulk of its routine pre-war communications with Washington and the rest of the world. In early 1914, mail required

⁵⁶ Kern, *Culture of Time*, pp. 259-260, 268, and 275-276. For an intensely interesting discussion of technology’s role in precipitously rushing the July crisis see Kern, pp. 259-286.

⁵⁷ Lauren, *Diplomats*, pp. 133-134. Accurate reconstruction of the July crisis, Kern explains, “requires a temporal precision to the day; after that the hour, sometimes even the minute, becomes crucial.” Kern, *Culture of Time*, p. 264.

roughly ten days to three weeks to reach its destination, including approximately seven days' steam travel between Bremen and New York City.⁵⁸ Once the war started, the mails slipped into a very delayed and uncertain state, often taking six weeks to three months over the same route.⁵⁹ Prominent Bowers and Sands attorney, Frederick J. Middlebrook, handled much of Gerard's financial and property matters and suggested in mid-August, 1914, that Gerard consider sending a power of attorney if the conflict did not clear up by the fall, so that the mails could be relied upon.⁶⁰ Two days earlier, Colonel House remarked in a letter to Gerard on the unsure state of mail service and whether his correspondence might ever reach Gerard.⁶¹ By December, 1914, Gerard could complain of the embassy being "so shut off here, so deprived of newspapers and news that it is impossible to know what is going on in the world."⁶² A Baron Seidlitz of the German Army wrote Gerard that month asking him to forward some enclosed correspondence to points outside the country. "It seems to be impossible to get any news to [the] U.S.A.," he lamented to a sympathetic Gerard. "[I]t is a sad feeling to be without any connection with the outer world..."⁶³

⁵⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-3, Winslow to Scharps, 10 February 1914.

⁵⁹ For example, a letter from Alfred H. Curtis to Gerard left New York on 22 October 1914 and arrived in Berlin on approximately 7 December; Gerard Papers, Folder 9-20, Curtis to Gerard, 22 October 1914. Frederic J. Middlebrook refers to the "uncertainty of the mails;" Gerard Papers, Folder 17-6, Middlebrook to Gerard, 30 March 1916. In May, 1916, Middlebrook resorts to sending messages via State Department cable "owing to the difficulty in communicating with him in the usual method [mail];" Gerard Papers, Folder 17-6, Middlebrook to Secretary of State [Lansing], 19 May 1916. Also that month, Mr. Gustav Schwarzwald in Germany complained to Gerard that letters from his sons in New York took not the normal 10-20 days, but nearly three months, due to delays by censors and the restrictions imposed by the British blockade; Gerard Papers, Folder 18-12, Schwarzwald to Gerard, 27 May 1916. In July, Middlebrook now used Gerard as intermediary, asking him to forward enclosed Berlin-addressed letters, "as it [currently] takes over two months to receive correspondence through the mails besides the chances of loss;" Gerard Papers, Folder 17-6, Middlebrook to Gerard, 10 July 1916. On the other hand, transit time for official correspondence dispatched by Gerard to the State Department in Washington, D.C., between August and December, 1914, took just under a relatively normal 20 days, possibly due to its diplomatic immunity from the censor's inspection. Based on author analysis of correspondence dates and indicated dates of receipt by the State Department of communications in Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1914 Supplement, The World War, United States Department of State (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1919). Actual average was 19.6 days. Also, the embassy enjoyed numerous American newspaper subscriptions gratis, but issue currency quickly lapsed after the war broke out until the most recent were over 3 weeks old. Gerard Papers, Folder 7-42, Gerard to John M. Bowers, 15 September 1914.

⁶⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 10-10, Middlebrook to Gerard, 14 August 1914.

⁶¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 9-47, House to Gerard, 11 August 1914.

⁶² Gerard Papers, Folder 8-5, Gerard to Charles C. Burlingham, 7 December 1914.

⁶³ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-3, Seidlitz to Gerard, 12 December 1914.

By the summer of 1915, the mails had become more or less reliable again, although remaining naturally slower than normal.⁶⁴ But another difficulty now emerged. The open mails had to transit through the German postal system, a situation fraught with obvious security problems, particularly under wartime conditions. By April, 1915, the embassy had received “special warning” from the State Department to refrain from discussing current developments even in private correspondence.⁶⁵ Gerard’s options for effective communication had become so limited by late that year, that he expressed great relief upon hearing of Colonel House’s pending journey to Europe for the opportunity it would provide him to convey sensitive, otherwise deemed uncommunicable, information back to the President. “There are many things I want to tell the President but which I do not dare commit to paper,” let alone dispatch by cable.⁶⁶ In late December, 1916, Gerard finally received firm evidence that the German authorities opened and inspected the embassy’s mail, when a private investigator for Gerard, George A. Taylor, wrote him from France desiring advice on the safest way to send Gerard “important information.” Taylor’s caution stemmed from a recent episode in Berlin’s Alexanderplatz where he had been confronted with a letter he had earlier sent Gerard by registered mail. At that time, Taylor was warned by “one who knew, that all letters to you [Gerard] are opened (in Berlin).”⁶⁷

To avoid such compromises of its official business, the embassy relied as much as possible on official and unofficial couriers. Every Tuesday a dedicated courier, typically a civilian attaché or one of the Third Secretaries, departed for London carrying embassy correspondence and miscellany to the outside world too lengthy to send via encrypted cable or too sensitive to risk through the regular mails. Returning later in the week with the “London-Berlin bag,” the diplomatic pouch and its weary runner took three days each way traveling via Berne and Paris.⁶⁸ An alternate route might also take an armed escort through the Netherlands, accompanying back hard-to-obtain household items.⁶⁹ The London embassy’s censorship,

⁶⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-34, Winslow to Armendt, 20 July 1915.

⁶⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-31, Gerard to O’Laughlin, 17 April 1915.

⁶⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-10, Gerard to Lansing, 28 December 1915.

⁶⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-13, Taylor to Gerard, 31 December 1916.

⁶⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-6, Gerard to U.S. Legation in Berne, Switzerland, 26 April 1915; and Folder 17-24, Walter Hines Page to Gerard, 4 April 1916. Sent by pouch on 4 April, its receipt stamp by the embassy indicates 7 April.

⁶⁹ “Household items” proved a broad category. Wilson recalled once when a broken bottle of whisky drenched personal letters and all the week’s correspondence from Washington, the barroom odor

however, posed another obstacle to the embassy's communications security. Ambassador Page's post evidently felt bound "out of respect for the British censorship regulations to be aware of the contents of every [mail] bag sent out of England." In November, 1915, a "boiling" Gerard complained to Colonel House of the impropriety, explaining the "harmless nature," but extreme confidentiality of the letters addressed to (and, presumably, from) the Berlin embassy, including one from House which he had received with its seal broken.⁷⁰ The next month Gerard wrote House after missing his heretofore weekly missive in the London-Berlin bag, remarking, "Hope no one requisitioned your letter if sent."⁷¹ Even as late as January, 1917, Gerard showed overt concern: House's letters might have been "taken somewhere on the line."⁷² Because of the uncertainties of using the German postal system and, to a lesser degree, the London-Berlin bag, the embassy occasionally relied upon Americans traveling out of the country as couriers, particularly to Belgium, Holland, England, and America. They might deliver embassy mail to other legations or embassies direct, or merely mail correspondence through normal postal channels from outside Germany.⁷³ Gerard later described one such episode, when he ferried through his brother-in-law, Marcus Daly, an important report to President Wilson of a recent interview with the Kaiser. Intent on preventing its contents from being intercepted by the Germans, he relied on an unofficial courier, curiously remarking afterwards, "That was a little old-fashioned diplomacy."⁷⁴

In 1858, after nearly two tedious years of effort, the final stretches of the first underwater telegraph cable between America and the European continent settled onto the Atlantic sea floor and flickered to life. Although the line died out after only a few messages, it represented the initial step in a

eventually leaving the embassy offices only grudgingly. Page's embassy disapproved of the arrangement, leading to a "constant feud" between London and Berlin over the diplomatically immune shipments. Wilson, *Education*, pp. 181-182.

⁷⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 23 November 1915.

⁷¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, (no day indicated) December, 1915.

⁷² Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 23 January 1917.

⁷³ For example, in late August, 1914, the embassy entrusted mail to Professor K. McMurray of the University of California for delivery to U.S. Minister Van Dyke in The Hague, Holland; Gerard Papers, Folder 10-14, McMurray to Gerard, 27 August 1914. Los Angeles businessman Mr. P. Max Kuehnrich agreed to courier documents back to America; Gerard Papers, Folder 13-9, Kuehnrich to Gerard, 3 March 1915.

⁷⁴ *The Reminiscences of James W. Gerard*, Columbia University Oral History Research Office Oral History Project (New York: Columbia University, 1950), pp. 43-44; and Gerard Papers, Folder 16-25, Gerard to Lansing, 18 January 1916.

quantum leap forward for global communications and, eventually, Gerard's implied "modern" diplomacy. For the first time, information transmission speeds across oceans broke their previous confinement to the pace of a boat and revolutionized man's capacity for rapid information. In contrast to the days required for a steamship to reach its destination, messages now might be transmitted over global distances and vast expanses of water in only a few hours. Called "the grand Victorian technology," telegraphy helped to profoundly change the world's conceptions of time and space, and transform the conduct of international relations by diplomats like James Gerard. Due to technological limitations, land telegraphy had existed for over two decades before submarine telegraphy. After the disappointing first try to America in 1858, engineers reviewed the potential points of failure and by 1860 had perfected the essential techniques of electrical transmission and of manufacturing and laying submarine cable. In rapid fire, cables soon connected the rising colonial powers with their possessions overseas. In 1866, the year after Britain finally established a dependable telegraph link to India, the first working transatlantic cable to America came on line.

Technological improvements helped to further increase efficiency, capacity, and utility in subsequent years. In so doing, great strides were taken in speeding up transmission times and reducing telegram costs, which in turn encouraged use. For example, in 1870 only a few dozen telegrams made their way over Britain's cable to India. But by 1895, the number had blossomed to over two million annually and along the way had transformed the very nature of Anglo-Indian relations' daily routine. In the 1870s, the primary customers used the early cables mainly for commercial or private reasons. Within ten years, the British Admiralty and Colonial, War, and Foreign offices had joined them and soon found themselves accustomed to using telegraphic communication. Appreciating the great advantages conferred by the technology, they desired in consequence to extend the web to all parts of the Empire, a project at last completed with the "All-Red Route" in 1902, which girded the world with cables passing exclusively through British territories. By century's end, roughly 190,000 miles of underwater cable had spread a web of nearly instantaneous communications around the globe, 72% of the total British-owned.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Headrick, Tools of Empire, pp. 157-163.

Predictably, America entered the transoceanic cable business late. Distracted by the post-Civil War reconstruction, the nation's isolationism permitted numerous lapses, particularly with regard to avenues of international communication. Although iron-hulled, steam-driven ships had become feasible by the 1840s and 1850s, a precipitous decline in the American merchant marine (sail- and steam-powered) followed the conflict, with serious effect on ocean-borne mails. On the eve of the Civil War over 65% of American trade and mail traffic crossed the seas on ships hoisting the American flag, but by 1898 the figure had dropped to below 10%. As with the merchant marine, the United States neglected the establishment of transoceanic cables, too. Continental railroads and later attempts with American steamship lines had set precedents in the way of private ventures securing government subsidies to make them happen. In 1874, however, a scandal broke out over discovered bribes to Congressmen in securing governmental subsidies for the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. Thereafter, opponents touted the issue of subsidies as symbolic of corruption and privilege, effectively making it difficult for American lines to maintain regular steamer connections for decades, and making it similarly problematic for American companies to initiate expensive submarine cable projects.⁷⁶ At most, the United States would only block European monopolies' efforts to gain cable landing privileges on the American continent. The Government refused the French, for example, unless the French government reciprocated by similarly guaranteeing landing privileges for future American companies. Likewise in the Pacific, the United States tended towards the defensive and away from proaction. Numerous Presidents had encouraged Congress to foster expansion of cable service to Hawaii and the Far East, the question finally entertaining hot debate by the mid-1890s. But in the end, action was restricted to merely opposing establishment of a British cable station on the island for a Canadian-Australian line.⁷⁷

Gradually, demand made it profitable for companies like Western Union to open up transoceanic cable service without government subsidy. And, like its British counterpart, the State Department soon availed itself of the new telegraphic means of communication, however belatedly. Sheer speed provided

⁷⁶ David M. Pletcher, "1861-1898: Economic Growth and Diplomatic Adjustment," in Economics and World Power: An Assessment of American Diplomacy Since 1789, William H. Becker and Samuel F. Wells, Jr., ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 140 and 159.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

one important enticement. A ship might take upwards of ten to fourteen days' transit time between New York City and Rotterdam, and considerably more once the entanglements of the British blockade fell into place beginning in November, 1914. A telegram, in contrast, generally took anywhere from a few hours to a more typical few days to reach its Berlin destination from Washington, D.C.⁷⁸ Actual transmission time depended on the vagaries of the circuitous route a cable traveled once the war started. Leaving the United States, it had to be telegraphed to the American legation at Copenhagen via London, or the embassy at Rome via the Canary Islands, and then retelegraphed overland to Berlin.⁷⁹ But due primarily to the United States' earlier isolationism, a handful of cables proved adequate for the small volume of traffic between the continents in the years prior to the war.

Another important benefit came with better connectivity between the State Department and its posts abroad. The experience of nineteenth-century European imperialism proved the telegraph's utility in connecting together all parts of an empire for more efficient administration. In peace time, its cables served as the "lifelines" for ever-increasing business communications between imperial home offices and the colonies. Up-to-date information on prices, quantity, and availability of products around the world crowded the cables between the financial centers of Europe. Newspaper correspondents likewise provided the latest news, dispatching by telegraph their accounts of events in faraway places and profoundly adding to Europeans' sense of simultaneity with the rest of the world. The telegraph became a valuable tool of diplomacy in times of crisis as well. In the 1898 confrontation at Fashoda, for example, Britain's Kitchner maintained communications with London through an underwater cable deployed on the bed of the Nile, while his French counterpart, Marchand, operated in classic nineteenth-century autonomy, cut off from Paris. And during times of conflict, as in the First World War, only through telegraphic technology could a far-flung empire efficiently arrange and coordinate supply of raw materials, food, and troops.⁸⁰ The British

⁷⁸ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 195-196, Grew diary, 15 May 1915; and Gerard, Four Years, p. 198. Gerard Papers, Folder 11-16, Frederic William Wile to Gerard, undated, indicates prewar cables could reach their destination in less than one-quarter of a day.

⁷⁹ See Gerard, Four Years, p. 198. After initially being cut off from communication with Washington, the embassy "soon established a chain of communication," initially through Italy, then later through Denmark. Gerard indicates, "At all times cables from Washington to Berlin, or *vice versa*, took, on the average, two days in transmission."

⁸⁰ Headrick, Tools of Empire, pp. 163-164.

experience on all these counts impressed observers, including the Americans. The sharp increase in American participation in world affairs after the war with Spain helped prompt the nation's increased use of the speedier telegraph. The President and State Department officials could obtain ever more timely information with which to make decisions and, increasingly, to formulate coordinated policy.

In 1906, the Secretary of State Elihu Root began breaking ground on a plan he hoped would establish badly needed connectivity with the department's diplomatic missions. Although gradually using cable more and more, up until then, he observed, "There never has been the practice of keeping the two ends informed of what the other end was doing, except casually as time passed along by the slow process of the mails."⁸¹ The plan involved standardizing the dissemination of information by routinely cabling a digest to a regional distribution point for subsequent mailing to the missions. Once the cable arrived in Europe, for instance, its information would be mailed to all the continent's American legations. The ambassador in Berlin, then, might be more systematically informed of the State Department's actions in Washington which bore upon his representations in the German capital. In 1908, Root finally enacted a more limited scheme to test the plan's feasibility. The department recently had established an experimental Far Eastern division to better handle and coordinate American diplomacy in that part of the world. United States posts in Berlin, London, Paris, and Saint Petersburg were directed to send the department duplicates of all important correspondence dealing with the Far East; the missions in Tokyo and Peking would likewise forward all their correspondence except simple acknowledgments. Washington then digested and copied the received dispatches before reissuing them as a confidential information series. In this way, then, did modern diplomacy affect embassies like Gerard's in yet another way. A rapid growth in the sheer volume and detail of information pertaining to their work inevitably raised the level of difficulty in their diplomatic duties. Nevertheless, American diplomats in both Europe and the Far East hailed the procedure enthusiastically,⁸² and the enhanced connectivity proved of such value, that the department eventually expanded it to its other geographical divisions as they came on line.

⁸¹ Richard Hume Werking, The Master Architects: Building the United States Foreign Service, 1890-1913 (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1977), p. 134.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 135-137.

A variety of restrictions imposed certain limitations, however. Although the average cost of a telegram had plummeted over the half-century since the telegraph's advent, expense still weighed heavy enough on the State Department's tight budget for it to constrain the use of cabling to urgent matters or to issues whose communication and resolution were given to brevity. By the summer of 1914, ironically, all cables had been sharply curtailed due to expense. But certainly the most severe limitation came that August. That month both the Americans and the Germans discovered the value of possessing a secure means of communication once their British-controlled direct cable access was cut upon declaration of war.⁸³ The telegraph's inaugural employment militarily occurred during the Crimean War (1854) when the Allied Army resorted to its use and the American Civil War had made enormous use of the technology. The Spanish-American War (1898) additionally geared landline and cable telegraphs for the first time to meet the needs of newspaper war correspondents and the conflict also marked the first time in which cables were cut at sea as an act of belligerency (by the U.S. at Cienfuegos, Cuba, and at Manila, The Philippines).⁸⁴ The immediate and lasting crush of work brought by the latest war made the telegraph a mainstay for communications between the State Department and America's missions abroad like Berlin, with the department's mere 28,031 words of telegraphed text in 1914 mushrooming by war's end to 217,597 annually.⁸⁵

For Gerard's embassy, another restriction stemmed from the necessary routing of all cable traffic reaching the country through the German telegraph network. Sometime between late 1913 and January, 1914, the Western Union Telegraph and Cable Company successfully applied to the State Department for approval of a direct cable link to Germany. At the end of January, Ambassador Gerard expressed his

⁸³ Headrick, Tools of Empire, pp. 164. Gerard inexplicably claims the existence of a single direct German-owned cable between Germany and America via the Azores before the war. The German company successfully opposed his efforts to gain approval of Western Union's application to land a cable in Germany, which was quietly "pigeon-holed." After the war began, in August Gerard told Ballin of the Hamburg-American Line and the head of the Deutsche Bank, von Gewinner, of the circumstances. Realizing the untold damage to Germany otherwise averted with an uncut American-owned cable, their anger quickly prompted the Foreign Office's approval of Western Union's application. Of course, the company abstained from acting on the concession until the war's hostilities were ended. Gerard, Four Years, p. 74.

⁸⁴ The precedent led to new provisions in international law to protect such installations, although the British evidently paid scant attention in 1914.

⁸⁵ Graham H. Stuart, The Department of State: A History of Its Organization, Procedure and Personnel (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1949), p. 244.

willingness to facilitate the company's plan by arranging discussions with the German Director General of Posts and Telegraphs of their application for a cable landing on the country's coast. The London-based European representative for Western Union, S.J. Goddard, met with Gerard on 31 March 1914, but with war hardly four months off, the plan never reached fruition.⁸⁶ With cables direct to Germany cut in August, the country and the embassy relied on indirect links through neutral neighbors, with traffic handled internally by German lines and operators. All embassy cables inbound and outbound, consequently, passed through a German intermediary whose preferential conduct should have held few surprises for the American ambassador or his staff. Indeed, it soon became clear that cables to (and, presumably, from) the embassy were being copied for the German Foreign Office first, before making their way to their intended destination. In May, 1915, Grew was amused "to note that a copy of every telegram addressed to the embassy is furnished to the [German] Foreign Office by the telegraph office and sent to the appropriate bureau." After hurrying back from Vienna upon reading of the Lusitania's 7 May sinking, he heard of Lithgow Osborne's recent experience, in which Osborne had called on Dr. Schueler at the Foreign Office and saw on the latter's desk a copy of a telegram from the State Department to the embassy--which had arrived only that morning--on the very subject which Osborne had come to discuss. Grew concluded, "A good many communications which we make to the Foreign Office under instructions are quite superfluous, for the Foreign Office knows about them quite as soon as we do..."⁸⁷ Later in September, Grew found among the embassy's daily telegrams one stamped "*Abschrift für A.A. Original befördert*" ("Copy for Foreign Office. Original forwarded.") The telegraph office had mistakenly sent the embassy the *Auswärtiges Amt* copy instead of the original! Grew commented, "We always knew that copies of our telegrams were sent to the Foreign Office, but this confirms it..."⁸⁸

To counter this threat to communications, the embassy and the State Department naturally resorted to using ciphers or codes to encrypt the contents of their cables. Prior to the war, the department used several systems, all, however, so primitive and unimaginative as to make it likely every major power

⁸⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-24, Goddard to Gerard, 6 February 1914; and Gerard to Goddard, 28 March 1914.

⁸⁷ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 190-191, Grew diary, 9 May 1915.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 1: 215, Grew diary, 25 September 1915.

quickly knew them. An early effort by the department to address the weakness occurred under the Roosevelt administration, which replaced the antique “Old Gray Code” with the “Brown” code along with several others, like the A, B, and C codes.⁸⁹ An otherwise naively content State Department apparently relied on a single such cipher in the period leading up to the war, with the cable’s composer indicating at the top of the cable form “cipher” or “plain,” if transmission *en clair* was acceptable. This lasted until September, 1914, when the initial use of the “Green” cipher began. In February, 1915, and in late November / early December, 1916, American diplomats switched to the “Blue” cipher for very brief periods before again returning to the Green, whose use would continue at least through the end of the war. While periodic changes of the cipher seem an obvious precaution against its compromise, the State Department evidently perceived no such threat, as it almost exclusively relied on the Green cipher.⁹⁰

For their part, the Germans could rely only on American indulgence for telegraphic and wireless communication between their Foreign Office in Berlin and Ambassador von Bernstorff in Washington. Unlike in their legation at Mexico City, no clandestine wireless transmitter was available.⁹¹ Gerard’s embassy played point man in the negotiations concerning the extent of license granted the Germans. While allowing them use of American means, Washington initially refused the right to communicate in cipher. Von Bethmann-Hollweg and the Foreign Office naturally took issue on the grounds it hindered their ability to satisfactorily arrange such sensitive diplomatic matters as the Lusitania case. In a late 1915 interview with the Chancellor, Gerard directly indicated the restriction stemmed from well-founded concern the Germans might encode communications destined for subversive agents in America.⁹² Nevertheless, Secretary of State Lansing finally granted permission for von Bernstorff and the Foreign Office to send and

⁸⁹ Charles W. Thayer, Diplomat (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959), pp. 140, 144, and 150.

⁹⁰ Based on author’s review of cipher use for cables in United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31. Other evidence, however, indicates more frequent use of other ciphers than indicated in this uncomprehensive review. For example, in March, 1916, the State Department issued encrypted instructions to the embassy to transmit opinions or confidential information using “House Cipher with [the] green book,” implying multiple encryption/decryption schemes or “books” to be used with the codes, which Colonel House apparently helped devise. Gerard Papers, Folder 18-16, Lansing to Gerard, 30 March 1916.

⁹¹ Thayer, Diplomat, p. 152.

⁹² Gerard Papers, Folder 13-10, Gerard to Lansing, undated, but mid-December 1915.

receive enciphered cables “as a regular thing” via Gerard’s embassy,⁹³ which had “no idea what is in them.”⁹⁴

Despite the wartime difficulties for both the Germans and Americans, reliance on the telegraph rested largely on its continued responsiveness over the much slower, more traditional forms of communication. Written letters and reports were limited to the time required for an oceanliner to steam the nearly four thousand miles between America and Germany, which went from several days before the war, to several weeks during it.⁹⁵ In contrast, transoceanic cables required only a few hours at most prior to August, 1914, and thereafter still only several hours to a few days. Even with any “delays” due to overloaded cable lines, overwhelmed operators, or overzealous censors, cables conferred nearly immediate communications between the State Department and its diplomatic and consular officials abroad. The Gerard embassy made extensive use of the link in prosecuting its wartime work.

Aside from the expected dislocations in regular communications, the British disruption also immediately created a major difficulty for the embassy in providing desperate funds to stranded Americans. Normally, funds might be deposited in America and notice cabled to the embassy authorizing a disbursement to the individual. With no immediate means of communication available, the embassy obviously could issue no money.⁹⁶ Two days after the war commenced, Gerard telegraphed Washington via Copenhagen urgently asking for funds. At his request, the State Department cabled Gerard’s agent to deposit some \$32,000 of his own money with the U.S. Treasury and arrange its reimbursement from an emergency load of gold bullion imminently shipping to Europe aboard the U.S.S. Tennessee. Gerard’s cable also had the department additionally cable Third Secretary Albert Ruddock’s wealthy grandfather, C.K.G. Billings of New York City, to request he issue a telegraphic order for four thousand German marks to the “*Handels Gesellschaft [sic]*” in Berlin. Finally, the embassy requested the department’s response

⁹³ Johann H. von Bernstorff, My Three Years in America (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), p. 166.

⁹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 15 February 1916.

⁹⁵ Roughly 3,749 nautical miles separate New York City and Hamburg.

⁹⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 9-27, Lacombe to Gerard, 15 August 1914.

“by telegraph.”⁹⁷ Through such technological means was the embassy finally able to quickly provide at least a temporary source of emergency funds to stranded Americans in Germany.

The embassy’s work potentially played an important role in the timing of American diplomatic initiatives, which, in extreme situations, could depend directly on the speed of the embassy’s reporting. In early 1915, for example, Gerard came to believe the Germans had become ready for peace. A new phase of the war, however, ominously threatened to close the favorable opportunity at hand, and Gerard, earlier directed to communicate and coordinate the matter with London-based Colonel House, now conducted all his communications by cable, due to the situation’s urgency.⁹⁸ Another example cropped up late the same year. In early winter, the United States secured indisputable evidence of spying by German attachés von Papen and Captain Boy-Ed. In consequence, Wilson declared them to be *persona non grata*. The state of American public opinion, however, already had grown anti-German in the wake of the Lusitania sinking in May and, consequently, the German government desired to resolve the matter discretely to avoid further inflaming the American public and raising a storm of protest in Germany. The Foreign Office wished to keep friendly relations with the United States, feeling a public demand for the men’s recall would endanger German-American relations, embitter the German public, and “enrage” their Emperor. Secretary of State von Jagow approached Gerard to earnestly seek restraint in any publicity of the sensitive issue and Gerard promptly cabled Washington with his request. Wilson and Lansing nonetheless decided on publication of their demand for recall, the intent of which the German ambassador in America, von Bernstorff, cabled to von Jagow. The Secretary quickly sent for Gerard again to show him von Bernstorff’s telegram and to further emphasize the German government’s view of the matter, explaining the Emperor and the German people would resent the manner of the demand and again requesting a quiet arrangement. Gerard “immediately” sent a cable asking that publication be withheld pending State’s receipt of a longer, follow-on cable elaborating the details of the von Jagow interview, which he composed and issued very shortly thereafter. In the end, his efforts proved for naught, as he received a Department telegram advising his

⁹⁷ United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31, Magruder telegram to Secretary of State, 6 August 1914; Bryan to Middlebrook and Bryan to Billings, 8 August 1914.

⁹⁸ The Reminiscences of James W. Gerard, Columbia University Oral History Research Office Oral History Project (New York: Columbia University, 1950), pp. 32-33 and 40-42.

cables had “arrived too late” and then received reports that the Chancellor and Foreign Office were “furious” at the action and America’s neglect in helping “keep the peace.”⁹⁹ Despite the outcome, however, trans-Atlantic telegraphy clearly facilitated Gerard’s time-critical attempt to resolve an important public relations issue and a matter of potentially grave import to German-American relations.

The responsiveness of the telegraph also played an important role in Gerard’s public image back home. While vacationing in Europe in the week after his Senate confirmation, the new ambassador received in Hamburg an urgent telegram from his close supporter and Washington lobbyist, Thomas D. McCarthy, who kept close tabs on Gerard’s affairs in America. McCarthy reported to Gerard accounts in the recent Sunday papers, which purportedly carried details of an interview with Gerard. He allegedly had uttered such undemocratic indiscretions as asserting Americans in Europe should be taxed to support the maintenance of the country’s embassies there; indicating he would wear court dress for his ambassadorial duties; and criticizing the American government’s ill-treatment of its ambassadors abroad. “[T]here has been unpleasant impression created[.] have told Washington you never could have said what was reported[.] deny interview or say it was given in jest[.]...absolutely no trouble [advised.] interview unfortunate to you personally as reported[.] cable immediately = mccarthy[.]”¹⁰⁰ In the still sensitive, precarious atmosphere surrounding Wilson and Bryan’s patronage appointments, such bad press for Gerard and for the Administration amounted to a potential disaster for Gerard’s prospects. Quick resolution and coordination of the issue were absolutely necessary for damage control and only by transoceanic cable were possible.

In the early spring of 1915, another delicate, “very disagreeable matter” arose, requiring Gerard’s advantageous use of the rapid communications afforded by the telegraph. Sometime prior to March, 1915, the French army had captured two German officers, Lieutenants Count von Strachwitz and von Schierstaedt, along with two non-commissioned officers and two other soldiers. The cloudy circumstances of their apprehension led that March to reports in a French publication, that the officers were enroute to French Guiana in South America to where they had been condemned as criminals and that the other men

⁹⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 7 December 1915.

¹⁰⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 6-12, McCarthy to Gerard, cable dated 6 August 1913.

had been imprisoned in France as convicts. The matter of the Germans' treatment already had caused considerable excitement and ill-feeling back in their homeland, but the latest reports of their fate threatened to seriously aggravate German sensibilities. Realizing and hoping to avert the serious danger of reprisals against French POWs in Germany, Gerard "took the unusual, undiplomatic and extraordinary course of telegraphing...direct" to U.S. Ambassador William G. Sharp in Paris to advise him of the connection between the condition of the French prisoners and the treatment of Count von Strachwitz and the others. Fortunately, the like-minded Sharp already had made what representations he could to help compose the matter.¹⁰¹

With Guglielmo Marconi's 1894 invention of a device to transmit and receive electromagnetic waves--in these early decades still limited to the crackle of Morse code--the age of wireless began. Three years later, Marconi had arrived in England and set up the first coastal station for communication with ships at sea. The process of proliferation of wireless instruments soon witnessed the first transatlantic transmission in 1901 and an exchange between King Edward VII and President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, the same year that Berlin played host to the inaugural International Congress on Wireless Telegraphy and its attempts to regulate the use of the new technology. The next year, 1904, the Marconi Company launched the first transoceanic wireless news service, transmitting nightly between Cornwall and Cape Cod. By 1912, a mere ten years after its invention, the wireless had become an integral component in international communications as it tied together "land stations and ships at sea in an instantaneous, worldwide network."¹⁰²

During the initial months of Gerard's embassy, two new wireless stations in America went on line to further extend the network. Erected by German enterprise and partly financed by American and French capital, the stations were sited along the coast at Sayville, Long Island, New York, and at Tuckerton, New Jersey,¹⁰³ and on the night of 11 February 1914 a test was conducted of the planned Berlin-New York wireless connection. Messages and news from German newspapers in Berlin passed to New York papers and vice versa, and thus hailed the arrival of direct instantaneous radio contact between Germany and

¹⁰¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-57, Gerard to Sharp, 19 April 1915.

¹⁰² Kern, *Culture of Time*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁰³ Von Bernstorff, *Three Years*, p. 66.

America.¹⁰⁴ The test's success helped lay the ground for an eventual German wireless news service that developed during the war, which directly allowed vital circumvention of the Allied-controlled and -censored cable routes. American journalists in Berlin could now transmit their reports directly to the United States and, escaping the British censor's pen "unmutilated," could provide sorely lacking balance to the news picture in America.¹⁰⁵ Taking legal advantage of ambiguous ownership among the parties, the French attempted to close the stations through litigation once the war began, but in the wake of tedious negotiations the United States took possession and kept them open. With German access insured, the stations' final disposition largely convinced Ambassador von Bernstorff of the benevolence of American neutrality.¹⁰⁶

In a time when the importance to foreign affairs of public relations was reaching new heights, Germany found wireless its only outlet to counter the Allied advantage in playing the critical public opinion game in the United States. In December, 1916, the German ambassador credited "the recent important development" of this "special news service" as an important factor in Germany's generally positive, post-presidential election press and in countering the entirely misleading reports seeping out of London of several recent German military successes.¹⁰⁷ With its instantaneity and longer, less restricted reach, the wireless obliterated the barriers intrinsic to cable-borne communication, just as the airplane leveled earth-based obstacles. Whereas the telegraph was limited to trained operators and restricted to transmitting stations along definite lines, the omnidirectional wireless "proliferated source points of electronic communication" on land and sea, and furthered the reality of simultaneous experience.¹⁰⁸

In the meanwhile, yet another device doggedly worked to extend the "source points" to the masses. Since its invention in 1876, the telephone only slowly penetrated diplomacy's jealous reserve. Hardly two decades had passed between Gerard's embassy and the period when the apparatus initially began to proliferate in the 1890s. In Germany, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had expressed notorious

¹⁰⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-16, Wile to Gerard, 11 February 1914.

¹⁰⁵ Correspondents seemed to have been the primary users of wireless from Germany, perhaps due to the censorable, public nature of their reportage. Gerard's embassy evidently did not use the omnidirectional wireless at all, probably due to reasons of security.

¹⁰⁶ Von Bernstorff, Three Years, p. 66.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁰⁸ Kern, Culture of Time, p. 68.

hostility toward modern devices, particularly the telephone, an attitude which his tradition-bound successors zealously perpetuated in the venerable Foreign Office.¹⁰⁹ In America, one of the first in New York City belonged to Gerard's law firm, Platt, Bowers, and Sands, where in 1892 a telephone was "installed in a hallway wall between two offices."¹¹⁰ The advantages were obvious. The telephone made it possible, in a sense, to be in two places at the same time as it allowed people to speak with one another across great distances, for good or ill. It let them immediately respond to matters, but in doing so, it did not allow time to deliberate as with written communications. In consequence, "[b]usiness and personal exchanges suddenly became instantaneous instead of protracted and sequential,"¹¹¹ as did routine embassy matters. Twenty years later in Berlin, anyone with business with Gerard's embassy might telephone "Zentrum 2070" to make arrangements,¹¹² and likewise the legation's outside work often was similarly conducted.¹¹³

The advantages of instant communication could not be ignored, as Sir Edward Goschen, the British Ambassador in Berlin, realized at the outbreak of the war. When Great Britain's entry against Germany became known, mob violence seriously threatened the British embassy, which Gerard would very soon take over. Goschen's phone call to the German Foreign Office brought an immediate force of mounted police and the Foreign Minister's apology.¹¹⁴ The telephone revolutionized newspaper reporting, business and other transactions, as it "leveled hierarchical social structures" and "made it possible for callers to control the immediate future of anyone they wished."¹¹⁵ Indeed, one German diplomat, Rudolf Nodolny, recalled how at the turn of the century his chief, Counselor Rudolf Goebel von Harrant, feared that if telephones penetrated the Foreign Office, diplomats might soon dare to even call the Kaiser direct!

¹⁰⁹ Lamar Cecil, The German Diplomatic Service, 1871-1914 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 5-6.

¹¹⁰ Gerard, Eighty-Three Years, p. 33.

¹¹¹ Kern, Culture of Time, p. 69.

¹¹² Gerard Papers, Folder 10-43, undated Gerard note indicating embassy telephone number.

¹¹³ For example, on 12 April 1916 Lanier Winslow telephoned Edwin S. Lay, American Consul-General in Berlin, to request he forward all mail received on behalf of a troublesome American expatriate, Edwin Emerson. Gerard Papers, Folder 16-27, Lay to Gerard, 12 April 1916 and 17 April 1916. Of the embassy's annual \$15,000 contingent fund, \$100 was reserved for telephone expenses. Gerard Papers, Folder 7-15, Shand to Gerard, 12 August 1913.

¹¹⁴ Stuart, American Practice, p. 333.

¹¹⁵ Cecil, German Service, p. 5.

Discovering one had been installed during his absence on vacation, von Harrant immediately dispatched the device with a pair of desk scissors and exiled it to the peon Nodolny's desk.¹¹⁶ Like the telegraph and the cinema, the telephone significantly contributed to the general acceleration of the pace of life. It "brought the voices of millions of people across regional and national boundaries...worked to create the vast extended present of simultaneity," and thereby complicated diplomatic intercourse for men like James Gerard and his staff.¹¹⁷

The invention of the cinema between 1893 and 1896 introduced to the world yet another means for simultaneous experience. Using a variety of techniques, like intercutting and double exposures, this new art and communications form effectively compacted events in time "to suggest the multiplicity of occurrences in many distant places in a single moment." The medium's popularity quickly saw 10,000 nickelodeons spring up in the United States alone by 1910. By Gerard's appointment in 1913, the cinema "already had established itself as a "democratic art." Its eye penetrated all barriers, even vast oceans, a no man's land between two armies of millions, and the martial veneer of the German Empire; and "its cheap admission prices and mixed seating arrangements brought the highbrow culture of the theater to the working classes."¹¹⁸ Viewing "The Birth of a Nation" in 1916, Hugh Wilson felt the expansive, new film had "revolutionize[d] my conception of the cinema" as a new, powerful medium of dramatic art (and, indeed, propaganda) accessible by the masses everywhere.¹¹⁹ Little wonder, then, that Gerard and his embassy should become a subject in demand. The American people wanted to see for themselves the man who defended their interests and neutrality from such isolation in the blockaded capital of a principal belligerent.

Already in November, 1914, the master public relations man and new chairman of the International Committee for the Relief of Belgium, future-President Herbert Hoover, was advising U.S. Minister to occupied Brussels, Brand Whitlock, to seek approval from the German authorities to have

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹⁷ Kern, Culture of Time, p. 317.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 278 and 316-317.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, Education, pp. 158-159.

“moving pictures” taken of general conditions there.¹²⁰ Likewise, Gerard did not wish to miss the unprecedented public relations potential for his diplomatic work and for his political future. In March, 1915, Gerard initiated efforts to have himself and Mrs. Gerard filmed for show back in America. As his close confidant in Berlin, American correspondent Franz Hugo Krebs, advised him, “Anything shown...will reach millions of people in the United States who can not read English, and millions more who can not be appealed to except through their eyes.”¹²¹ With the film duly made, a friend of Gerard’s reported in August of seeing him in the “movies” in New York City and how the ambassador had “received quite an ovation and applause...The cheering for you was quite remarkable [by] a very high grade audience of 3000 people...”¹²² The film, entitled “Our Ambassador to Germany Shown for the First Time,” another friend described as “first class.” “Your name has certainly become a familiar one to the U.S. citizen,” he informed a presumably pleased Gerard,¹²³ who a few years later would make a bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In September the president of the Universal Film Company arrived in Berlin with a letter of introduction from Gerard’s Washington point-man, Thomas McCarthy, desiring to make a moving picture for Universal’s “Weekly.” Needlessly, McCarthy strongly encouraged Gerard in the project, noting “it may prove valuable later.”¹²⁴ Late the next month, Mr. Oskar Einstein of *Erstklassige* (“First Class”) Films, Universal’s Berlin office manager, passed to Gerard copies of the films shot of the ambassador in his office and in front of the embassy, the embassy entrance on the Mauerstrasse, and American doctors and nurses serving with the German Red Cross.¹²⁵ While perhaps uninspired to the late-century mind, such clips of an animate Gerard and the bustle around America’s embassy in a faraway capital wowed his contemporaries, and gave them exciting, telescopic insight into events a million miles away and helped establish a cinematic dimension to public relations. In 1913 a French movie critic had noted the enormous impact on politics wielded by the cinema, particularly on the career of French President Poincaré. His

¹²⁰ Hoover Institution Archives, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 326, File “Whitlock, Brand,” Whitlock to Hoover letter dated 16 November 1914.

¹²¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-7, Krebs to Gerard, 8 March 1915.

¹²² Gerard Papers, Folder 11-34, Allen to Gerard, 3 August 1915.

¹²³ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-31, Anderson to Gerard, 6 August 1915.

¹²⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-19, McCarthy to Gerard, 27 August 1915.

¹²⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-19, Einstein to Gerard, 27 September 1915.

frequent appearance on newsreels had greatly boosted his popularity and led the critic to consider the cinematograph as “a kind of popular annex to the Elysee Palace.”¹²⁶ In a similar sense, scenes of America’s ambassadors in Berlin and elsewhere gave a face to the nation’s representatives abroad and helped cultivate popular response to the country’s policies of neutrality. The technology of mass communication thus asserted itself as a factor in political and diplomatic affairs by engaging the common citizen and shaping public opinion.

As witness to the birth of several of the first commercial motor car manufacturers, including Oldsmobile and Pope, the year 1897 generally marks the start of the era of automobiles. Years later, Gerard would proudly recall his participation in an event which grandly hailed the dawn of a new age in ground transportation, the first-ever “automobile flower parade” on the streets of Newport, New York, in September, 1899. Gerard counted among his social acquaintances the Newport “cottagers,” who “played an important role in introducing motoring in America,” by making it fashionable and lending publicity to automobile touring.¹²⁷ Although motorcars initially fell only to the wealthy, mass-production quickly brought their cost down. Even before inexpense made it available to the masses, however, the automobile possessed a recognized democratizing effect.¹²⁸ Automobiles, like the 1908 Ford Model T allowed their passengers, rich or poor, to travel unheard of distances to nearly anywhere in amazingly short times--a luxury available earlier only to those who might afford a horse or passage on the railroad. But not until 1911 would the invention of a self-starter for the gasoline engine eliminate steam and electricity as competition, and, with assembly line production in 1913 and falling costs, precipitate wide popularity for the motor car.¹²⁹ Until then, automobiles largely remained with the rich, including those occupied with the nation’s foreign affairs.

Begotten of wealth, Joseph Grew naturally possessed and used an automobile. Once arrived in 1906 at their new post in Mexico City, the Grews bought their first, a two-cylinder Cadillac, in order to commute into the city from the suburb, Tacubaya. Eventually it gave way to a Pope Hartford, which

¹²⁶ Kern, *Culture of Time*, p. 260.

¹²⁷ Gerard, *Eighty-Three Years*, p. 45.

¹²⁸ Kern, *Culture of Time*, p. 317.

¹²⁹ James J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, MA, and London: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1975), pp. 12-17.

remained in the family for many years, seeing faithful service in Russia (1907) and then in Germany during Grew's first tour in 1908.¹³⁰ Gerard brought over from America at least two automobiles. A Mercedes he had shipped to England some years before, evidently for motor excursions during vacations in Europe. Due to the island's very heavy taxation on auto registration, however, in August, 1911, he moved the vehicle to France. There it remained in storage for nearly two-and-one-half years until late October, 1913, when he had it shipped to Berlin by train.¹³¹ Immediately upon his arrival in the city the same month, the *Königlicher Automobil-Club* extended, and Gerard accepted, an invitation to join.¹³² Gerard also expressed an interest in possibly purchasing an automobile for the embassy's use. Already in mid-October, 1913, a representative of Detroit's Hudson Motor Car Company wrote to Gerard of the virtues of the firm's newest model "54" six-cylinder Hudson, as an "ideal car for your purpose," noting "Ambassador Page in London has recently favoured the Hudson company with an order and one of our new models is shortly to be put in use by the Embassy in Paris." Gerard approved a demonstration for the next week, though it is unclear whether he struck a deal in the end.¹³³

Automobiles were *de rigueur* for the embassy's cadre. A natural sign of status in Berlin's aristocratic and diplomatic milieu, motorcars conveyed America's diplomats to social functions, holiday retreats, and the ambassador's game reserve forty-five minutes outside the city. Eminently suited to the pre-war *joie de vie*, the machines quickly would establish their utility in the conduct of the embassy's wartime work. By 1916, representatives from the Berlin embassy were rushing hither and yon inspecting at least 148 different camps throughout the German Empire.¹³⁴ With rail transportation constrained by schedules and subordinated to military exigencies, the automobile proved the quickest, most reliable and efficient means to visit the archipelago of camp locations.¹³⁵ Although by the fall of 1916 gasoline

¹³⁰ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 34. The Cadillac Automobile Company formed in 1902 from the remnants of one of Henry Ford's unsuccessful, early ventures, the Detroit Automobile Company.

¹³¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-36, Stenson Cooke of The Automobile Association and Motor Union (of London) to Gerard, 14 February 1914.

¹³² Gerard Papers, Folder 6-6, *Königlicher Automobil-Club* to Gerard, 20 October 1913. Gerard indicates thereon his acceptance and payment of initiation fee and dues.

¹³³ Gerard Papers, Folder 7-13, Johnston to Gerard, 16 October 1913; and Johnston to Gerard, undated, but between 17-23 October 1913.

¹³⁴ Stuart, *American Practice*, p. 66, Footnote 14.

¹³⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-22, Osborne to Gerard, 10 October 1916. Osborne tells how he and medical attaché Dr. Webster motored around for four days inspecting POW working camps.

shortages were critically afflicting the embassy's mobility,¹³⁶ the automobile had found its place in American diplomacy.

The variety of new technology made its mark on the embassy in numerous smaller ways as well. As Grew and other embassy personnel could attest from their early experience, noted British statesman Lord Vansittart's encounter with the typewriter was not unique in diplomatic work. He remembered when in 1900, as a fresh, young diplomat in the midst of copying telegrams by hand, stuffing diplomatic pouches, and deciphering incoming cables, he once paused to "explore" a nearby typewriter he found under its tarpaulin. Just then, however, the head of his department burst in exclaiming, "Leave that thing alone! Don't you know we're in a hurry[?]"¹³⁷ Such was the reception of new-fangled gadgetry in even the time-honored British Diplomatic Service.¹³⁸ Across the Atlantic, persistent efforts to rationalize the State Department's work and introduce more efficient, business-like procedures led by the eve of war to a thorough adoption of the typewriter, with virtually all official correspondence, memoranda, cables, even intra-office notes rendered in its easy-to-read script.¹³⁹ Mention was made earlier of Grew's amenability to technology and innovation. By 1912, he had taken to often using the faster, more efficient typewriter for writing his correspondence. At one point, he lightheartedly explained to his mother, "Someday we shall all come to it and shall carry around our pocket typewriters instead of our leaky fountain pens, but for the present the pioneers must go forward apologetically." Among the pioneers could be counted Grew's embassy the next year under his new boss, Gerard, where use of typewritten correspondence was standard for the same reasons of speed and efficiency in its diplomatic work.¹⁴⁰ Meanwhile, other contemporaries would continue to resist, like the Prince Regent of Bavaria, who insisted on having all typewritten

¹³⁶ Benzol began replacing the embassy's exhausted gasoline and dedicated efforts were underway to effect some means of resupply through the Paris embassy. Gerard Papers, Folder 18-17, Winslow to Gerard, 6 October 1916.

¹³⁷ Lord Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 43.

¹³⁸ See above for Joseph Grew's similar experience of the initial clash between technological innovations and diplomatic work.

¹³⁹ Based on author's review of contents of United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31. Also interesting are the many letters in the file from American businesses to the State Department, which only rarely are not typewritten.

¹⁴⁰ Based on author's review of extensive contents of the Gerard Papers.

documents first copied into longhand before he would consider them and kept a regular staff of clerks to do so.¹⁴¹

As described earlier, the newly installed electrical fixtures of Gerard's renovated embassy joined its elevator as a modern convenience.¹⁴² Adding machines proved necessary enough for the routine office work, that one was ordered in July, 1914.¹⁴³ In the frenzy of wartime activity arising the next month, the embassy found itself hard-pressed to keep American citizens inside Germany informed of the volatile conditions. Initially relying on individual replies through the German post and, when urgent, telephones and expensive telegrams, the embassy very shortly came upon a windfall in the form of a duplicating machine lent by an American expatriate. The embassy now could turn out one-thousand copies of an original in only a quarter of an hour, which they immediately used to issue general information bulletins "which...obviate[d] much private correspondence" and streamlined the staff's heavy workload.¹⁴⁴

Just as they did in their personal and professional backgrounds, Gerard and his staff reflected the shifting diplomatic paradigm with their new embassy and with the technology outfitting it. With no permanent housing in Berlin for his embassy and residence, and those of his predecessor judged unsuitable, Gerard found himself in classic nineteenth-century tradition searching for an adequate alternative, in a tight housing market, and at his own expense. The tide had begun to turn three years before Gerard arrived in Berlin, when the Lowden Act of 1910 provided the initial move towards addressing the housing crisis in the American foreign service. Persistent lack of political resolve kept meaningful results at bay, however, until the Foreign Service Buildings Act of 1926 in the wake of the Rogers Act two years earlier. While the diplomatic paradigm shift slowly pushed the housing issue, an entirely different force helped propel the shift itself.

Beginning around 1880, the technological revolution in communications and transportation afflicting Gerard's day radically compressed time and space, as it gave birth to what Marshall McLuhan

¹⁴¹ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 97.

¹⁴² In May, 1914, the embassy's elevator was scheduled for quarterly inspections. Gerard Papers, Folder 8-33, Carl Flohr Maschinenfabrik to Winslow, 14 May 1914.

¹⁴³ Gerard Papers, Folder 8-33, Fidelity & Deposit Company of Maryland to Winslow, 10 July 1914.

¹⁴⁴ For maximum publicity, the bulletins also were published in the German daily *Lokal Anzeiger*. Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 141-142, Grew diary, 7 August 1914.

would later call the “global village.” By Gerard’s tenure in Berlin, its infancy was marked by a web of wireless stations and telegraph offices, and, along with countless other innovations like modern steamships, electricity, and the cinema, enormously affected the conduct of modern diplomatic relations. As force-multipliers, such modern conveniences as typewriters and automobiles allowed diplomats like Gerard and his staff to conduct their work more efficiently and effectively. Affairs transmitted through the virtual instantaneity of the telephone, telegraph, and wireless, demanded prompt resolution, introducing untold pressures for accelerated decision-making. Further magnifying the hazards, technology had matured the public eye’s powers of scrutiny and helped introduce a pressing, and unprecedented, public relations dimension to foreign affairs. Public opinion weighed in materially, as cinematic coverage helped prepare a topic as an issue and telephoned, telegraphed, or radioed news reporting of its further development might be known worldwide within hours. For diplomats and statesmen, their work altogether grew considerably more difficult, volatile, and problematic--trademark trends for the new paradigm of twentieth-century diplomacy.

With technology its *sine qua non*, the First World War drove home the reality of these changes and helped mark decisively the coming of age of the new age of simultaneity in all its imperfect and complicating glory. In the driven dynamic of the new diplomacy, information for decision-making and its communication assumed paramount importance. After the February, 1917, break in relations, the German response to Gerard’s embassy offered backhanded tribute to this reality: they reacted immediately with the simple, but very effective, tactic of a complete communications blackout. Embassy telephone service was cut, mail service suspended, and telegraph privileges frozen, even to give final instructions to the American consuls scattered across the Empire.¹⁴⁵ But perhaps for Gerard, it meant great relief. For even as technology had accelerated diplomacy’s pace, in the midst of war it had also helped painfully convolute diplomatic work way beyond its previous bounds.

¹⁴⁵ Gerard, Four Years, pp. 383-384.

CHAPTER V

THE EMBASSY AND ITS WORK IN WAR AND THE NEW CENTURY

When the war hurricane burst over Europe, Americans abroad suddenly became acutely conscious of the American diplomatic service. The American ambassador or minister loomed out of the vague background, where, for most of us, he usually remains, the subject of humorous contempt. He ceased to be a mere concession to international formalities and became a reality, a rock and a refuge.¹

--The Chicago Tribune (October, 1914)

For the countless thousands of Americans traveling in Europe in early August, 1914, these words in an editorial a few months later rang with certain truth and, for many, much understatement. For while Americans everywhere encountered some inconvenience, it was those in Germany who most particularly found themselves isolated, prostrate, and afraid. With declarations of war coming rapid fire, rail travel usurped by the military, cable connections to home cut, mails disrupted, borders closed, and war-hysteria and suspicions rising to fever pitch, the war's quick outbreak rapidly became an occasion for their arresting concern. Untold numbers found themselves stuck in some small corner of the German Empire, all cash reserves inaccessible in closed banks, native landlords and others insisting on full payment of debts immediately, personal checks not accepted by anyone, stringent restrictions on all correspondence and telephone calls inside the country, and all communication outside shut off.² It was in these circumstances that, for the first time ever, it fell to their country's foreign service and diplomats to succor so many against so anarchic an act of God.

As might be gleaned above from Grew's and Hugh Wilson's early accounts of its professional stirrings, American diplomacy before the war exhibited very little of the demands and complexities which would become standard during the wartime and post-war years. Even at the larger embassies in Europe's great capitals, the work only very rarely proved at all strenuous. Despite America's world power status,

¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 10-23, Patterson to Gerard, 27 October 1914, enclosing a 27 October 1914 Chicago Tribune editorial, entitled "Ambassador Gerard."

² Gerard Papers, Folder 11-12, Anita de Vizen to Gerard, 5 August 1914.

her continued policy of non-entanglement stayed its course and effectively excused American diplomats from the detailed, absorbing work that was the bread and butter of other diplomatic services. International treaties and agreements provide a telling indicator of America's increasing global involvement after the turn of the century. In the forty years before 1900, the United States entered into a total of 255 international treaties and agreements, an average of roughly sixty-one per decade. In the first ten years of the new century, however, the emerging world power became party to a further 188, a rise of slightly more than 200% and a number that would set the pace for the early twentieth century. Especially in 1915, 1916, and 1917, the consuming war years ironically saw the number of international treaties temporarily dip to help leave that decade's total at a depressed, but still high, 139, before swelling again to 214 during the 1920s.³

The American diplomatic service's work not only was changing in quantity, but in quality as well. The war imposed unprecedented challenges upon American and, indeed, world diplomacy, and provided what has been called "a preview of the age of total warfare and total diplomacy."⁴ The assumption of belligerent interests, submarine warfare, massive humanitarian relief assistance, human rights issues--all were thoroughly complicated by the demands of more rapid, mass communications and the immensely more influential role of public relations. These and other novel, twentieth-century concerns were highlighted by the conflict, which, as Joseph Grew observed from 1929, "so effectually put an end to those old days of diplomatic serenity--a fool's paradise."⁵

ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS: THE EMBASSY AS HUMANITARIAN

It was in February, 1915, that Gerard perhaps first heard the phrase "human rights." While his correspondent referred to the Mexican anarchy, saying "Human rights are not respected; foreign life and

³ Graham H. Stuart, The Department of State: A History of Its Organization, Procedures, and Personnel. New York: MacMillan Company, 1949), Appendix III.

⁴ Charles W. Thayer, Diplomat (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1959), p. 165.

⁵ Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of 40 Years, 1904-1945, 2 vols., ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952), 1: 131.

property are gravely menaced and the diplomats are in danger,"⁶ Gerard surely cast Europe's wartime anarchy under the same rubric. Over most his three-and-one-half year tenure hung a humanitarian pall of pending, widespread famine, of maltreatment of prisoners of war and civilian belligerent detainees, of population deportations, of murderous, new killing machines in the air and under the sea. The war brought basic human rights under the purview of diplomacy with dramatic force. Focused beneath the sun of newfound public scrutiny in the age of mass communications, humanitarian transgressions could ignite public furor, just as humanitarian gestures could warm and inspire public and official moods.

Gerard's humanitarian involvement during the war proved exceptional and certainly gained not a little moral authority for America and her neutral standing. Gerard contributed to the success of at least two medical expeditions made to Germany by the American Physicians Expeditions Committee, Inc.⁷ He provided indispensable letters of introduction for officials of the International Commission for Relief in Poland traveling to Denmark and the Balkans.⁸ His contact extended to such organizations as the Relief Committee for War Sufferers in Lodz, Poland⁹ and the New York-based Prisoners of War Relief Committee for the Relief of German and Austro-Hungarian Prisoners of War.¹⁰ His hands worked for the procurement and delivery of three motorized ambulances intended to operate in the rear of the German lines advertising American flags.¹¹ With the Countess von Bernstorff, Gerard became a formal patron of the American-organized American Red Cross Hospital, newly-established in Munich as a branch of the German Red Cross.¹² He and his embassy assisted in the unhindered shipment of humanitarian supplies and provisions destined for the German Red Cross and the American Hospitals in Munich and elsewhere.¹³

⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-31, O'Laughlin to Gerard, 8 February 1915.

⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-35, Portack to Gerard, 16 February 1916. Portack asked for Gerard's support in an upcoming third, to which the ambassador surely agreed.

⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-4, Trumbull to Gerard, 11 May 1915.

⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-40, Dressler to Gerard, 3 November 1916.

¹⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-30, F. zur Nedden to Gerard, 14 November 1916.

¹¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-4, Taylor to Gerard, 24 February 1914 and 28 March 1915.

¹² Gerard Papers, Folder 13-9, Kuehnrich to Gerard, 19 June 1915, enclosing a Kuehnrich article in an undated Los Angeles Examiner (Sunday Edition) on the Red Cross Hospital.

¹³ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-26, Morris to Gerard, 9 April 1915, and Gerard to Morris, 26 April 1915. The other two were in Gieiwitz and Cosel. In the fall of 1914, for example, Minister van Dyke at the Hague alerted Gerard that over five thousand tons of provisions along with further International Red Cross supplies from America had left under American charge and control and that all would "probably pass through your hands." Gerard Papers, Folder 11-12, Van Dyke to Gerard, 12 November 1914.

And, manned by members of Berlin's American colony and feeding over two hundred destitute Germans every day, the American Relief Kitchen opened and endured hard times largely because of Gerard's patronage.¹⁴ In such small, but largely symbolic, ways did Gerard's diplomacy quickly develop a humanitarian flavor to America's difficult policy of neutrality. Describing the embassy's specially nurtured attitude of impartiality to his father-in-law, Grew wrote, "We have a hard road to follow here...In our actions we are neutral and are heartily doing as much for Germans as we are for others, for human want, sorrow, or suffering know [sic] no creeds."¹⁵ Neither, the First Secretary could well have added, might they know any bounds to diplomatic effort. For soon, matters of humane treatment for tens of thousands of prisoners of war and issues of massive food relief operations reaching millions of Belgians, French, and Poles rapidly escalated the Berlin embassy's humanitarianism into a new dimension of diplomacy altogether.

BELLIGERENT HUMAN RIGHTS

America's assumption of belligerent interests immediately after the war's outbreak, initially introduced the embassy to the larger issue of human rights. On 4 August 1914, Gerard assumed charge in the German Empire of all British interests, and soon those of Japan, Serbia, Romania, and San Marino. Aside from Roosevelt's precedent in the Russo-Japanese War, this was an invitation into European affairs without earlier parallel and, despite the wartime exigency, perhaps indicated the status America had assumed in the previous fifteen years. Almost immediately--and throughout the war until the break--the embassy's most engrossing concern centered on the welfare of belligerent prisoners of war (POWs) and interned civilian nationals, which Gerard and his staff took up with admirable energy. Already by January, 1915, a bare half-year since the war's start, Gerard's embassy served as principal protector and

¹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-35, Atwood to Gerard, 12 April 1916. A full statement of the kitchen's operations indicated Gerard's continued interest in the projects. Folder 14-35, Treasurer, American Association of Commerce and Trade Berlin to Gerard, 4 September 1916. Grew wrote he was "glad that an official mark of approval was thus placed on [the kitchen], as everything is of use that can serve to counteract the unfortunate anti-German reputation which we all have here." Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 166, Grew to Mrs. Grew, 7 December 1914.

¹⁵ Grew, Turbulent Era, 1: 166, Grew to Thomas Sargeant Perry, 6 December 1914.

representative of a considerable portion of over 700,000 POWs of all nationalities (mostly Russian and French), a total which would eventually exceed the two million mark.¹⁶ By August, 1915, the embassy ministered to the needs of almost 6,000 interned British civilians and 24,000 British POWs--which would climb to nearly 40,000 by year's end, making Gerard, according to one headline, "the busiest diplomat in the world."¹⁷

Camp inspections proved the embassy staff's most time-consuming duty. The embassy was first obliged to negotiate the labyrinthine German bureaucracy to obtain, and periodically renew, special passes from the War Ministries of each of the Empire's constituent states, including Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony.¹⁸ Thus armed, embassy representatives regularly fanned out from Berlin to conduct inspections of camps and detention centers, that by April, 1916, numbered at least 148 different locations scattered across the Empire.¹⁹ The extensive list of inspection items included general sanitation and treatment of prisoners by the German authorities; sleeping, bathing, washing, and cooking accommodations; nutrition quality and quantity; arrangements for exercise and entertainments; provision of blankets, clothing, footwear, and other necessities; hours and nature of work required of the prisoners; medical care provided; delivery, dispatch, and censoring of packages and letters; and innumerable other details of the prisoners' humane treatment.

Back in Berlin, the embassy meanwhile conducted on-going negotiations with the countless German authorities, whose jealously-guarded, overlapping jurisdictions helped ensure constant trials. In March, 1915, Gerard successfully arranged with the Prussian Ministry of War, the German Foreign Office, and the Army General Staff, a so-called "treaty" to facilitate thorough, reliable inspections. Prior-notice inspection of any camp could now be demanded at any time. Inspectors gained the privilege of speaking with prisoners out of ear-shot and without the interference of camp authorities, and could insist on "the

¹⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-23, Middlebrook to Gerard, 20 January 1915, p. 3.

¹⁷ United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31, J.D. Chenoweth to Lansing, undated but received by State Department on 19 August 1915, enclosing a clipping dated 7 August 1915 from the Canadian newspaper Saturday Night. In December, 1915, Germany held approximately 300,000 Frenchmen (whose interests the Spanish embassy handled) and a little less than 40,000 British prisoners. Gerard Papers, Folder 13-35, Gerard to Walter Hines Page, 6 December 1915, p. 6.

¹⁸ See Gerard Papers, Folder 15-36, for several such passes.

¹⁹ Graham H. Stuart, American Diplomatic and Consular Practice (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936), p. 66, Footnote 14. Some larger locations, like the civilian Ruhleben camp, received weekly visits. Gerard Papers, Folder 13-35, Gerard to Walter Hines Page, 6 December 1915, p. 5.

removal of the causes of justifiable complaints.” The embassy also secured the right of final appeal to the Imperial War Ministry itself on any POW issue.²⁰ Subsequently, in February, 1916, Gerard at last succeeded in negotiating stringent, no-notice inspection visits.²¹ Another matter requiring the embassy’s diplomatic intervention centered on arrangements for prisoner exchanges or releases. Gerard parleyed for the British to reduce the age under which interned civilians were considered potential combatants from 55 to 50, and in some cases to 45 years, thus qualifying for repatriation *considerable numbers of men*.²² He also negotiated and facilitated a series of individual prisoner exchanges before finally representing the British desire to abandon them for mass exchanges.²³

Gerard meanwhile played a significant role in gaining access to the camps for neutral, humanitarian, non-governmental organizations. His representations at the Foreign Office on behalf of the Young Men’s Christian Association, for example, helped produce by April, 1915, a military proclamation, that “[t]he German War Ministry establishes a new humanitarian precedent and welcomes the Y.M.C.A. in prison camps.”²⁴ The ambassador added point to his position by joining his Spanish counterpart late that month in making a high-profile visit to the inaugural ceremony marking the new relationship. “You cannot know how your visit is giving us standing throughout the country,” one beleaguered Y.M.C.A. official wrote.²⁵ The General Secretary of the New York-based International Committee of Young Men’s Christian Associations, Mr. John R. Mott, wrote a week later of the organization’s “profound appreciation of the invaluable service and influential cooperation which you have rendered.”²⁶ Mott’s remark could well have applied to all Gerard’s work on behalf of his British wards. Whether in facilitating other bodies’ aid, or intervening itself diplomatically (through its representations) and pragmatically (through its camp inspections), Gerard’s embassy performed critical, front-line humanitarian duty in its efforts for humane

²⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-35, Gerard to Walter Hines Page, 6 December 1915, pp. 7-9. “Constant inspections of camps” immediately ensued beginning 29 March 1915.

²¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 15-1, Cecil to Gerard, 17 January 1916.

²² Usually elderly or sickly—for example, embassy Special Assistant John B. Jackson relayed to Gerard an English *note verbale* regarding its acceptance in principle of a German proposal to release all British and German civilians over age 45. Gerard Papers, Folder 16-16, Jackson to Gerard, 11 August 1916.

²³ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 23 May 1916.

²⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-1, Harte to Gerard, 5 March 1915, and Harte to Mott, undated. The latter advises, “Our Ambassador informing State Dept.”

²⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-1, Harte to Gerard, 20 April 1915.

²⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-26, Mott to Gerard, 27 April 1915.

treatment of British prisoners of war and civilian internees. Within a few months of assuming belligerent interests within Germany, however, the Gerard embassy would extend its duty beyond the Empire's borders into German-occupied lands, as well.

BELGIAN FOOD RELIEF

Meticulously choreographing Germany's invasion of France, the von Schlieffen Plan necessitated by-passing the Maginot Line fortifications with an end-run through neutral Belgium. Despite a valiant fight, roughly eight million Belgians and two million French still inhabited German-occupied Belgium and northern France when the offensive finally ground to a halt in early September, 1914. With military expedience satisfied in the midst of wide expectations of a short war, the passing battlefield ravaged the mature, August crops ready for harvest. With food reserves from the previous year low and the industrial and urban centers of this, Europe's most highly industrialized state, dependent upon daily replenishment, the conquerors were face to face by October with a looming food crisis of unprecedented proportions. As the Commission for Relief in Belgium bluntly described it, "The complete occupation by a hostile army of an area so exceptionally industrial and urban in its character...and so dependent on overseas imports for its food-supplies...has created a situation of siege unparalleled in history and given rise to problems not hitherto contemplated, whether from the standpoint of sociology, economics or international convention."²⁷

As the crisis grew, representatives from several Belgian cities were allowed in early October to cross the Channel with hopes of temporarily alleviating mounting food shortages through grain purchases in England. Desperate in their plight, they secured the services of a visiting American mining engineer and millionaire named Herbert Hoover. A man of abiding integrity and energy, Hoover quickly established the American Relief Commission (ARC), soon recast as the International Commission for Relief in Belgium (ICRB), with himself as chairman. The neutral body would provide an organized approach to raising the

²⁷ Hoover Institution Archives, Joseph Coy Green Collection, Box 5, File "ICRB - General Reports, Annual Report (Second) 1914-1916," The Commission for Relief in Belgium Second Annual Report, November 1, 1914 to October 31, 1916, Part I - Provisioning Department (London: Crowther & Goodman, Ltd., 1916), p. xiii.

required vast sums of money, purchasing foodstuffs sufficient for most of ten million people, providing for shipping through belligerent waters and borders, and, finally, supervising the fair distribution of the emergency provisions through local native committees to the needy, captive civilian populations.²⁸ With its operations caught between the always-posturing British, French, and Germans, the CRB's existence, let alone its success, remained tenuous, as it fought to establish and preserve its neutrality and to avoid becoming a pawn in the belligerents' war maneuvering.

To help legitimize the Committee and its neutral status and to secure invaluable diplomatic aid for its activities, Hoover began recruiting a prominent list of diplomats as patrons. By late October, CRB letterhead proclaimed as honorary chairmen Brand Whitlock and the Marquis de Villalobar, the American and Spanish Ministers in Brussels; Walter Hines Page and Señor Don Merry del Val, the American and Spanish Ambassadors in London; and, in Berlin, the Spanish Ambassador and American Ambassador James W. Gerard.²⁹ The "protective diplomacy" of Page and Gerard would prove of decisive importance to the CRB.³⁰ Together, the CRB and the neutral diplomats sought to lay a foundation of effective and efficient relief through a variety of agreements with the different belligerent governments, covering such essential issues as transport of foodstuffs through belligerent lines, protection of native food supplies, government subsidies, and freedom of staff movement and communications.³¹ In this inaugural appearance

²⁸ With the help of researchers in London, Paris, and Berlin, Hoover early conducted a thorough investigation into past European famines, plagues, and organized relief efforts, in order to provide himself with some guidance on his monumental undertaking. Of the greatest famine in European history, that following the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), he noted the lack of any relief, "for it was recorded that one-third to one-half of the population of Europe died." He concluded, "Except for the charities of the religious bodies, of occasional municipalities and of a few princes, there had never [before] been such a thing as relief." Hoover felt "shortly convinced that gigantic famine would follow the present war." Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 3 vols. (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1951), I: 184.

²⁹ Others included the Dutch Minister to Belgium's government-in-exile at Le Havre, Jonkheer de Weede; the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Johan Loudon; the American Minister to the Netherlands, Henry van Dyke; and William Sharp, the American Ambassador to France. The corresponding officials of Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, and Denmark declined. With American, Dutch, and Spanish representatives, the American Commission changed its name on 22 October 1914 to the Commission for Relief in Belgium, or CRB. Hoover, *Memoirs*, I: 157-158.

³⁰ Hoover's term. Hoover Institution Archives, CRB Collection, Box number 6, "Hoover - July 1916," Hoover to Page, 11 July 1916.

³¹ Hoover Institution Archives, Joseph Coy Green Collection, Box 5, File "CRB - General Reports, Annual Report (Second) 1914-1916," *The Commission for Relief in Belgium Second Annual Report, November 1, 1914 to October 31, 1916, Part I - Provisioning Department* (London: Crowther & Goodman, Ltd., 1916), p. xiv.

of what British diplomat Lord Percy later termed “moral reprobation as an instrument of foreign policy,”³² Gerard’s work in Berlin on the CRB’s behalf, like Page’s in London, dramatically illustrated diplomacy’s expanding field of operations. As with his embassy’s personnel, facilities, and technology, its humanitarian diplomacy further reflected the new century’s novel forces, as their pressure produced for the first time a real human-rights dimension to international relations.

On 7 October 1914, Hoover and his associates approached Ambassador Page with a plan to use the new American Relief Committee to send emergency food to Belgium. Page cabled Washington to outline British authorization and to underline the necessity of securing the German government’s approval. The next day, Gerard made his initial foray into humanitarian relief issues when he took up with the Foreign Office the matter of the ARC’s plan and cabled the Germans’ agreement to Page ten days later on 18 October.³³ The quick *agreement* with Wilhelmstrasse, however, unfortunately occurred only because of a still maturing appreciation of the issue’s complexities. For the rest of the war, the Commission, with help from Ambassador Gerard and the other neutral chiefs of mission, would maintain precarious relations with the belligerent governments, which Hoover likened to “walking a tight rope.”³⁴ The story also vividly illustrates the ascendance of a new political force in diplomacy, that of public relations.

Everyone wished to see the Belgians fed. Preferably, however, at the enemy’s expense and at no cost to the friendly war effort. The Germans disavowed responsibility for feeding the populations, citing the Allied blockade’s barring of food imports as part of an effort to starve the central Powers into submission. They did effectively support the CRB’s relief, however, because they knew their resources were already tight and they rightly perceived the public relations disaster that would accompany a Belgian famine. On their side, the British and French feared relief food and supplies entering the occupied territories would end up in German hands. But they also understood the bad press stemming from blocking

³² As quoted in George H. Nash, The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Humanitarian, 1914-1917 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), p. 182.

³³ Hoover Institution Archives, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 329, File “Commission for Relief in Belgium - Articles by its Members,” from the article “The Authentic Story of Belgian Relief” by Vernon Kellogg, in The World’s Work, June, 1917.

³⁴ Hoover, Memoirs, I: 161.

relief efforts destined for their ally's populace, or for their own people in the case of France. "The introduction of a neutral organization...into such a situation," the CRB considered a year later,

has proved to be an undertaking which, in its diplomatic phases, is fraught with the utmost difficulty and is always face to face with failure. The question as to which of the belligerents is legally and morally responsible for feeding civilian population in such a position of unparalleled human experience, the military aspects of the economic weapon of food-control, the transfer of the food-supply through war zones and over belligerent frontiers, its distribution and the financial transactions involved therein, are obviously matters of the greatest importance to the combatants. All of the Commission's activities have, therefore, been subject to jealous supervision by both sides.³⁵

The diplomatic twists and turns that would buffet the CRB repeatedly, generally followed the pendulum's swing to and fro between political fears and ambitions. Cultivating popularity in the neutral countries stood for both sides as a central goal in the relief issue, a theme which Hoover and Gerard did not fail to emphasize with vigorous publicity demanding justice for the Belgians facing avoidable catastrophe.

The nations concerned quickly became keenly sensitive to every nuance of the CRB's relief operation and regularly precipitated crises as they grappled with such an unusual matter. Almost from the beginning, Hoover encountered strong and mounting opposition in Britain to the CRB's fledgling relief effort: Attempting to side-step the issue of which side held the moral and material obligation, Hoover sought English assistance on humanitarian grounds. Heads raised at his warnings of the untold, but substantial, effect on American sympathy towards the British that public knowledge of England's explicit refusal to help would have. As he privately warned one British notable, the "English people cannot afford to have the question of responsibility in case of failure on the part of this Commission through lack of resources, put up to the judgment of the neutral world." To bolster his humanitarian appeals and overcome the decisive objections of the British military, Hoover knew he had to secure more cooperation from the Germans, and to do this, he needed Gerard.³⁶

³⁵ Hoover Institution Archives, Joseph Coy Green Collection, Box 5, File "CRB - General Reports, Annual Report (Second) 1914-1916," The Commission for Relief in Belgium Second Annual Report, November 1, 1914 to October 31, 1916, Part I - Provisioning Department (London: Crowther & Goodman, Ltd., 1916), p. xxii.

³⁶ Nash, Life of Hoover, p. 72, Hoover to Earl Grey, 15 December 1914, and p. 73.

In his cables and letters Hoover typically tailored the line of argument he wished the correspondent to take in representing the matter at hand--essentially diplomatic instructions--and did so with Gerard. On 27 November Hoover cabled Gerard a request to approach the German Government and solicit on the CRB's behalf a monthly subsidy of five million Marks (approximately one-quarter of Hoover's estimated need for the Commission's operations). Such funding, he told Gerard, would go far in quelling the outspoken criticisms levied on Germany for her conqueror's attitude in Belgium. Additionally, it would compel France and Great Britain to provide the CRB with like sums, and thus largely alleviate the organization's financial problems. A second issue for Gerard centered on reports of requisitions of locally-grown food by the German army. Hoover opined, that "[a]ll of the destruction in Belgium and the levying of food supplies for the support of troops can be defended as a war measure, but to allow these people to starve while under their material control will raise a storm in the neutral world fifty times the volume of that which has already been created by any local destruction." Hoover condemned as tantamount to murder any belligerent's failure to assist in meeting the Belgians' food requirements. Alternatively, any aid extended by the Germans in this hour of need would "wipe out nine-tenths of the charges of [German] ruthlessness in war." On 5 December, Hoover wrote Gerard urging again his assistance in winning German cooperation and once again invoking the bogeyman of American public opinion. Given his "instructions," Gerard commenced pressing the Foreign Office for its cooperation with the Commission. Within three weeks, Wilhelmstrasse promised a halt to food requisitions in Belgium by the German army of occupation, "and for a reasonable time after the last delivery," so long as the CRB continued sending supplies. On the day after Christmas he cabled Hoover, via the State Department, of a German acceptance.³⁷

On 28 December, Minister Whitlock received in Brussels Governor-General von Bissing's confirmation of the agreement, but already the next imbroglio had ripened when two interrelated problems threatened the CRB with imminent failure and required Gerard's direct intercession again. Financially, the CRB had to generate more secure financial resources and, diplomatically, it had to cultivate better relations

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 73, 81, and 117.

with the British and German governments.³⁸ Just after the New Year, the Germans, determined to extract some advantage from their occupation, announced the imposition of a forty million franc per month indemnity on Belgium's vanquished provinces. On 3 January 1915, Hoover cabled Gerard to start working on Berlin to rescind its decision. Three days later, on 6 January Hoover wrote Gerard on the other pressing issue of cultivating better relations concerning Belgium and now northern France.

By the winter of 1914-15, the battle lines in northern France had settled into their maze of trenches, trapping over 2 million hapless French civilians between the front and the Belgian / German borders. Straining under the same conditions of privation as the Belgians (though, as enemy citizens, treated somewhat more roughly), they, too, grew perilously short of food. Mass starvation threatened by late fall, 1914. The CRB originally had been organized in October exclusively for relief in Belgium, but between November and January, 1915, it extended operations to two French border districts and thereby rescued roughly 130,000 French from famine. But the effort lacked the resources and authority for sustained operations sufficient for the rest of the millions, including 600,000 children, in occupied France, and Hoover set to work on a remedy. He wrote Gerard on 6 January to explain the CRB's willingness to assume the extra burden. Short experience in Belgium, however, had shown the CRB had to expect improved cooperation of the various governments, especially the German.³⁹ Much of Gerard's diplomacy in Berlin at this time consequently centered on establishing a more comprehensive cooperation with the Germans on Belgium and securing their assistance in extending full-scale relief operations into northern France.

Back in London, throughout January, 1916, Hoover massaged the scene through a series of discussions with Her Majesty's government and finally overcame the major British opposition to the CRB's relief operations at a 21 January meeting with senior officials, including Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George. In tentatively agreeing to allow the CRB's operations to continue and even voting to contribute to the Belgian relief, the British imposed two conditions; namely that Germany abandon food levies and that she forsake her intentions to secure any indemnity from Belgium.⁴⁰ The

³⁸ Hoover, Memoirs, 1: 160.

³⁹ Nash, Life of Hoover, pp. 104-105.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 83-84.

overarching concern centered on “securing from the Germans more effective control of food in Belgium.”⁴¹

The pressure was back on in the German capital. Although Gerard continued working on the Foreign Office, Hoover now felt personal intervention in Berlin would be necessary to once and for all clear the air on both sides regarding suitable, stable arrangements for the CRB’s business. He assumed a two-pronged approach. First, he set the stage by bringing initial pressure to bear through a “storm of public opinion” in the American press. On 27 January he cabled to Secretary Bryan to take up with von Bernstorff the CRB’s problems, “believing the [German Ambassador] would be especially sensitive to American public opinion.” Hoover then followed this up with a gloomy release to the Associated Press on 30 January, which began with a bleak prognosis for the Belgian situation, before explaining both sides’ refusal to assume responsibility for feeding the Belgians and emphasizing the imperative of governmental support to supplement limited, private philanthropy. Warning, finally, that millions of Belgians would die should the belligerents fail to come to terms over the problem, Hoover concluded that “[o]ur [the CRB’s] only court of appeal is American public opinion.”⁴² The next day he promptly left London for Berlin on the second prong of his approach, arriving on 1 February intent to “besiege the German Government at the top directly and on all fronts.”⁴³

In Berlin, Gerard and his embassy played central roles in arranging and preparing the ground for Hoover’s planned conferences. Over the next ten days of talks, Hoover recalled, “Ambassador Gerard arranged, and was often helpfully present at, interviews” with the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, Foreign Minister von Jagow, Finance Minister Helfferich, and other important German officials.⁴⁴ Prior to their first meeting in early 1915, Hoover had been led to expect of Gerard “a typical Tammany lawyer, whose appointment had been imposed upon an unwilling President by a crooked political machine.” Instead, the future president discovered Gerard to be “a man of polished attainments, of fine intellectual insight, helpful, courageous, who at once inspired confidence in his fine integrity. When I first called at his

⁴¹ Hoover, Memoirs, 1: 163.

⁴² Nash, Life of Hoover, p. 86, and Hoover, Memoirs, 1: 163-165.

⁴³ Nash, Life of Hoover, p. 86.

⁴⁴ Hoover, Memoirs, 1: 165-166.

Embassy...he met me at the door and said at once: 'We are all for you here. What can we do [to help].' ” During the subsequent negotiations with the Germans, “Gerard opened every official door in Berlin for me and did not leave me on the doorstep. He brought skill and, where necessary, real punch to our negotiations. At all times he stood ready to catch the ball and run with it. Whenever he smelled danger he acted without our having to appeal to him. He sought no publicity out of our activities but did at every turn single-mindedly seek the success of our work.”⁴⁵

Several major issues concerning the CRB's operations and status were ultimately resolved in the course of the interviews. The Germans earnestly sought to find a financial arrangement for the CRB, as they did not wish to see the Commission collapse for any reason. They additionally agreed to cease taking food from the occupied areas; to allow complete freedom of movement to CRB staff without search; to order submarine commanders definitely to respect CRB ship markings; to provide directions through mine-free sea routes to Rotterdam, the off-load point; to charter for CRB use German merchant ships sitting in refuge in neutral ports; and to assign direct German officer liaisons to assist the CRB in treating with no less than six different, independent German authorities with overlapping jurisdictions in the occupied areas. Finally, the Germans allowed the extension of CRB relief operations into France, but the obstinate Germans categorically refused to lift the indemnity.⁴⁶

Through deft diplomacy and vigorous action by Hoover with assistance from diplomatic patrons like Gerard, temporary funding for the CRB's near-term expenses was secured from Germany, Britain, France, and Belgium. Germany's acquiescence to the CRB's other points and resolution of the financial crisis relieved Hoover's imbroglio by late February, 1915. The crisis, however, largely set the pattern for future CRB-belligerent relations and Gerard's supporting role. As Gerard subsequently obtained written German confirmation of the resolved points, he must have wondered at the chasm separating the simple, comparatively trite work of his pre-war months, and the complex, unprecedented wartime issue of

⁴⁵ Hoover's early-twenties recollection of Gerard was positive and appreciative, in direct contrast with his remembrances of Sharp (a "timid" man, who "unlike Gerard...would never take the initiative on our behalf"), van Dyke ("one of my trials"), and Whitlock ("helpful," but a sensitive man who "shrank from the rough stuff of dealing with the German officials"). Page Hoover called the CRB's "most intimate supporter," a "great mind," and "a man of sympathy and kindness...almost fanatically devoted to service of his country." Hoover, *Memoirs*, 1: 203-205.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1: 165-166.

international food relief in conquered lands. Up to this point, Hoover recalled, “We were a great bother to our patron Ambassadors and to their legation staffs in making appointments, attending conferences, securing of visas, ship passes, and a hundred other details, to say nothing of major negotiations with top officials.”⁴⁷ For the remainder of the war, the burden did not lessen either, as CRB issues mounted staccato and occasioned Gerard’s repeated intervention in Berlin. To pressure the Germans to lift abruptly-imposed travel restrictions and recover essential freedom of movement for CRB personnel; to obtain guarantees of the CRB’s right to a minimum number of staff in German-occupied territories; to secure safe passage for CRB vessels crossing the Channel between England and Holland after Germany declared a new submarine “war zone” around Britain; to persuade the Germans to cease exporting any foodstuffs or livestock out of Belgium; to win German guarantees to reserve the Belgian and French harvests for the native populations: On these, and countless other points, the embassy’s representations firmly established the new human rights dimension to America’s diplomatic work, even as they turned their attention to other pressing humanitarian problems.

POLISH FOOD RELIEF

In the summer and fall of 1915, conditions on the eastern front unexpectedly deteriorated, as German offensives shoved the Russians back and eventually captured Warsaw on 1 August. Adopting a “scorched earth” policy, the retreating Russian troops burned over four thousand villages and surrounding croplands, leaving two million refugees and a devastated harvest in their wake. By fall, occupied Poland joined Belgium and northern France at the brink of calamity. Hoover’s success in Belgium naturally drew to him the responsible authorities. The German General Staff, Warsaw’s principal charity organization, and others in America appealed to Hoover’s CRB for assistance, and in late October, Hoover dispatched to Poland Stanford University professor, Dr. Vernon Kellogg, to assess conditions for similar relief services as in Belgium and France.⁴⁸ Kellogg’s grim report in mid-November left little to doubt, as it told of

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1: 199.

⁴⁸ Kellogg, Hoover’s friend and the CRB “ambassador” at the Kaiser’s western front headquarters in Charleville since spring, 1915, would become later American Secretary of State in the 1930s.

increasingly scarce food supplies, private charities' emergency resources nearing exhaustion, and over seven-and-one-half million Poles preparing to face the winter with nothing.⁴⁹

Hoover immediately began making arrangements on both sides to extend operations into the nation. The Poles were requesting only CRB relief along the lines of that already being rendered in Belgium and northern France, but the effort involved "a thousand difficulties" before it might even get off the ground. An estimated five million dollars per month--far more than available from charity--would be required. Shipping arrangements from the United States to Stockholm, thence to Danzig, would be fraught with pitfalls, particularly as they would require creation of another gap in the Allied blockade. And for the Allies ever to approve the scheme, the Germans would need to provide various guarantees. In the face of disaster, on 2 December the Germans unofficially offered their full cooperation and promised all foodstuffs in Poland to the civilian population. Nevertheless, on 22 December prospects remained dim for Allied approval, as a depressed Hoover formally offered to British Foreign Secretary Grey a proposal to use the CRB's services for Polish relief.⁵⁰

Not for six weeks, until 5 February 1916, did Grey finally respond to Hoover. Negative undercurrents welled up in his reply, as he pointed to continued German and Austrian requisitions and even exports of native Polish foodstuffs as grounds for rejection of the CRB proposal. But he suggested relief for Poland might be possible, if these practices stopped and the Central Powers made other concessions. Thus slightly encouraged, Hoover wrote Gerard on 5 February and twice more on 7 February with the details and a request to approach the German government to seek their agreement.⁵¹ "The matter has now got beyond anything we can do as simple, unofficial persons and I feel that if you are able to develop [sic] something with the German Government, Mr. Page at this end would be able to advance it another step on this side." Once again providing guideposts, Hoover observed to Gerard that "the more humane section of

⁴⁹ Nash, Life of Hoover, p. 185.

⁵⁰ The same month, Hoover also received the initial entreaties from the Serbian Minister to London, the German General Staff, and the American Relief Clearing House in Paris to investigate the urgent needs for humanitarian relief of the war-torn Balkans. Gerard evidently had no role in the issue. Nash, Life of Hoover, pp. 186-189; and George J. Lerski, Herbert Hoover and Poland: A Documentary History of a Friendship (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1977), pp. 4-5.

⁵¹ Hoover Institution Archives, CRB London Office Dossiers Collection, Dossier number 55, "Preliminary Negotiations for the Relief of Poland," Gerard to Hoover, 15 February 1916.

the English Government wishes to see something done for Poland,” and that a substantial “counteroffer” by the Imperial government would put Germany “right in public opinion” and lead to a breakthrough.⁵²

Gerard took the matter up and his representations quickly bore fruit. On 11 February in Warsaw the German government of occupied Poland issued a memorandum of agreement on relief principles, in which it promised not to export any native food supplies, and to reserve all to the civilian population, except “surplus” potatoes and what food would be necessary for the roughly 100,000-strong German constabulary.⁵³ On 14 February, Gerard resurrected a preliminary “treaty” on Polish relief, which he had worked out with German officials over one year earlier in April, 1915, when the contract had failed for lack of Allied ratification. An amended copy of this he presented to Undersecretary Zimmermann to consider as a possible basis for negotiations in the current matter.⁵⁴

Back in London, on 21 February Hoover and Frederic Walcott of the humanitarian Rockefeller Foundation submitted a limited relief proposal (the Hoover-Walcott memorandum), which placed the burden of Polish relief on the Germans. While the British again stonewalled, impatient hunger pangs meanwhile awaited the trifles of combatant diplomacy. On 25 February Hoover wrote Gerard asking him to assure the Polish [Relief] Committee in Warsaw that the CRB was “unceasing in our efforts on their behalf,”⁵⁵ but not until 10 May did Grey finally respond with England’s acceptance of the terms of the memo--as well as her imposition of difficult, new conditions. The relief must cover all of Poland, Grey insisted, including Austria’s occupied portion. No native food could go to the German constabulary. And the Central Powers themselves should provide sufficient supplies and food to the occupied Balkan areas of Serbia, Albania, and Montenegro under neutral supervision. It fell once again, of course, to Gerard to negotiate the new demands with Wilhelmstrasse. Nearly three weeks passed before he cabled on 30 May the German response. They stood willing to purchase and ship necessary food imports to Poland, and even supplement the shipments from their own food supplies. They were not willing, however, to guarantee

⁵² Ibid., Hoover to Gerard, 7 February 1916, pp. 1-2.

⁵³ Nash, Life of Hoover, p. 189.

⁵⁴ Hoover Institution Archives, CRB London Office Dossiers Collection, Dossier number 55, “Preliminary Negotiations for the Relief of Poland,” Gerard telegram to Page / Hoover, received 1 June 1916; and Gerard to Hoover, 15 February 1916. The exhausted Gerard declined at this time to become an official chairman of any resultant relief effort in Poland.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Hoover to Gerard, 25 February 1916.

extension of the relief into Austrian Poland or to take responsibility for the Balkans. Gerard further advised Hoover (through Page) of several points upon which a possible arrangement might rest, based on his recent conferences with German Interior Ministry and Foreign Office officials, and Prince Lubecki of the Polish Committee.⁵⁶ But the British were in no mood to parlay.

With the British reply on 15 June 1916--that Germany could compel Austria if she so desired; that Poland had to be treated as a whole, as a matter of principle--deadlock ensued.⁵⁷ A State Department call to resolve the issue "in the name and interests of humanity," even a personal appeal from President Wilson could do nothing to move the belligerents. A "final proposal" from the British only incensed the Germans to hold a conference in August to review the continuation of all relief operations. While the CRB survived the crisis, Germany soon announced that with the coming harvest, no relief in Poland would be necessary after 1 October. Any suffering there meanwhile would be England's onus. Thus, the long campaign to extend the CRB into Poland collapsed and the break in German-American relations soon after the new year precluded any resurrection.⁵⁸ By the summer of 1916, however, Gerard's embassy had other humanitarian matters clamoring for its attention. For in early spring, its "protective diplomacy" assumed a different charge: Forced German relocation of French burghers and deportations that fall of able-bodied Belgian males posed disturbing new breaches of human rights.

FRENCH AND BELGIAN DEPORTATIONS

In order to alleviate the overcrowded, idle workforce of the highly industrial areas of northern

⁵⁶ Ibid., Gerard to Page, 30 May 1916.

⁵⁷ Hoover Institution Archives, CRB Collection, Box number 6, File "Hoover - June, 1916," Shoecraft to Hoover, 15 June 1916, which transmits a copy of Sir Edward Grey's reply.

⁵⁸ Hoover Institution Archives, CRB London Office Dossiers Collection, Dossier number 55, "Preliminary Negotiations for the Relief of Poland," English translation of German Foreign Office note to the Embassy of the United States of America (in Berlin), dated 25 August 1916, referencing Gerard's "Note Verbale" of 29 July 1916. Nash, *Life of Hoover*, pp. 189-192. America's entrance into the war in spring, 1917, effectively squelched all chances for outside help to starving Poland. Only after the 11 November 1918 armistice would she receive any substantial aid from America, when Hoover organized mass food relief based on careful preparations started in mid-October, 1918, when the Armistice was certain. His American Relief Administration's efforts continued for three more years, eventually feeding over 1.3 million Polish children daily. Lerski, *Herbert Hoover and Poland*, pp. 5-6; and p. ii, Forward by U.S. Senator Mark O. Hatfield.

France, in April, 1916, the German government of occupation decided to offer the populace a chance to work in the fields for wages and to more easily supplement their small CRB rations. Quite ignorant of agrarian matters, few of these city folk took advantage of the dubious opportunity, which prompted the autocratic Germans to decree that approximately 50,000 inhabitants were to go anyway. The forced relocations began the week of 22 - 29 April 1916 in the cities of Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing, and immediately outraged CRB officials. As it turned out, on 1 May 1916 the Germans abruptly summoned CRB Director Poland and all the American representatives of French districts to the northern French town of Charleville, where Kaiser Wilhelm kept his Western Front *Grosses Hauptquartier* (Grand Headquarters). No hint given as to the reason, the officials soon discovered that Ambassador Gerard and First Secretary Grew had arrived from Berlin for a tense conference with the Emperor and his staff concerning the crisis over the recent Sussex torpedoing. The Germans had arranged a rare meeting of the Americans, ostensibly to give a delighted Gerard an opportunity to talk over the Belgian relief with the representatives. In reality, the Germans intended the arrangement to help them placate the American diplomats, but quickly learned to regret their ploy. The CRB officials considered, "that the least the American Commission [the CRB] could do would be to bring the tragedy of the Lille deportations to [Gerard's] attention...and, if possible, to obtain from General Headquarters some action for an amelioration of the situation." Director Poland consequently took advantage of the occasion to discuss with the ambassador the question of the outrageous deportations, including that of young girls from the French city of Lille and its vicinity. Gerard's intervention with the highest authorities at this time put an end to the barbarities.⁵⁹ "The Germans never forgave the Commission for that incident," recalled CRB *Hauptquartier* liaison Dr. Kellogg, "but the happy result was an interruption in the brutal performance."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Hoover Institution Archives, Committee for the Relief of Belgium Collection, Box 6, File "Mr. Hoover, April, 1916," undated, anonymous memorandum entitled "Memorandum on the Deportation of Inhabitants from the Cities of Lille, Roubaix & Tourcoing, April 22nd - 29th 1916;" and Joseph Coy Green Collection, Box 20, File "Belgium - Short Articles, CA. 1917," typewritten anecdote dated 5 February 1917, entitled, "May 1st 1916."

⁶⁰ Hoover Institution Archives, Herbert Hoover Collection, Box 329, File "CRB - Articles by its member," in article "How North France Has Been Fed," by Dr. Vernon Kellogg, in The World's Work, January, 1918, p. 303.

A second German initiative, as brutal to Edwardian sensibilities as population deportations, called further attention to the issue of human rights. On 10 October 1916, just two weeks after Gerard's return to America on leave, *chargé d'affaires* Grew received word from the American Legation in Brussels that the German military authorities in Belgium had begun deporting able-bodied men to work in Germany. Besides the obvious inhumanity, the CRB feared the development might prompt the British to halt relief supplies passing into Belgium and sought Grew's representations in Berlin to stop the deportations.⁶¹ Appreciating the "far-reaching results of these new measures and their ultimate effect on the world's opinion," Grew obtained the State Department's authorization to make informal representations at the Foreign Office on humanitarian grounds. On 15 November, exaggerated reports, that Grew would formally (not informally) protest the issue, infuriated Wilson, who was then in process of formulating his planned post-election peace move. He desired nothing to interfere with its timing. While Lansing clarified his actual, more limited instructions to Grew, he and Colonel House successfully argued the deportations must temporarily delay any offer of mediation for fear of Allied rejection while Germany "persisted in enslaving the civilian subjects of enemies who have fallen into her hands."⁶²

Back in Berlin, Wilhelmstrasse twice parried the energetic Grew's efforts, which led him to escalate the matter to an interview with Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg himself. For three weeks prior to the 22 November *démarche*, Grew carefully prepared his case. He sought all available details and solicited recommendations from Brussels, meanwhile consulting other neutral diplomats in Berlin to lay the ground for a wider appeal if necessary. At the *démarche*, Grew detailed the deportations and their likely negative impact on world opinion. After his presentation, however, a somber, worn von Bethmann-Hollweg abruptly moved the discussion to the issue of peace, asserting the deportations stemmed directly from the failure abroad to follow up on Germany's several, earlier-expressed desires to halt the hostilities.

⁶¹ Gerard had handled diplomatic matters himself throughout the war and this issue, arising as the United States and Germany entered a twilight period before their break three months later, provided Grew's first real opportunity to exercise his wartime diplomatic skills.

⁶² House Diary entry of 15 November 1916, as quoted in Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 28.

Grew immediately cabled to Washington his report of the meeting, concluding with his correct impression of the Chancellor's unspoken, but particular, disappointment at American dallying.

Sensitive to rising public antipathy in America over the deportations, on 26 November Wilson directed Lansing to issue instructions for a "very solemn protest," which should emphasize the German actions as posing a "very serious obstacle" to creating a favorable opportunity for any peace move by the United States. This point, Wilson explained to the Secretary, would "from Mr. Grew's recent despatches...be the most persuasive part of the protest."⁶³ Lansing issued instructions to Grew on 29 November to make the formal protest in hopes of clearing the way for Wilson's peace initiative, which Grew issued on 5 December. While in the end the Germans' two-installment reply amounted to a rejection of the protest, Under-Secretary Zimmermann informally promised amelioration, which later reports from Brussels led Grew to believe his efforts might have resulted in an easing of the deportations.⁶⁴ Gerard, upon his return, continued working the matter with "some hope that a [more permanent German] retreat [from the policy of deportations] may be arranged,"⁶⁵ but had to leave it unsettled after the February break.

Gerard's engagement of humanitarian concerns directly illustrated the growing complexity of modern American diplomacy. His embassy played a key role in sustaining the critical food relief work of the CRB in Belgium and northern France. Though unsuccessful, Gerard had worked hard to promote extending the Committee's aid to millions in Poland. His direct intervention helped end forced relocations of French civilians. As *chargé d'affaires*, Gerard's lieutenant, Grew, had escalated the Belgian deportations to the highest level. Human rights issues had indeed moved forcefully onto the diplomatic stage of the new century. That they did so was not only a factor of the embassy's energy and America's strong humanitarianism. Modern, mass communications technology also played a critical role, as telegraphs, daily newspapers, and the cinema helped magnify transgressions against defenseless human beings into serious factors of international public opinion. Particularly for the most important neutral of the conflict, the United States, public relations became an important, new facet of diplomacy.

⁶³ Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters, 8 vols., 6: 343, as quoted in Heinrichs, American Ambassador, pp. 28-29.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

⁶⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-33, undated (but certainly late December, 1916) Gerard notes, probably for a report to Wilson, Lansing, or House.

ISSUES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS: DIPLOMACY'S NEW DIMENSION

The old diplomacy concerned itself little with propaganda and popular opinion. In America, preoccupation with domestic issues, a limited political franchise, limited mass communications technology, a large, rural, relatively uneducated population and other nineteenth-century conditions helped keep the public's awareness and involvement in international issues low. Towards the end of the century, however, these conditions began changing with the diplomatic paradigm. Factors such as mass circulation newspapers, renewed emphasis on education in a complex, urban-industrial society, and the nation's emergence as a world power hankering for overseas markets, began encouraging the American populace to have opinions on foreign matters.⁶⁶ At the same time, the new diplomacy's switch to "policy" involved a heightened awareness on the part of decision-makers, that public opinion could be useful, and occasionally crucial, in accomplishing their national goals.⁶⁷ In America, as throughout Europe, the creation and shaping of public opinion assumed increasing importance beginning in the 1890s, but the First World War's infinitely higher stakes abruptly, and once and for all, established popular sentiment as a nearly indispensable component of any foreign policy calculus. "Especially during the First World War when nations fought for their very survival, pressures mounted for governments to mobilize all possible resources in support of their cause, including public opinion at home and abroad," explains historian Paul Gordon Lauren. "Vicious, unprecedented competition for the hearts and minds of the world's citizens convinced many of the necessity for immediate action. In response, [French, German, and other foreign ministries] broke with past practices and created elaborate institutional mechanisms designed to assume new and expanded responsibilities for international propaganda."⁶⁸ As the Gerard embassy's experiences

⁶⁶ While public foreign-policy opinion carried increasing weight in America's affairs abroad after the Civil War, it originated not from the masses, but rather from "tiny elites [of acknowledged opinion makers and influential newspapers] in a few metropolitan centers." Robert L. Beisner, From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900 (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1975), p. 5.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁶⁸ Paul Gordon Lauren, Diplomats and Bureaucrats: The First Institutional Responses to Twentieth-Century Diplomacy in France and Germany, (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976), pp. 178-179. See his Chapter 6, "*Civilisation and Kultur: New and Expanded Responsibilities for International Propaganda*," pp. 178-207, for a thorough discussion of the general development of mass "public opinion"

would reveal with British POW treatment in Germany, human rights abuses in France and Belgium, and large-scale humanitarian relief operations in Belgium and Poland, the importance of public relations to twentieth-century diplomacy could not be underestimated.

In 1914, most American newspapers received their pre-war European news from London, with hardly any maintaining European staffs.⁶⁹ Upon the cutting of Germany's transatlantic cable immediately after war's outbreak, Ambassador von Bernstorff perceived England "held the whole of the Transatlantic news apparatus in her hands," with American public opinion inevitably receiving a lopsided, pro-Ally view of the war's causes and course.⁷⁰ Within the first week of the war, then, the Germans had begun worrying about their public appearance in America. With England coloring reports against her and Germany's access to the American press severely curtailed, German domestic papers devoted much space to the necessity of exhibiting the "greatest friendship" to Americans still in Germany.⁷¹ In this way, the Germans hoped at least to balance somewhat the American leadership's impressions of them through the Berlin embassy's reporting of the country's internal mood. While Americans generally failed to fully appreciate the extent to which the belligerents viewed the United States as the determining power in the war, the matter's truth escaped neither the British nor the Germans. It, in fact, was clearly understood and served as the fulcrum in the coming diplomatic wrangling surrounding the rest of Gerard's embassy.

Once Germany realized in late 1914 the gravity of the crisis brought on by a war of stalemate, peace became her ulterior diplomatic program. If an outright truce failed to solidify her gains, great good still could be had, if Germany could successfully pose as the one belligerent desiring peace and meanwhile maneuver the Entente to be viewed as responsible for the war's prolongation. If Germany came to be regarded "in a tolerant spirit" at least, disputes with England over neutral shipping and blockades might easily be fanned into outright anti-British sentiment and ideally into American intervention on Germany's side. As the war lasted unexpectedly and as it soon became clear America's enormous economic and

and international propaganda around the turn of the century, and of the concerted efforts of the French and German foreign ministries to address these novel, twentieth-century factors of diplomacy.

⁶⁹ From narrative by editor Walter Johnson prefacing chapter IX, "Viewing the War from Berlin, 1914," in Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 157.

⁷⁰ Von Bernstorff, Johann H., *My Three Years in America*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), p. 38.

⁷¹ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 142, Grew Diary, 7 August 1914.

financial power would be the conflict's virtual kingmaker, Germany's peace program gained urgency. "The consideration which was chiefly at stake in these tortuous proceedings," one contemporary historian concluded, "was public opinion in the United States."⁷² Proclaimed "the land of propaganda *par excellence!*" by von Bernstorff, neutral America and her sentiments became conspicuous marks for influence and public relations manipulation.⁷³

Across the Atlantic, both sides kept an eye on the public and official moods concerning the CRB's humanitarian relief operations in Belgium. Herbert Hoover likened the CRB's precarious position to "walking a tight rope, the ends of which were [in January, 1915] anchored in the desire of the British and French on one side, and the Germans on the other, to cultivate popularity in neutral countries. Our vigorous publicity in demanding justice for the Belgians who were between the millstones of a blockade and an army of occupation met with a limited amount of enthusiasm from both the British and German governments. Neither we nor the governments concerned were dumb in these matters [of public relations]."⁷⁴ Whatever diplomatic maneuvering notwithstanding, neither wished, if at all possible, to risk public condemnation over its perceived role in any debacle relating to feeding the Belgians. From the CRB's beginning, Hoover understood its success to hinge intimately on the mobilization of public opinion to such a degree that neither the Allies nor Germany could afford offending it. Gerard's strenuous and successful efforts to get correspondents and photographers into occupied Belgium indicated his appreciation of the point, as well.⁷⁵ By late 1915, when pressure for twentieth-century total war in England grew to overwhelm her nineteenth-century humanitarian sentiments, the CRB and its relief mission were firmly grounded. Its efforts were broadly and actively supported by American public opinion, and the political costs in hindering its operations had grown too great to be dismissed--particularly by the Allied governments, who remained especially dependent on American arms, money, and food.⁷⁶ In all this,

⁷² Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), 1: 399-400.

⁷³ Von Bernstorff, My Three Years, p. 33.

⁷⁴ Herbert Hoover, Memoirs, p. 161.

⁷⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-40, E.M. Patterson to Gerard, 23 November 1914.

⁷⁶ Nash, Life of Hoover, pp. 182 and 193-194.

Ambassador Gerard and his embassy played an important role as a key diplomatic patron, just as they found themselves mired in public relations considerations in their efforts on behalf of British POWs.

A series of correspondence between Gerard and Baron Newton of the British Foreign Office reveals the extent to which public relations had become an important factor in the new diplomacy. The embassy's reports of POW camp conditions in Germany played an important role in sustaining Anglo-American relations. Their work helped reassure the apprehensive English people that their soldiers were being well treated, even against frequent and exaggerated reports to the contrary.⁷⁷ Embassy reports were issued to the British Foreign Office and direct, personal correspondence kept up with its superior officials, like Sir Horace Rumbold, Lord Robert Cecil (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), and Baron Newton. Of his representations on behalf of British POWs, Gerard kept the Foreign Office and Newton (privately) informed, making confidential suggestions as to an appropriate response on issues as they arose.⁷⁸ In mid-January, 1916, an issue flared up in which the Germans began punishing British POWs for refusing to work in German munitions factories. Were the situation made public, Lord Grey's personal indignation would have paled next to inflamed popular wrath. With the potential hanging in the balance of public opinion easily driving the government to reluctantly retaliate in consequence, Gerard gained permission to use the possibility to bargain the German government into promptly ceasing the practice, releasing any POWs imprisoned over the issue, and giving assurances against such work or "other labor closely connected with the operations of war."⁷⁹ Thus, did prospects of fiery public sentiment directly motivate Gerard's intercession and thwart a diplomatic stumble.

That summer, the embassy again became the focus of a public relations-sensitive matter, this time concerning POW camp conditions. In May, leaks of Gerard's "very disquieting" reports to London of unacceptably meager camp rations at the largest civilian intern camp, Ruhleben, and elsewhere, had worked up public opinion by June until "there is [now] a widespread belief that our people [POWs and civilian detainees] are starving." Additionally, complaints over the lack of mail from Ruhleben had further

⁷⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-16, Edward Lowe to Gerard, 30 April 1915.

⁷⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 16 August 1916, makes this clear.

⁷⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 15-1, Lord Cecil to Gerard, 16 January 1916.

stirred up great suspicion that “s[omething] has gone wrong there.”⁸⁰ While recent reports from Lithgow Osborne of nothing out of the ordinary had allayed some fears, British officials predicted an unavoidable demand by the public for retaliation and great difficulty for the government in successfully opposing it. In late June, reports from Gerard became “very ominous” and brought to fever-pitch official apprehensions of a public outcry. A final Cabinet decision only delayed publication of the most recent report on Ruhleben, but the Foreign Office expected its eventual disclosure to “certainly arouse a storm when it does come out.” To help forestall plummeting public opinion, the British quickly urged Gerard to extract a German agreement, at least of the principle, to their recent proposal to exchange one-for-one all civilians detainees over the age of forty-five. A public announcement of such an understanding, Baron Newton explained, “would go some way towards easing the [public relations] situation.”⁸¹

The British greatly desired publication of the contents of embassy camp inspection reports, hoping it would allow the English public to better judge the sensitive POW situation against the frequent wild rumors. At the least, they wanted to publish Gerard’s despatches to air evidence of his active skirmishing on behalf of England’s POWs and thereby help assuage demands for recriminations. The State Department, however, continued to withhold permission from the exasperated British out of concern for appearing unneutral, despite mounting pressure to suborn full discretion to Gerard over which reports might be published.⁸² Pending its approval (which never came), Gerard’s exertions made no immediate gains, as the Germans continued to dawdle in responding to the British proposal and British public feeling grew ever more severe. Finally, the government felt compelled to make official threats of retaliation if the Germans did not improve the food rations at Ruhleben and by early July, the Cabinet was considering reprisals in earnest. Baron Newton reminded Gerard that England could easily reduce the rations of the 26,000 German civilians interned in Great Britain to the Ruhleben-level and could also intern the 12,000 other German males still permitted to remain at large. Despite Gerard’s representations on this and other

⁸⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 6 June 1916.

⁸¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 21 June 1916.

⁸² Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 28 June 1916 and 12 July 1916; and Folder 16-33, McCarthy to Gerard, 13 October 1916.

points, the Germans not only perplexingly dragged their feet on Ruhleben and the exchange proposition,⁸³ but some officials actually began obstructing the embassy's camp visitation rights. During the rest of the summer, as the British government held the public at bay, the ambassador persisted in working the issue in Berlin. He continued pressuring the Germans for agreement to the British proposal.⁸⁴ He moved to gain the removal of two particular Ruhleben camp officials implicated in the obstructions and to insist on right of access to Ruhleben and other camps.⁸⁵ The British government waited anxiously, but then in late July came the execution of a British prisoner named Fryatt, which "appeare[d] to be the limit" of English tolerance. While the Cabinet would ultimately decide, public opinion would almost certainly insist on some retaliatory measure.⁸⁶ Only with difficulty did it managed to contain popular enmity on the issue until near Christmas, when the Germans at last agreed to the exchange.⁸⁷

This episode in the interminable dispute over POW camp conditions and prisoner exchanges played out against a backdrop of public sentiment. A balance had to be struck between attempting to compel improvements in the camps, but not overly inciting the English people into making counterproductive demands. On the other hand, the threat of public wrath forcing the government's hand could serve as effective leverage. Either way, the sway of public opinion had to be heeded in this fresh era of mass communication and popular suffrage. Gerard and his embassy confronted this latest spin to American diplomacy in their international dealings on behalf of British POWs and civilian internees. In the midst of world conflict, public relations dawned as an essential consideration for effective diplomacy, a point the ambassador meanwhile was learning on a much more personal note.

In early 1916, even as Bolsheviks, proto-Nazis, and fascists were awakening into ultimately the most sophisticated, if not brutal, state propaganda regimes ever devised, the American ambassador to Berlin fell prey to a propaganda smear campaign. Conducted by the small membership of a shadowy front organization called the "League of Truth," the campaign attacked the United States, Wilson, and Gerard, in

⁸³ They retained serious reservations over certain conditions attached to the British proposal. Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 5 July 1916.

⁸⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 19 July 1916.

⁸⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 26 July 1916.

⁸⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 2 August 1916.

⁸⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-16, Baron Newton to Gerard, 27 September 1916; and Folder 18-33, undated Gerard notes, probably for a report to Wilson, Lansing, or House.

an all out effort to discredit America's neutral policies. The League's program opened innocuously enough in January, 1916, when it displayed in the most conspicuous place in Berlin (a prominent statue of Frederick the Great) a sizable wreath with the American flag bound in mourning. A large inscription read, "Wilson and his press do not represent America," but despite the embassy's official protests, for three months the wreath remained in place under winter skies.⁸⁸ The League followed this up with hoisting the American flag draped in black crepe and distributing copies of the U.S. Declaration of Independence ominously stamped with a Satanic black cross and blood-red hand.⁸⁹ Its short-lived, German-language newspaper, *Der Bindestrich* ("The Hyphen"), the English-language *Continental Times*, and various pamphlets and circulars issued in both languages soon began spreading various fabricated propaganda themes: Gerard had betrayed the German-supported, Irish rebel, Sir Roger Casement. Gerard's blatant anti-Germanism had so tainted America's neutral credibility, that U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau would soon replace him.⁹⁰ Gerard even headed the "*englischen Spionenneste*" allegedly infesting the Reich.⁹¹ Meanwhile, League members were writing and cabling protests to prominent American officials, like Senator O'Gorman.⁹² By summer, the League's smear campaign had helped hasten America's fall from being friendly neutrals to "the most hated people in Germany,"⁹³ and a vigorous response by Washington and the embassy grew imperative.

"Allowing them longer to poison the air without rebuke was taken as a sign of weakness here," charged Gerard. "No one who abuses his own country, its government or its chief," he resolved, "is entitled to protection from that country."⁹⁴ With this, Gerard's counteroffensive began. The embassy started actively taking up the passports of Americans who in any way slandered or defamed the ambassador, the President, or the United States; in at least one case, it brought pressure to bear by routing

⁸⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-17, Gerard to Lansing, undated.

⁸⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-13, Neumann-Hofer to Gerard, 20 June 1916 and undated.

⁹⁰ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-27, Polk to Gerard, 4 May 1916.

⁹¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 16-25, Gerard to Secretary of State (Lansing), dated 1916; Folder 17-13, affidavit by Frau Annie Neumann-Hofer, dated 14 June 1916; Folder 18-13, affidavits of George A. Taylor, dated 6 and 7 June 1916.

⁹² Gerard Papers, Folder 17-25, Phillips to Gerard, 10 May 1916.

⁹³ Mounting animus in Germany over the submarine issue and America's continued armaments sales to the Allies played prominent parts also in this decline of American stature.

⁹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-16, Gerard "Diary" (originally a letter intended for President Wilson), dated July, 1915.

personal mail through the embassy and holding it.⁹⁵ Gerard wrote editorials for German newspapers like the *National-Zeitung*, to fight the League's false accusations. He sent a statement of denial, as well, to the State Department for publication in America, thence Europe.⁹⁶ But such direct tactics proved insufficient to the task. The League's multi-pronged offensive could happen only with German officialdom's toleration--or, as Gerard came to understand, its connivance. The editor of the League's main organ, the daily *Continental Times*, at one point told Gerard he received considerable financial support from the German Foreign Office, which agreed to buy many thousands of copies of each issue. Gerard also knew the German Government had allowed the League use of their wireless, from which he concluded they had "probably managed to get this story to America." And at least one of the founders, Edwin Emerson, was in the pay of the Foreign Office, having received from Ambassador von Bernstorff at least one payment for fifteen hundred dollars soon after the League's establishment.⁹⁷ The ambassador, therefore, complained heatedly, but vainly, to von Jagow of Wilhelmstrasse-supported, League-inspired articles and editorials.⁹⁸ But as he knew the League served hidden masters, so he concluded the situation obliged less conventional countertactics.

Early on, Gerard successfully enlisted a spy inside the League to collect intelligence on not only the League, but also the entire local American colony in Berlin.⁹⁹ By early summer, his man produced a series of enlightening background and current-activity investigative reports on a variety of German and American individuals and organizations.¹⁰⁰ Gerard, meanwhile, retained a German attorney to examine pursuing legal action in the German court system against the League and its founders. Testimonial

⁹⁵ Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 206-207, Grew to Edward Bell, 6 July 1915.

⁹⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-25, Phillips to Gerard, 17 May 1916; and Gerard to Phillips, 7 June 1916.

⁹⁷ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-17, Gerard to Lansing, undated.

⁹⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 16-17, Gerard to von Jagow, 9 May 1916. Gerard derided Edwin Emerson's recent *Continental Times* article condemning the ambassador and puts forth that von Bernstorff paid Emerson \$1,500 in April, 1915, "for expenses." Folder 17-23, Gerard to O'Ryan, 31 July 1916.

⁹⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 18-13, Taylor to Winslow, 2 December 1916; and Folder 18-17, Winslow to Gerard, 2 October 1916.

¹⁰⁰ Including Herr Richards, the proprietor of a restaurant at which an alleged embassy staff scandal occurred; the German-American Trade League; the League of Truth, of course, and its principal American and German members; and a former League office secretary. Gerard Papers, Folder 18-13, series of correspondence and reports from Taylor to Gerard, dated through summer, 1916.

affidavits from former and current office secretaries,¹⁰¹ and important League associates ultimately provided insufficient evidence for a case,¹⁰² but the effort had put the League under uncomfortable scrutiny. Eventually, Gerard coopted several of the League, including hiring an ex-secretary to help begin a counter “League of Friendship” and a newspaper to help combat the League of Truth’s propaganda. And, finally, in a classic foreshadowing of later, totalitarian method, the ambassador even sketched the plot of a propagandistic play, as he prepared to escalate the fight in this new age of “total diplomacy.”¹⁰³ While Gerard effectively neutralized the League by early fall, 1916, by then its job was done. Despite his efforts to improve them, Gerard’s poor official and public reputations suffered until the break in relations that winter.¹⁰⁴ His experience with modern propaganda and public affairs reflected yet another encounter between a nineteenth-century diplomat and twentieth-century diplomacy’s changed character. Even so, Gerard had shown impressive resourcefulness in tackling the League’s assault, and, in doing so, he illustrated the renewed importance of an old, though neglected, facet of modern American diplomacy. To really know one’s enemy, timely, accurate knowledge was key.

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Gerard’s efforts to gather information on the League of Truth reflected yet another now-urgent task for American diplomats: intelligence collection. Allowed to wither in the nation’s decades of isolation, so ancient an undertaking abruptly assumed grave, modern relevance. To play the new public relations game, to gauge domestic sentiments, to discern official in-fighting, to measure war efforts and

¹⁰¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-13, affidavit by Frau Annie Neumann-Hofer, dated 14 June 1916; Folder 18-12, affidavits by Taylor and Miss Gaese, dated 8 June 1916.

¹⁰² The associate revealed deeper connections with German officialdom, in that one ringleader claimed he had obtained his contact list of Americans from the President of the German Police in Berlin; that he had Under Secretary of State Zimmermann “*in der Hand*,” and that the Foreign Office facilitated the League’s mail postings to America. Gerard Papers, Folder 17-40, two affidavits by Wilhelm Redl, dated 4 and 5 June 1916.

¹⁰³ Gerard Papers, Folder 17-13, Neumann-Hofer to Gerard, 20 June 1916 and undated. The latter also offered further evidence of official German connivance in the League of Truth.

¹⁰⁴ In the meantime, his terrible sensitivity to appearing pro- or anti-German had grown so aggravated, that in his search for a new personal secretary in America, he eventually nixed the top choice, Miss Lillian Schoedler, on account of her surname. Gerard Papers, Folder 18-5, Sheridan to Gerard, 25 October 1916; and Folder 18-12, Schoedler to Gerard, 31 October and 10 November 1916.

war aims, to formulate diplomatic initiatives and help time them--these critical undertakings of wartime and twentieth-century diplomacy required regular, accurate, and timely information on which to base decisions. America's lazy, pre-war efforts had left the country's decision-makers in the dark in the summer of 1914, with Wilson and the State Department clamoring for information as a dangerous, new century dawned. Intelligence collection suddenly became an imperative component of American diplomatic work, as the experience of the country's Berlin legation showed.

The Gerard embassy seemingly exhausted every avenue in its attempts to keep its finger on Germany's pulse. In pursuing its difficult wartime policy of neutrality, Washington could know of internal conditions only through four primary sources: infrequent presidential emissaries like Colonel House; occasional travelers, such as businessmen, diplomats, and seamen; biased, Ally-censored news reportage and, later, a trickle from equally biased, German-censored sources; and, finally, through front-line diplomatic listening posts, with London, Berne, and Berlin standing highest in importance--the last, perhaps most. In theory, then, Gerard embassy reports of internal politics, state matters, and popular mood would figure prominently in American executive decision-making; at the least the State Department desired to be kept informed.

The embassy availed itself of the more obvious sources of information, of course. Normal contacts with the rest of Berlin's diplomatic corps and German officials in the Foreign Office and the military were routinely consulted. Gherardi, the embassy's naval attaché, proved particularly valuable, according to historian Waldo Heinrichs, as his "sources of information at the Admiralty provided a surer gauge of the pressure there for unrestricted submarine war,"¹⁰⁵ the critical issue between America and Germany throughout the neutrality period. Visits by embassy military attachés to the various fronts provided at least some perspective regarding the German military situation, troop dispositions, and morale.¹⁰⁶ Other staff members regularly toured the empire on official business and soon began combing domestic news sources

¹⁰⁵ Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-8, Kuhn to Gerard, 2 May 1915 and 17 July 1915. In the summer of 1915, for instance, Military Attaché Major Joseph E. Kuhn toured the Eastern Front headquarters and various Western Front sectors during a major French-British offensive that began in early May. He assessed them at one point as "so well in hand that it does not appear possible for them to be dislodged." Routed to Gerard, Kuhn's observations certainly found their way into Gerard's assessments and on to Washington, possibly informing the timing of American diplomatic and peace initiatives.

in their efforts to follow internal developments.¹⁰⁷ American consular agents also frequently directed news and potentially valuable contacts to the embassy.¹⁰⁸ Gerard himself was “well in a position to keep the Department intelligently informed as to the general situation, the character and influence of officials, etc.,” according to Grew. “He often talks with the higher officials at the Foreign Office, meets and keeps in touch with other influential persons, discusses affairs with bankers, politicians and officials and, in general, keeps his hand on the pulse of governmental and public opinion. He continually has prominent persons at his table and he spends the entire morning and part of the afternoon receiving visitors, which should keep him well in touch with affairs which I presume he reports upon fully.”¹⁰⁹ The ambassador took routine advantage of social contacts with German and American prominents and businessmen in Germany, as when he attended a Thanksgiving dinner in his honor. Hosted by Consul-General Robert F. Skinner and

¹⁰⁷ Prior to the war, the State Department stuck to its traditional policy of non-entanglement in Europe and did not encourage comprehensive political reporting by its diplomats; consequently, reporting the press was a chore which Grew felt he might neglect when pressed for time. Heinrichs, *American Ambassador*, p. 21. Very early on, Gerard received an offer for the services of Klose & Seidel Newspaper Extracts Bureau, which specialized in providing abstracts and extracts from a large number of German newspapers. Gerard Papers, Folder 6-6, Klose & Seidel to Gerard, 6 October 1913. Gerard declined, but it is uncertain whether he reconsidered a year later.

¹⁰⁸ For example, probably connected to the League of Truth’s defamation campaign in the spring, 1916, Consular Agent J. Buck reported to Gerard a curious encounter onboard an Atlantic steamer with two American men. They had insinuated that a press campaign would soon open up in America to effect Gerard’s nonretention as ambassador. Buck reported the event to the director of the Consular Service, Wilbur Carr, but finally reported to Gerard when he noted a recent “public press attack” against Gerard in the German press. Gerard Papers, Folder 14-43, Buck to Gerard, undated but early 1916. In May, 1916, American Consul in Basel Philip Holland sent Gerard a recent edition of the *Basler Anzeiger*, a “Germanophile paper...recognized here as the official German organ for propaganda,” which recently ran an attack on Gerard. Gerard Papers, Folder 16-14, Holland to Gerard, 1 May 1916. In late December, 1914, for example, T. St. John Gaffney, American Consul General in Munich, sent a letter of introduction to Berlin with a Mr. Noeggerath, who “has recently made a trip through Belgium and I think you would be very much interested in his report as to conditions there.”¹⁰⁸ The next June, he sent another introduction with Westpoint-graduate Mr. Henry J. Reilly, now of *The Chicago Tribune*, who “has been at the front in France and will undoubtedly have some interesting information to give you.” Gerard Papers, Folder 12-24, St. John Gaffney to Gerard, 7 June 1915.

¹⁰⁹ Grew’s professional mind detected a potentially difficult flaw, however. Gerard adopted the method of “reporting what he gathers and what he himself thinks, in private and confidential personal letters written weekly to Mr. Lansing and Colonel House, the latter for eventual perusal by the President. Copies of these letters are not kept on file in the Embassy and he does not show them to or discuss them with any of us, nor does he invite advice or suggestions in preparing them...The only difficulty is that I and the other members of the staff do not know just what ground has been covered by the Ambassador...[and this practice...could affect the Embassy unfavorably...in case he should at any time go away [or otherwise become incapacitated] and leave a secretary in charge, in which event the secretary would not have had the benefit of the information which the Ambassador had acquired through the advantages of his position and would enter upon his chargseship under a handicap,” as happened that fall. Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 218-219, Grew to Phillips, 22 February 1916.

the American Club in Hamburg, Gerard had a prime “opportunity to meet a considerable number of [America’s] most active businessmen [in Germany].”¹¹⁰ Visiting important persons, for whom the embassy often arranged meetings with German officials, provided further insights. Herbert Hoover, Colonel House, and others discussed with Gerard their conferences.

Gerard also exploited other sources of information to an unusual degree. From the start, he maintained very close contact with the American corps of foreign correspondents in Berlin. During the important months leading up to the war, Frederic William Wile, who represented the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, and the London Daily Mail, provided important intelligence to Gerard on a variety of matters. Gleaned through his contacts, Wile gave inside information of sentiments and incidents in the German Foreign Office,¹¹¹ and was careful to draw Gerard’s attention to developments and mood in the German press.¹¹² He often alerted Gerard to the transient presence in Berlin of prominent individuals worthy of contact, about whom Wile would politely tip-off, “lest you may not already have gotten it through your own Intelligence Department.”¹¹³ Franz Hugo Krebs, the McClure Newspaper Syndicate’s exclusive interviewer and special features writer in Berlin, was a wellspring of information from audiences with Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, the influential Count Talleyrand, and other important German officials.¹¹⁴ United Press correspondent Carl W. Ackerman also retained close connections with Gerard, with whom he apparently informally discussed the war and Germany and otherwise served as one more

¹¹⁰ Skinner went on to note, “The American Club in Hamburg is composed exclusively of American citizens at the head of large undertakings, and I am inclined to think that it would be useful to you, hereafter, to come into touch with them, and also to meet the gentlemen prominent in [German] public and business life...” Gerard Papers, Folder 7-5, Skinner to Gerard, 7 October 1913; Winslow to Skinner, undated.

¹¹¹ For example, the “Dewey incident,” in Gerard Papers, Folder 11-16, Wile to Gerard, 20 February 1914.

¹¹² For example, in July, 1914, Wile wrote how “the German Press is at the moment devoting unusually much space to roasting our diplomatic service,” with amateur Minister in Rumania, Bulgaria, and Serbia, Charles J. Vopicka, cited with others “as horrible examples.” Wile referred to specific papers’ editions worthy of Gerard’s review, humbly suggesting, “with your usual vigilance, to let the [State] Department know about these things.” Gerard Papers, Folder 11-16, Wile to Gerard, 10 July 1914.

¹¹³ In June, 1914, for example, came the editor of The New York Times; and in the month before the war, Wile alerted Gerard of the arrival of the noted observer and writer on German naval affairs, von Lengerke Meyer, whom Wile was “trying to coax” into talking on his “views about the necessity of a definite naval programme on [current] German lines”--ironically, a key contributing factor in the coming conflagration. Wile left soon after the war’s outbreak. Gerard Papers, Folder 11-16, Wile to Gerard, 9 June and 6 July 1914.

¹¹⁴ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-7, Krebs to Gerard, series of requests for audience with Gerard, variously dated spring, 1915.

knowledgeable sounding board for the ambassador.¹¹⁵ Very likely, Gerard did what he possibly could for New York World correspondent, Herbert B. Swope, who sought the ambassador's assistance in the matter of attending a German Foreign Office-arranged visit for foreign journalists to the Western Front.¹¹⁶

Certainly as mindful of their public relations value as of their information flow, Gerard's careful cultivation of the American press soon established him as one of only two diplomats abroad, "who have won the approval of the newspaper fraternity."¹¹⁷

His esteem extended to the native press, as well. Influential German newspapermen, like Paul R. Krause, of the Berliner Lokal Anzeiger, helped Gerard with important connections and provided detailed, native observations of current sentiments among both the populace and high-level government officials. His expositions found Gerard's ear on future peace and the roles of Gerard and Wilson in facilitating friendly relations until the right "psychological time" came.¹¹⁸ In May, 1916, Max W. Karstensen, special correspondent for the "highly influential" Münchener Zeitung, approached Gerard as an intermediary from the highest political interests of the royal inner circle in independent-minded Bavaria. Assiduously cultivating good ties with Gerard, Karstensen eventually introduced him to the wealthiest and most politically influential men in South Germany, including possibly the King of Bavaria. Karstensen even actively countered "the circulation of reports which are detrimental both to your and our own intentions," and otherwise advised Gerard in his contacts in the southern kingdom.¹¹⁹

Closer to home, more unusual avenues brought intelligence to Wilhelmsplatz 7. Gerard evidently promoted contact with Herr Louis Adlon, owner of Berlin's grand Hotel Adlon, a nest of intrigue frequented by prominent German officials, military men, diplomats, newspapermen, and expatriates.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵ Gerard Papers, Folder 14-24, Ackerman to Gerard, 5 October 1916.

¹¹⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 11-2, Swope to Gerard telegram, 3 October 1914.

¹¹⁷ In mid-June, 1914, close friend, prominent New York City attorney, and newspaper contributor, John C. Hammond, also noted to Gerard with satisfaction of "how popular you ha[ve] become with the newspapermen [in Germany]." Gerard Papers, Folder 9-8, Hammond to Gerard, 18 June 1914.

¹¹⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 13-9, Krause to Gerard, 8 April and 20 June 1915.

¹¹⁹ Gerard Papers, Folder 16-23, Karstensen to Gerard, 14 May and 8 July 1916.

¹²⁰ Gerard's eyes and ears, Adlon politely advised the ambassador in October, 1914, of recent information concerning German staff personnel assignments. Adlon had spoken with Oberleutnant Trutzschler von Falkenstein, "who informed me that he will keep his position as Adjutant to His Excellency General von Boehn, the [n]ew *Kommandant* of Berlin." Gerard's unlikely informant concluded his short note, "Assuring Your Excellency that I shall always take great pleasure of being of service to you..." Gerard Papers, Folder 7-36, Adlon to Gerard, 13 October 1914.

The ambassador often received anonymous information, which he considered “usually quite correct in [its] ‘dope’,” although it is difficult to say what level of confidence he otherwise assigned to it.¹²¹ In mid-summer, 1915, another odd source of intelligence emerged from the war’s chaos, when an “extraordinarily interesting ‘find’ “ made its way through the embassy’s front doors. A sixteen-year-old sailor from Seattle, Washington, sought assistance in returning home after a German submarine had sunk his ship and taken him aboard. There he spent the next eleven days as she plied the waters until exhausting her ammunition, and key among considerable and enlightening information was his confirmation that not once did the commander sink a vessel without prior warning--a major point of dispute in America’s on-going tensions over Germany’s submarine warfare.¹²² A dubious episode late the same year illustrated the means to which Gerard conceivably reached in his hunt for information. That month from Germany, New York National Guard Captain Edwin Emerson dramatically resigned his commission in protest, charging “that Ambassador Gerard committed the gross impropriety of asking me to violate my pledges of honor toward the German General Staff by furnishing secret information of my possible observations at the German front to him in the form of apparently harmless field postal cards, which were to be written by me in a text containing a cypher of Mr. Gerard’s own devising.”¹²³ In so many ways did Gerard’s embassy attempt to ferret out useful information to report back to Washington. But, in the midst of shifting diplomatic and technologic paradigms, different challenges faced both ends of the line. A new State Department was taking shape and, along with it, new work relations with its posts in the field.

¹²¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 3 August 1915.

¹²² Evidently believing him to be German, the crew released him once back in port. Commander Gherardi, the embassy’s naval attaché, “found him intelligent from a technical point of view and we learned more about the interior and working of a German submarine than has probably ever before been learned by any Naval Attaché or other foreigner.” Grew, *Turbulent Era*, 1: 209-210, Grew diary, 30 July 1915.

¹²³ Emerson’s regular occupation was a news syndicate representative on assignment to Berlin. In early 1915 he became a co-founder of the League of Truth. Referring to an attached letter of complaint to Secretary of State Lansing, Emerson, in his military capacity, evidently had somehow contrived to attend a visit to the frontlines as an official observer. “Of course I refused indignantly...I was all the more astounded at such a breach of propriety from Ambassador Gerard considering Gerard was himself a past National Guard officer.” The matter fell on deaf ears, while Emerson and the League of Truth would soon give Gerard major headaches. Gerard Papers, Folder 12-18, Emerson to O’Ryan, 22 December 1915.

NEW RELATIONS WITH A NEW STATE DEPARTMENT

As the telegraph and telephone removed generals from the front ranks to control and follow their armies from distant headquarters,¹²⁴ so too did their technology, at least potentially, make possible an unprecedented coherence of action and policy between the State Department and its distant corps of representatives. Especially in the face of a bare decade's worth of grudging reform being buffeted in the stormy seas of total diplomacy, two questions are begged. Caught together in a shift of diplomatic and technologic paradigms and meanwhile transitioning towards diplomatic professionalism, what was the wartime status of the essential relationship between Washington and her embassies abroad? And how well did the State Department and the embassies weather the new century's novel demands? As the Gerard embassy reflected the diplomatic paradigm shift in its personnel, the procurement of its housing, and its work, so too did it reflect the concurrent technology-driven shift in frame of reference with regard to policy formulation.

Ironically, in the late nineteenth-century, American opponents of permanent diplomacy argued the very advances in communication and technology provided adequate substitutes. The Atlantic Cable in 1866 allegedly "allowed a minister of foreign affairs, with the telegraphic wire under his hand, [to] treat with the same functionary of another state almost as if the two sat on each side of a table."¹²⁵ Transoceanic cables, improvements in steamship propulsion, "and other elements of progress," according to another observer, "have rendered ministers abroad trifling, expensive, and useless for every purpose of national comity, interest, and glory."¹²⁶ While certainly exaggerated, the statements still contained considerable truth.

As early as 1861, diplomats were appreciating the impact of rapid telegraphic communication with their Foreign Office-based superiors. Most disturbing seemed the decrease in the heretofore isolated

¹²⁴ Stephen Kern, The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 317.

¹²⁵ Albert Rhodes, "Our Diplomats and Consuls," *Scribners*, XIII (December, 1876), p. 175, quoted in Warren Frederick Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy in the United States, 1779-1939: A Study in Administrative History (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 20.

¹²⁶ Samuel S. Cox, The Folly and Cost of Diplomacy (Washington, 1874), p. 6, quoted in Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy, pp. 20-21.

diplomat's traditional autonomy and powers of discretion. That year, British envoy Sir Arthur Buchanan observed, that "it reduces, to a great degree, the responsibility of the minister, for he can now ask for instructions instead of doing a thing on his own responsibility."¹²⁷ The point's truth had become only more manifest by the time of Horace Rumbold's assertion at the turn of the century. But also as evident, it obtained only if the superiors were fluent in foreign affairs and adroit in coordinating them from afar-- conditions largely absent at the other end of Gerard's telegraph line. As a politically appointed amateur, James Watson Gerard has been condemned by some as an ineffective diplomat, failing to report developments accurately or fully.¹²⁸ While deserving without question some of the criticism, Gerard's hurdles were unusually high. Preeminent among them were the communications restrictions inside Germany and the overwhelmed State Department and policy-makers inside Washington. The embassy's performance must be considered in perspective under the light of a department and White House themselves adapting to the changing diplomatic paradigm and then frantically adjusting to the pace-setting demands of world conflict. Despite the advances in the embassy's communications and the expected improvement in overall foreign policy formulation, execution, and coordination, improvements in the relationship between the field and Washington did not so easily follow the shifting paradigm.

While the State Department posed its own encumbrances to the country's foreign policy process, a critical obstacle to its effectiveness was the policy formulation "team." Through Gerard's time, it must be remembered, American foreign policy was formulated exclusively in Washington, not in the field. Wilson was the first president to exercise fully the power of executive leadership and control over American diplomacy. Ideally, the President and Secretary of State together determined the country's course after thorough counsel by other Cabinet members and experts in the State Department. In reality Wilson remained the primary architect with inputs by Bryan, and more frequently by his replacement, Lansing.

¹²⁷ From "Report from the Select Committee on the Diplomatic Service," 1861, cited in D.P. Heatley, Diplomacy and the Study of International Relations (Oxford, 1919), p. 252, quoted in Kern, Culture of Time, p. 274.

¹²⁸ For comprehensive reviews and assessments of Gerard's performance, see John Lawrence Herberich's "James Watson Gerard: The Forgotten Ambassador" (Master's thesis, Department of History, San Jose State University, 1976); Theodore R. Berthold's "Assignment to Berlin: The Embassy of James Watson Gerard, 1913-1917" (Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1981); and Martin V. Melosi's "American Amateur Diplomats during the Administrations of Woodrow Wilson: An Evaluation" (Master's thesis, Department of History, University of Montana, 1971).

Wilson held small regard for State Department bureaucrats and diplomats, even those he appointed. His many amateur appointees received essentially no instruction prior to leaving for their posts and their reports received nearly as little attention from Wilson. Rare exceptions were made when they amused him, as with Walter Hines Page's witty correspondence, or they supported his position. He considered the diplomats and almost all members of the State Department as unimportant in the formulation of American foreign policy, viewing in true nineteenth-century fashion the department and the diplomatic service as peopled with mediocrity at best. Until the war, when he began to appreciate the diplomatic service's import (at least as an information source), Wilson persisted in his earlier voiced opinion of 1905, that for diplomats, "There is little of serious importance to do; the activities are those of society rather than those of business; the unimportant things are always at the front; there is no provocation to study; impulses are cooled and principles are exposed to rust."¹²⁹

Matters received scant help from the other half of the policy-formulation mechanism, Wilson's Secretary of State Bryan. On the job, the typically disorganized Bryan's ignorance proved uninspiring, if not downright frightening. The Secretary received frequent briefings on foreign affairs of state from several high-level consular and diplomatic officials. Wilbur Carr related the predominant perception that Bryan "seemed hardly to follow a definite line of thought," in strong contrast with his predecessors Knox and Root. State Counselor John Bassett Moore lamented Bryan's "apparent inability when present to give consecutive thought or really intelligent consideration to anything brought before him. He never seemed to have a reasoned judgment on anything or any real appreciation of what he was doing."¹³⁰ In early 1914, a close friend complained to Gerard of the President's decision-making in a vacuum, calling it one of "Wilson's great defects," and condemned Bryan's non-contribution:

[Wilson's] confidence is absolute, but he gets practically no advice. So far as I can learn the only man in the Cabinet who speaks up at all is Garrison. Poor old Doc [Secretary of State] Bryan has been eating out of Wilson's hand so long that he can't feed himself. I appreciate [Bryan's previous service to Wilson on domestic issues], but now of what possible use can he be--a man who hasn't thought a thought probably for 25 years? He is a feeler, not a thinker, with a moral formula to apply to every situation...¹³¹

¹²⁹ Arthur S. Link, *Wilson*, 6 vols. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947-65. Vol. 1: *The Road to the White House*, p. 214.

¹³⁰ Rachel West, *The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 33.

¹³¹ Gerard Papers, Folder 8-5, Burlingham to Gerard, 28 April 1914.

With Bryan's unfeeling return to spoilsmanship, he already had shown his higher regard for politics than for the practical organizational health of his new department. Along with the major shake-up in the field, back in Washington he also turned out large numbers of personnel running the State Department itself and replaced them with men with little knowledge or experience, but much in the way of partisan support to the Democratic Party. Morale among the remaining employees and diplomats languished near the bottom as a result. Bryan also displayed little to no facility in wielding the organization as a unified whole in accomplishing the nation's objectives abroad, especially after August, 1914. The State Department's mechanism for policy formulation (or, at least, advisement) and execution had begun falling into place over the past ten years, but Bryan remained oblivious to its potential.

The diplomats in the field became soon aware of the disorganization reigning in Washington. Within the State Department the order of dissemination of dispatches and information from representatives abroad changed frequently depending upon the personnel. Consequently, it was not unusual for cables and correspondence to fall anonymously into a file cabinet or hide indefinitely at the bottom of an in-basket.¹³² Often, no reply came back to routine queries, and sometimes weeks passed before any answer returned on important matters of policy. American diplomats naturally followed the department's lead and soon shied of communicating with Washington on matters of not much more import than visas and commercial listings. They refrained from anything more ambitious for fear of reports getting pigeon-holed, as Grew experienced in Vienna just prior to his reassignment to Berlin. In a series of despatches from Vienna throughout the summer of 1911, Grew kept the Department informed on Austria's food riots and tough economic conditions. Later, Grew returned to Washington on leave and decided to call on the Chief of the new Near Eastern Division (under which Austria-Hungary fell) to receive his expected accolades for his fine reportage. To his dismay, however, he found the Chief with feet on a clean desk and the baseball news in hand. He had not read or even seen Grew's reports--suggesting they probably were in the files. Grew recalled later, "That was another shattered dream for me!" Eventually, the President himself came to understand Bryan and the State Department as a collective weak link, leading to his circumvention of the

¹³² West, State on the Eve, p. 107.

secretary through use of executive agents, like Colonel House. This in turn adversely affected relations between the State Department and other foreign offices, exacerbated the field's estrangement from the Department, and contributed to the further demoralization of department staff relegated to bystander status.¹³³

As a result, in the hands of an antipathetic Wilson and an unenlightened Bryan, the formulation of policy and its transmission and execution in the field once war began tended to leave diplomats like Gerard in the dark. This persisted even after Lansing replaced Bryan as Secretary of State in June, 1915, when the latter resigned over moral objections to Wilson's tone with the Germans during the Lusitania crisis. "The underlying problem [for the Wilson Administration after war's outbreak]," as one student accurately observed, "was the difficulty of formulating 20th century policies with 19th century guidelines."

Patronized, often ignored, typically not privy to high-level decision-making, and usually lacking instructions from State, Gerard often "could only react to each new crisis on the basis of previous official responses."¹³⁴ For the duration of his embassy, Gerard labored under a State Department still ignorant of keeping the field adequately informed.

Such poor relations posed little trouble for most the lesser embassies and legations, whose nineteenth-century diplomatic ways and means only belatedly entered the crucible of twentieth-century pressures. But serious conflicts with the Administration arose for those primary embassies on the front line, exposed directly to the tumultuous birth of the new century and its new diplomacy. Ambassador to revolutionary Mexico Henry Lane Wilson, and Walter Hines Page, ambassador to a principal ally (Great Britain), clashed hardest with the Administration, as did the American ambassadors to two other key belligerents, Ambassador to Russia, Paul Reinsch, and Gerard. In each of their cases, the Wilson Administration reacted differently, though never deviating from an ultimate disregard for the envoy. Wilson was outright dismissed, Page ignored, Reinsch pacified, and Gerard, finally, neglected, particularly as regarded keeping him informed on policy and diplomatic developments elsewhere.¹³⁵ In April, 1916, Gerard made opportunity to "respectfully point out to the Department that my work here is greatly

¹³³ Ibid., pp. 3; 95, n. 5; and 34-35.

¹³⁴ Herberich, "Forgotten Ambassador," pp. 51 and 74.

¹³⁵ Melosi, "American Amateur Diplomats," p. 187.

handicapped by my lack of information and knowledge of the Administration's views and intentions. Ambassadors are expected to be thoroughly *au courant* of the situation at home. My information depends entirely on the censored despatches in the press and I am thus frequently placed in embarrassing situations in conversation with officials and influential persons in Germany," he wired. "Respectfully suggest that this could be obviated by the Department's cabling me and other Ambassadors a daily resume of the trend of official and public opinion at home regarding important pending questions such as Mexico and the Submarine [sic] issue marking as strictly confidential such communications as are for our personal information only."¹³⁶ But, unsurprisingly, Gerard's entreaties were disregarded.

Even in the midst of crisis, Gerard and his embassy were "insufficiently informed of [Wilson's] intentions and plans during decisive periods."¹³⁷ For example, in the midst of the Sussex crisis in May, 1916, Gerard complained to Colonel House, "I wish the State Department would keep me better informed." "He had received information that Washington had made demands for the release by England of Americans arrested from a ship called the China. Gerard strongly felt knowledge of the matter would have "been of great assistance" to him as leverage during his climactic late-April *démarche* at the Kaiser's Western Front Headquarters. "When I am getting 'Sussex' admissions and changes in submarine war and keeping the peace, and cannot get even a pat on the head...I might at least be kept up to date on information vitally affecting my work. This is a very small kick [back]." Adding further salt to the wound, Wilson's answer to the German note on the Sussex sinking had just arrived at the embassy--simultaneous with its publication in German newspapers that morning.¹³⁸

Evidence elsewhere of the State Department's ill-coordination revealed the problem's systemic nature. Across the Channel at America's other principal outpost, Walter Hines Page experienced similar neglect. At an early 1915 luncheon held by British Field Marshal Sir John French, the host brought up the matter of a recent, fourth peace proposal transmitted from the Kaiser to Great Britain via President Wilson, about which Page had no clue. "Alas!" he complained afterward, "the fact that I know nothing about the

¹³⁶ United States National Archives, Record Group 59, Decimal File 1910-1929, File 123G31, Gerard cable to Lansing, No. 3774, 19 April 1916.

¹³⁷ Karl E. Birnbaum, Peace Moves and U-boat Warfare: A Study of Germany's Policy Towards the United States, April 18, 1916-January 9, 1917 (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1958), pp. 338-339

¹³⁸ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-46, Gerard to House, 10 May 1916.

offer has no meaning; for the State Department never informs me of anything it takes up with the British Ambassador in Washington.”¹³⁹ Likewise, Gerard was unduly hampered in his diplomatic efforts by the department’s failure to properly harmonize American policies regarding Germany. “The pity of it,” said Second Secretary Wilson later, “was he was not always properly supported by the State Department so that the full results of his vigorous activity could not make themselves felt. Again and again the force of his presentation of America’s case was mitigated by soothing words from the Department, duly reported to Berlin by Ambassador Bernstorff.”¹⁴⁰

While greater coordination was now possible with the modern communications technology at its disposal, the State Department failed to fully exploit the potential. Much of the reason rested with Old Diplomacy residues, which portrayed the foreign service as “a subject for humorous contempt” and retarded State Department initiative. While the technology was there, the institution had not yet caught up with the shift in diplomatic paradigm. The new diplomacy increasingly demanded efficient formulation and execution of effective foreign policy. The State Department had only just begun to recognize the importance of two prerequisites: Timely, reliable intelligence reporting to inform the policy-makers, and sound coordination of the details of established policy with the field diplomats levied with its representation. The continued absorption of telegraphic and other technology since 1900; the attempt to keep the field better and more comprehensively informed through use of regular, circular briefs beginning around 1908; and the initiation and expansion of the geographical division concept from 1909 onward, all served to improve communications between Washington and its representatives abroad. Such reforms were largely experimental, however, and still in their infancy by 1914. They had insufficient time to mature before the war, in overtaxing them like everything else, revealed their importance to a concerted diplomatic strategy. Furthermore, the great pressures and huge volume of work during the war distracted the overworked department from its crucial coordination role and forced American diplomacy into a game of institutional catch-up. Wilson’s personalized approach to international affairs and his preference to keep

¹³⁹ Burton J. Hendrick, The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1923), 1: 425 and 429. A few days later on 18 January 1915, Colonel House wrote Page, explaining he and Wilson had no safe way to inform Page of the proposal.

¹⁴⁰ Hugh R. Wilson, The Education of a Diplomat (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), p. 171.

the reins fully in his own hands, if through use of presidential emissaries, posed one possible, though ultimately inadequate, solution in by-passing what amounted to an anachronistic logjam.

The wartime face of neutrality during the Gerard embassy in Berlin provided a dramatic presage of the new diplomacy. The new century's complex diplomatic problems, accelerated tempo, and increased work volume challenged the Gerard embassy and American diplomacy beyond anything previously encountered. Massive food relief operations became necessary as total war afflicted entire civilian populations. Neutral protection of belligerent nationals and prisoners of war, and deportations in occupied northern France and Belgium injected further urgency to a diplomatic role in international issues of basic human rights. Maturing political democracies in Western and Central Europe and, especially, the United States, combined with new, mass communications technology to once and for all unleash the formidable political force of Gerard's *bête noir*, public relations. The embassy's work in these novel dimensions of modern diplomacy paralleled the shift from the old diplomacy to the new and, simultaneously, underscored the practical advantages and, indeed, essentiality of maintaining a professional diplomatic service. Irreversibly established by the war in its international involvement, America discovered that the vagaries of total diplomacy required expert ability.

THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN SERVICE

Negotiation of peace treaties, war debt, the rise of Fascism, Bolshevism, Japanese nationalism, the League of Nations--all these issues and more on the horizon stood in dire need of professional diplomatic treatment in the post-war era. With the exorbitant diplomatic demands of the early modern century--a trend the war made emphatic--embassies like Gerard's could no longer meet their responsibilities competently without improved housing, manning, training, experience, and professionalism. The years 1914-1918 had "a lasting effect on the organization of the diplomatic service and the outlook of its members," due in part to the heavy diplomatic activity during the period of American neutrality.¹⁴¹ Aside from the Stone-Flood

¹⁴¹ Kenneth W. Thompson, American Diplomacy and Emergent Patterns (New York University Press, 1962), pp. 81-82.

Act of 1915, further moves towards professionalism were delayed by preoccupation with the war. But with the conflict's conclusion, efficiency in the American diplomatic (and consular) service--in coordination, unity of purpose, organizational cohesion, elimination of waste--reassumed top priority. The heightened level of work levied on the department during the war had set par for the new century born out of the conflict and lessened in no appreciable degree after the armistice in 1918. From the conflict, the United States emerged as unquestionably the greatest power of all with her strength enhanced enormously, or at least its long-existing reality made ostensible. America had become inextricably mired in world affairs and, as Wilbur Carr observed the year after the war's conclusion, "It does not remain for the United States to choose whether it shall enter into world affairs. It already has an important part assigned to it, and the only question that now remains is how efficiently or inefficiently that part shall be performed."¹⁴²

Representative John Jacob Rogers' legislation largely answered that question.

In drafting what would become the Rogers Act of 1924, the Congressman understood what Carr and most other observers saw as well. The diplomatic and consular services required thorough reform if they were to adequately serve as America's first line of defense in a considerably more unpredictable and perilous world:

The machinery of government now provided for dealing with our foreign relations is in need of complete repair and reorganization. As adequate as it may have been when the old order prevailed and the affairs of the world were free from the present perplexities, it has ceased to be responsive to present needs...Necessity is forcing new nations and even older ones to incur obligations and form political affiliations having a decisive if not a supreme bearing on the course of future events. International movements of such import can only be correctly judged through an accurate knowledge of causes and influences and a complete understanding of the methods and motives involved. American agents in the foreign field must broaden the scope and intensify the nature of their work in order that the Department of State may have at its disposal knowledge of the actual facts of every development or turn of events. Any degree of conjecture is fraught with the gravest danger...¹⁴³

As the most ambitious reform legislation ever in the history of the American diplomatic and consular services, the Rogers Act of 1924 drove major organizational changes. The act unified the two

¹⁴² Quote from a Carr report supporting the principle of "consolidation" of the services, 4 December 1919, Carr Papers, quoted in Jerry Israel, "A Diplomatic Machine: Scientific Management in the Department of State, 1906-1924," in Building the Organizational Society: Essays on Associational Activities in Modern America, ed. Jerry Israel (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 190.

¹⁴³ Stuart, American Practice, p. 185.

previously separate services into one Foreign Service on an interchangeable basis. An officer now might transfer between the two service tracks, allowing much greater flexibility and suitability in assignments. All Foreign Service officers were placed into one of nine merit-based grades, with all new officers entering the lowest class after passing the formal examination. The Executive Committee of the Foreign Service Personnel Board appeared to screen and examine applicants for the service and to recommend promotions within the service through a more formalized process. A new Foreign Service School provided more elaborate and sufficient instruction to new appointees. Whereas formerly the salary scale for diplomatic secretaries ranged between \$2,500 and \$4,000, now Foreign Service officers earned from \$3,000 (Class IX) to \$9,000 (Class I)--sufficient, for the first time, for a diplomatic secretary to live respectably without private, supplemental income. Provision also was made for the promotion to the rank of minister any Foreign Service officer recommended to the President as exhibiting special ability. The new law offered officers so promoted all the benefits of retirement and disability, which it otherwise now provided for the lesser, classified ranks with a new Foreign Service Retirement and Disability Fund. And, among numerous lesser reforms, the act established for the first time in the diplomatic service a formal inspection system for examining posts abroad for efficiency, like the consular service had enjoyed since the early years of the century.¹⁴⁴ At last, the American foreign service stood definitely and permanently outside politics, as the Rogers Act provided a professional, classified service firmly grounded on a merit basis. Another sign the next year indicated, too, that a new era had indeed dawned in American diplomacy. Under the new President Warren G. Harding, for the first time ever, every career diplomat retained his earlier commission and the traditional submission of resignations with a change in administration lapsed forever.¹⁴⁵

While the Rogers Act stood as a hallmark in the professional development of the consular and diplomatic services, full unification and professionalization of the United States Foreign Service would

¹⁴⁴ In authorizing the Foreign Service School, the Act permitted the assignment of candidates to the Department for however long was deemed necessary to provide sufficient instruction. In early 1925, the first class began a five month-long work period in the Department, which later was extended to seven to eight months. They heard regular lectures by experts on American foreign policies, economic policies, political reporting, and electrical communications. They worked from one to three weeks in each of the Department's divisions. Additionally, their period of instruction included French conversation, quizzes and study time--altogether of vastly greater quality than the earlier thirty-day period's haphazard preparation. *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 153-154, and 184-188.

¹⁴⁵ Ilchman, *Professional Diplomacy*, p. 214.

require still some refinement. In 1926, Congress passed the Foreign Service Buildings Act, under which the new Foreign Service Buildings Office assumed central responsibility for the administration of real property acquisitions abroad, marking a major move towards solving the permanent diplomatic housing problem. In 1930, allowances were made at last to chiefs of mission for building rent, light, heat, and fuel, previously paid for out of pocket. A 1927 scandal over administrative favoritism towards diplomatic personnel in promotions led directly to the Moses-Linthicum Act of 1931. Further executive reorganizations and Congressional legislation, like the Reorganization Act of 1939 and the Foreign Service Act of 1946, sought thereafter to remove the Service's shortfalls and continue its professionalization. Practices of formal examination, merit promotion, and evaluation of efficiency were diligently and successfully refined to best suit the Foreign Service's dedication to impartially offering a professional career to all suitable candidates and convincing the public the Foreign Service was a genuine profession. The spirit of professional careerism, finally, took deep root, as ambassadorial assignments testified. While in Gerard's time the number of career appointments to ambassadorships counted an exceptional few, by 1928 the ratio between career and non-career appointments stood at fifty-fifty. And by 1939, the proportion rose further yet to 60% professionals, including such critical posts as Mussolini's Rome and Imperial Tokyo, where Gerard's former First Secretary, now Ambassador, Joseph C. Grew reigned. Even Berlin itself warranted a professional, as Gerard's former Second Secretary, Hugh R. Wilson, followed in the footsteps of his erstwhile boss to become United States Ambassador to Germany.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ilchman, Professional Diplomacy, pp. 212-213 and 229.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION: PARADIGM SHIFT, THE GERARD EMBASSY, AND THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

We all suffer much from amateur diplomats.¹

-- Ambassador James W. Gerard (1916)

[The United States Foreign Service represents] a new order...established, a new machine...which is steadily being developed and improved with a view to serving American interests...with the greatest possible efficiency and to the greatest possible effect.²

--Undersecretary of State Joseph C. Grew (1925)

By the end of the First World War, the truth of Gerard's ironic remark resounded loudly down the halls of the State Department, through the political chambers of Washington, and across a nation now indisputably a great political, economic, and military power in a turbulent, Machine Age world. Gerard's Berlin embassy directly reflected the remarkable paradigm shift that occurred in American diplomacy around the turn of the century. Beginning in the early 1890s, developments in domestic and international conditions, and changes in Americans' perception of those developments, prompted a transformation of paradigm that would continue into the early 1920s. His embassy also reflected the on-going reform of America's diplomatic service from nineteenth-century amateurism to modern professionalism in response to the paradigm shift. Marking the actual beginning of the twentieth-century, the world war drove home the essence of the changed paradigm; that, no matter how reluctant, America's future lay amidst the stormy landscape of world politics and a global economy in which she played an unconditional role. It established

¹ In late 1915, Gerard's ironic expression of irritation to Secretary of State Lansing related to "some messages" (contents of which eluded the ambassador) conveyed from the German Foreign Office back to President Wilson via newspaper correspondents. Gerard Papers, Folder 13-10, Gerard to Lansing, 28 December 1915.

² Jerry Israel, "A Diplomatic Machine: Scientific Management in the Department of State, 1906-1924," in Building the Organizational Society: Essays on Associational Activities in Modern America, ed. Jerry Israel (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 194. From a Grew speech to the American Manufacturers' Export Association on 9 November 1925.

the complex and knotty character her relations with fellow sovereigns would assume *per force* in the new century. Its extreme demands, meanwhile, laid stark the grave disadvantages and inadequacies of a non-professional diplomatic service under the new paradigm. New-fashioned international affairs had come to roost in America and only Daedalian diplomacy might negotiate the shoals. The American foreign service would largely complete its reform towards professionalization by 1924. A year later, with United States career diplomacy finally coming into its own, Joseph Grew could issue his declaration. A new paradigm had replaced the old; and a bygone diplomacy had fallen to the new.

Gerard's embassy came at the inflection point of the shift between the old and the new paradigms. During its heyday between 1865 and roughly 1890, the old paradigm was based on Americans' continued trust that their isolated nation was free from foreign attack. They remained non-interventionist, as the country focused on such domestic priorities as post-Civil War reconstruction, settling the West, and building an immensely successful industrial society. Considering foreign relations unessential to those priorities, the nation's leaders largely disregarded international affairs and neglected the country's diplomatic and consular services. Republican simplicity stigmatized the diplomats particularly as elitist and unnecessary, and left the ill-equipped, underfunded services open to spoilsmanship in consequence. With few exceptions, posts went to party-hacks and misfits, and wealth became a principle criterion for selection, since meager salaries obliged the amateur diplomat to pay most his considerable expenses out of pocket. Meanwhile, back in Washington the nation's "foreign relations" remained relatively simple and of peripheral concern. Left largely to themselves with no direction or policies issuing from the center, the field--missionaries, military officers, ignorant diplomats and consular officers abroad--took the initiative, often creating situations to which Washington merely reacted willy-nilly. Actual, formulated foreign policies remained a thing of the future, as "spasm" predominated over any "system."

But starting around 1890, several developments conspired to begin shifting the paradigm and, eventually, the foreign service. The secure conditions and inward focus of most the nineteenth-century received three sudden blows, on top of other more gradual developments. The first blow began in the late 1880s and lasted well into the 1890s, as Americans generally entered into a dark period of gloom, anxiety, and loss of national confidence in their purpose and the country's future. Their fears and uncertainty soon

developed with the second and third blows into what historian Richard Hofstadter has termed the “psychic crisis of the 1890s.” The country’s decades of industrialization reaped dramatic dividends by the last decade of the century, as production of manufactured goods skyrocketed and helped fuel an explosive expansion of the nation’s economy and its foreign trade. In 1893, however, a sudden panic and severe economic depression befell the country, which would not subside for four, long years until 1897. By then, a second crisis rose up over perceived threats to America’s current and potential markets abroad--a matter soon taking on obsessive proportions, as Americans vested foreign trade with great hopes as a vent for the nation’s superheated economy.

Other, less abrupt developments also further altered conditions and America’s perspective.

Beginning in the last decades of the century, a revolution in transportation and communications technology simultaneously expanded America’s national interests, lent new importance to developments abroad, and moved potential threats--and markets--closer to the nation’s shores. Meanwhile, Americans increasingly appreciated the nation’s growing might and influence on its way to imminent world power status. Together, these several new pressures, changed conditions, and revised perceptions ever more forcefully urged a more deliberate, security-minded, trade-protective foreign policy to develop. By century’s end, a “policy” approach to international affairs began slowly replacing Washington’s earlier passivity--the hallmark of the new paradigm.

In response to the shifting paradigm, United States involvement in world affairs quickly gained steam through the 1890s, with the Spanish-American War finally signaling the country’s earnestness in 1898. Further evidence testified to the rising importance of international relations to America, as far-flung territorial acquisitions from the war conferred imperial status on her, and threats to Chinese sovereignty (and potential trade markets there) produced the Open Door notes; as a war in the Philippines sent back thousands of American war dead, and the assertive Theodore Roosevelt took the nation into the twentieth-century. It was only natural that the country’s new, increasingly purposeful, external involvement required a competent, reliable corps of foreign representatives to serve its widening interests. Thus, a heretofore amateurish diplomatic service and State Department came under scrutiny and under pressure to reform and adapt to the new environment.

Lagging in response to the shifting paradigm and in the wake of earlier, aborted attempts (as under Cleveland), the department and the diplomatic service finally began belated efforts to professionalize after the turn of the century. The fortunately successive Republican administrations of Roosevelt (1901-1908) and William Howard Taft (1908-1912) laid a solid foundation, as important executive orders in 1905, 1906, and 1909 effectively removed the consular service from the patronage system, established the diplomatic service on a merit basis for the first time, and instituted a variety of other lesser reforms such as entrance into diplomatic service only after formal examination. At the same time, Roosevelt's Secretary of State Elihu Root initiated a major overhaul of the State Department and began reorganizing it for maximum efficiency in the execution of its duties. A much improved filing system allowed better storage and retrieval of correspondence and documents. New diplomatic secretaries endured a thirty-day period of instruction in the department's various branches. Perhaps of greatest significance, Root introduced the first division of the department along geographical lines. The Division of Far East Affairs successfully separated administrative from policy matters and provided regionally-focused expertise against the increasingly voluminous and delicate diplomatic issues arising; iterations for other regions soon followed. Meanwhile, communications technology continued making inroads, as expanded use of telephones and, especially, the transoceanic telegraph offered promise for enhanced formulation, coordination, execution, and control of policy decisions. And the 1911 Lowden Act sought to begin correcting another serious deficiency in America's foreign service, the almost complete lack of permanent diplomatic housing abroad. Thus, thorough-going reorganization, specialization, and reform efforts under Roosevelt and Taft undertook the first serious steps towards eventual professionalization of the foreign service.

In 1913, however, the new Democratic administration of Woodrow Wilson made a significant return to spoilsmanship and patronage under Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. By that year, most diplomatic secretaries, like Grew, Wilson, Spencer, Harvey, and Ruddock, had entered the service under Republican administrations and recommendations from Republican congressmen. Indeed, many were of that party, and soon their fears of losing their positions, if not their "careers," materialized.³ Large

³ Rachel West, The Department of State on the Eve of the First World War (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), p. 121.

numbers of diplomats with extensive experience were turned out wholesale along with droves of veteran department staffers. Replacing them, *à la* old diplomacy, were amateurs like James Watson Gerard-- "deserving Democrats" of little to no experience, but replete with wealth, distinction, and indebting party service. Now, at last, came the harvest, with political spoils rustled up from the ranks of diplomatic plum positions. Much of the corporate knowledge and experience of the diplomatic service dissolved away next to the plummeting morale of the few surviving pre-Wilson officials. Wilson eventually began to rein in Bryan's ravages in response to these and other failings, as well as mounting opposition from influential quarters. The disrupted diplomatic service already had incurred much damage by mid-1914, however, just on the eve of the ultimate trial that would lay bare the relative merits and demerits of amateurism versus professionalism. Appointed ambassador to the German Empire in September, 1913, Gerard spent most of his tenure (*viz.* August, 1914 to February, 1917) upholding difficult American neutrality in the capital of a principal belligerent in the midst of the First World War. Emerging from the Roosevelt-Taft advances, feeling the sting of the Wilson retreat, and anticipating the final push to professionalism, his embassy uniquely reflected both the old and the new paradigms. In its professional staff, housing arrangements, embassy technology, the quantity and character of diplomatic work it engaged in, and in the status of its relationship with Washington, Gerard's embassy revealed a shifting paradigm and shifting diplomacy in every important aspect.

The ambassador and his professional staff themselves reflected the transition, particularly in their backgrounds, methods of entry into service, and in their tenures. The politically-appointed Gerard, selected in large part based on his great wealth and long, loyal service to the Democratic party, represented the patronage of the old diplomacy. His nearly complete lack of diplomatic experience did not discount him in the view of a presidential administration that harkened back to an earlier paradigm by installing a "useless lieutenant" as its Secretary of State, who then promptly broke with the previous two administrations in returning the diplomatic service to spoilsmanship. With the break in relations with Germany in 1917, Gerard returned to private life, his ambition of securing a prestigious ambassadorship realized. The large majority of his secretaries, on the other hand, were products of an increasingly professional, reforming diplomatic service that marked the new diplomacy. Gaining entry into the

diplomatic service after the 1909 institution of formal oral and written entrance examinations, they spent a newly-required 30-day period in training at the department prior to their first assignment. Increasingly, they perceived the service in terms of a career, in contrast to the older secretaries, like Grew, who initially looked upon diplomacy as an exciting, temporary waypoint to "real" work in business or law. Rushed through to passage on account of the great wartime difficulties embassies like Gerard's were encountering, the Stone-Flood Act of 1915 only furthered such feelings of careerism, as it introduced graded, indirectly-merit-based promotions and allowed more responsive administrative transfers between assignments.

Gerard's older staff, like First Secretary Grew, displayed in their lengthy, early service, traits of both paradigms. His career began as a political appointee at a time when long diplomatic service was a thing to be marveled at. Over forty years later, he retired with pension after unbroken service had successively promoted him finally to ambassador-level rank and undersecretary of state. Initially considering his entry into service as tentative given the volatile climate of patronage, he quickly developed a deep sense of loyalty to his diplomatic calling, which proved a vital glue in the professionalization of the U.S. foreign service. Along with all of his subordinate secretaries, however, the passing paradigm still showed in their common, elitist backgrounds. All hailed from privileged upbringing and education, most attended Ivy League schools and traveled abroad, all enjoyed private income--together they showed how far the service had yet to go towards opening up its ranks to merit-based access, towards eventually democratizing its recruitment in the name of professionalization. Wealth directly and indirectly stood in 1917 as an important criterion still for selection, advancement, and success in the service. Only provisions under the Rogers Act of 1924 and subsequent legislation would eventually replace wealth with merit as the deciding factor. The mark of success towards professionalization, otherwise, stood with four of eleven secretaries in the embassy eventually rising through the ranks to become ambassadors themselves--a very remote prospect at best when they first entered American diplomatic service.

On a more pragmatic level, until well into the twentieth-century, the United States made almost no provisions for suitable, permanent housing for its diplomatic representatives abroad. All the Europeans and most other nations considered adequate housing as indispensable to their professional diplomats. Gerard's experience vividly demonstrated the severe problems facing a new American envoy in this regard.

Already considering his inadequate embassy and official residence before leaving America, Gerard was consumed with the issue from immediately upon his arrival in Berlin the first week of October, 1913, until January, 1914. Almost the whole of the first four months of his tenure had passed, when a brand-new embassy opened finally for official business and the start of the German capital's important social season. During that time, he and his staff endured the major inconvenience and embarrassment of searching for a decent option in crowded Berlin, belabored the final decisions regarding the leasing, complete renovation, and occupation of Wilhelmsplatz 7, and tried to minimize, meanwhile, the complete disruption of the embassy, its work, and its reputation. Gerard, of course, had to pay several tens of thousands of dollars of his own money for the unnecessary distraction (no small sum in those days). In addition to the considerable entertainment and living expenses to diplomats, expectations that they (especially the ambassador or minister) paid for their own housing costs helped preserve private wealth as a key selection criterion, even as the new paradigm exhorted change. Only three years prior to Gerard's appointment to Berlin, the Lowden Act of 1911 passed Congress to become the first important, though ultimately ineffectual, step towards redressing the housing crisis. The first, meager appropriations under the act came only later just before the war, the exigencies of which cast the issue on the far, back burner and ensured Gerard's Berlin would not be a beneficiary. After a few fruitless, post-war attempts, the 1926 Foreign Service Buildings Act finally began to mount a serious effort to correct this critical fault in America's foreign service.

Caught in the middle of the housing issue, Gerard and his staff also found themselves in the midst of a phenomenal, technological revolution. A very important facet in the changing paradigm, technological advances in only a few decades had introduced such innovations as the steamship, automobile, airplane, telephone, typewriter, cinema, and, perhaps of most importance, a worldwide communications web of telegraph lines and wireless stations. Overnight, the speed of transportation joined new, virtually instantaneous, mass communications to effectively shrink physical distance and drastically compress people's notion of time. The pace of industrial life abruptly began accelerating, sweeping along the world and its occupants almost helplessly. Between roughly 1880 and 1918 a novel "age of nervousness" emerged to define the *angst* experienced by Gerard's generation. The bewildering speed of

change hastened by technology provoked lamentations and warnings of man's progressive degeneration. Contemporaries assigned increased incidences of suicide, disease mortalities, crime, and other pathologies to the "barrage of new speeds" in transportation and communication and the "tension, excitement, and incessant mobility of modern life."⁴ The Gerard embassy's unusual double-insanity of Second Secretary Harvey and Assistant Naval Attaché, Lieutenant Angel, gave dramatic point to the alleged connection.

On the occasion of his first telephone exchange with his grandmother, the French poet Marcel Proust had a vision of death.⁵ Along with the demise of an expiring world he saw, came also the extinction of old modes of diplomacy. For a shrunken globe and immediate, transoceanic communications posed direct implications for America's old diplomatic paradigm and her diplomatic service. Events abroad took on wholly new significance, as the nation had now to consider its interests and security on changed terms. Faster warships and effective, coordinating contact between them and political decision-makers made America seem considerably more vulnerable to foreign attack and urged a more security-minded foreign policy. At the same time, diplomats no longer enjoyed an ample leash, as under the old paradigm. Washington might exercise now micromanaging control over its field representatives, like Gerard. Policies might now be informed, formulated, and coordinated with unprecedented efficiency. Along with the pace of life generally, the rate of diplomatic dialogue and decision-making now accelerated quickly, as well. Demands intensified in international relations for speedier decisions and replies, thus introducing higher probabilities for mistakes and missteps under pressure, as the July crisis illustrated in 1914. Media like the cinema and mass circulation newspapers made enormous contributions to raising popular awareness over issues and thereby to raising public relations and propaganda to new heights as weighty factors to be considered in the conduct of diplomacy. Add to this situation the unparalleled diplomatic factors and issues that accompanied the world war, and the milieu and conditions in which the Gerard embassy conducted its work take on unusual severity--particularly when the actors were awash in residual elements of the old diplomacy.

⁴ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 124-126.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

The First World War erupted in the eleventh month of Gerard's embassy and marked a hard turning point for American diplomacy in every measure. With the war's fury coming down all around, one admirer called Gerard a "*Pharos* amid the storms of war."⁶ Indeed, he did prove a "beacon," as his embassy helped illuminate the way to twentieth-century American diplomacy. Certainly the spotlight fell most brightly upon the embassy's work experience, from the extreme upturn in workload to their exposure to work issues and factors with scant precedent in American diplomatic experience. The demands on the undermanned, untested State Department beginning in August, 1914, nearly broke it, while similar overwork exhausted the understaffed embassy in Berlin and elsewhere in the field. American travelers had not required passports previously; now Gerard's staff had suddenly to issue untold thousands throughout Germany. Only through their official intercession could desperate access to emergency funds and escape from the empire be arranged for trapped Americans. The same held true for other nationals as well, once the embassy assumed the interests of belligerent Great Britain, Japan, Serbia, Romania, and San Marino. These early rushes on the embassy, however, soon gave way to the real work ahead.

The substance of diplomatic work changed drastically overnight. Gerard quickly became embroiled in other matters highly unusual for American diplomacy. Such novel issues as intelligence collection, public relations, propaganda, and, most indicative, human rights, chastened the Gerard embassy and American diplomacy, as they would come to define and characterize the complexity of modern, twentieth-century international discourse. Assuming belligerent interests for Great Britain, his embassy soon became heavily engaged in British POW and civilian intern camp inspections at locations across the empire. Ensuring basic needs were met and standards and rights upheld by their German captors, Gerard proved key in gaining the introduction of and maintaining access for neutral, non-governmental aid organizations as the Y.M.C.A. The embassy also worked hard as intermediary to negotiate prisoner exchanges between the German and British governments, ultimately gaining repatriation for hundreds of men. Largely because of Gerard's diplomacy in Berlin on the organization's behalf, Herbert Hoover's Committee for Relief in Belgium averted catastrophic famine in German-occupied Belgium and northern France, saving several millions of lives. Although a similar food relief effort in war-torn Poland proved

⁶ Gerard Papers, Folder 12-20, Edwin J. Farber to Gerard, 18 February 1915.

stillborn, the ambassador's forceful representations at the highest level won elsewhere a stop to German forced relocations of French civilians and deportations of Belgian males as forced labor in Germany. The deep and constant involvement of Gerard's embassy in human rights and humanitarian issues thus introduced American diplomacy to the much more complicated, untraditional demands it would face in the new century.

Other extraordinary work demanded the embassy's attention as well. In contrast to the services of other nations, Washington had kept with the country's prewar isolationist orientation in not encouraging information gathering and reporting on conditions abroad right up to the eve of conflict. The war, however, immediately required the establishment of major national policies and, subsequently, the negotiation of a difficult neutrality through a wholly new landscape fraught with pitfalls, many exacerbated by the modern technologies of war and diplomacy. Public sentiments, domestic conditions, war effort, official mood, and countless other indicators became important factors in the calculus of diplomatic initiatives and the maintenance of America's neutrality. Information, therefore, proved vital and timely intelligence collection for decision-making became a top priority for key outposts like Gerard's. The embassy consequently exploited every available avenue as it sought, ultimately for Washington, an accurate picture of Germany's volatile internal scene. Gerard and his staff assiduously nurtured official and unofficial contact with Berlin's diplomatic corps, German officialdom (especially the Foreign Office and the Admiralty), German and American newspapermen, travelers, businessmen, politicians, and others of influence. They constantly monitored domestic news sources for broader trends, while spies and private detectives sought more specific intelligence. The staff brought back information from their frequent travels, whether inspecting POW camps or acting as couriers to Paris or London. U.S. consuls in-country knew to advise Gerard of any sensitive news and to direct potentially valuable contacts to the embassy. In so many ways, then, did Gerard attempt to establish an accurate sense of developments from inside Berlin and, meanwhile, establish a place for intelligence gathering in twentieth-century American diplomacy.

Perhaps to no more important facet of diplomacy was information so critical, than to the newly-emerging factors of public relations and propaganda. Sensitive public opinion, made keen in these early days of mass communication, arose as a potent consideration in domestic politics and international

diplomacy. This was especially so in democratic, industrial America--the most important neutral in the war and "land of propaganda *par excellence*," in the opinion of the German ambassador, von Bernstorff. Both sides in the conflict determined early on that their public standing in America was crucial to their war success, an emphasis which inevitably spilled over into American diplomacy, as Gerard's experience amply demonstrated. The embassy's humanitarian work, for example, was steeped in public relations concerns. The threat of being condemned to the world over an avoidable food disaster in German-occupied Belgium gained leverage for Gerard's diplomacy in Berlin, just as prospects of negative press certainly played well in his successful representations for redress of other humanitarian issues like the Belgian deportations and French relocations.

At the same time, British public opinion was an important concern for Gerard, responsible as his embassy was for the welfare of several tens of thousands of English POWs and interned civilians. He stood very much aware of the potential ripple effect that publication of the embassy's camp inspection reports might have in inciting popular domestic pressure. Pressing the British government for hasty, counterproductive action could inadvertently invite German retaliation; alternatively, the threat of pressure disadvantageous to German designs could prove a powerful ally in Gerard's negotiations. Gerard's run-in with the League of Truth, meanwhile, established the dangers of propaganda. Evinced a credible veil of neutrality was as important to his diplomatic effectiveness with the Foreign Office as it was to his reputation back in Washington. The mauling his ambassadorial prestige suffered at the hands of the German government-backed League of Truth struck a serious blow on both counts. Fully comprehending the threat, he went to exorbitant lengths combating the League's multi-pronged smear campaign through newspaper editorials, counterespionage, legal action, and his own counter-League of Friendship, reaching even so far as to draft a proposed propaganda play.

The experience of Gerard and his staff with public relations, propaganda, intelligence gathering, humanitarian diplomacy, and other novel, diplomatic demands presaged the complexities and concerns of modern American diplomacy. Exposed to the leading edge of the shifting paradigm and the new diplomacy, veteran diplomats became a post-war premium. The negotiation of peace provided immediate evidence of their great value, as the U.S. government tapped numerous Gerard staffers for important roles.

Appointed Secretary of the United States Commission to the Paris Peace Conference in November, 1918, Joseph Grew rushed to prepare proper facilities in anticipation of President Wilson's arrival. The diplomatic service's wartime experience was not lost as Grew whipped the logistics into shape, including a complete communications system with 24-hour code and cable facilities, considerable numbers of couriers and messengers, and a complete American telephone exchange. Reproduction of the Commission's vast paperwork fell to a large staff of stenographers, mimeograph operators, and a special printing facility.⁷

Grew meanwhile arranged positions for a proven, able group of diplomatic secretaries, of whose professional qualities he was well aware. Former embassy Special Assistant Ellis Loring Dresel he placed in charge of the Division of Current, Diplomatic, and Political Correspondence,⁸ with Gerard Third Secretary Lithgow Osborne among Dresel's principal assistants in an organization designed to keep the State Department apprised of Paris developments. Former Second Secretary Hugh Wilson acted briefly as secretary to the Commission as a whole and former Third Secretary Alexander Kirk performed as personal secretary to Secretary of State Lansing.⁹

The Paris conference altogether "showed how far removed from the requirements of the twentieth century [the] Old State [Department] with its pigeonholes and sealing wax had been," as Grew and his colleagues displayed their growing expertise against the "full force of the 'heyday of irregular diplomacy.'"¹⁰ Their pivotal, wartime experience in Ambassador Gerard's Berlin embassy left little doubt that America's maturing world power status and inevitable global involvement in the new century promised much rougher going than in the last. No longer would or could non-professional diplomats suffice for the rigors certain to come; Gerard's mere "sufferance" of amateurs stood soon to invite potentially ruinous consequences for the nation. Only six years later, the Rogers Act recognized this truth with its 1924 establishment of a professional United States Foreign Service. With the diplomatic paradigm

⁷ Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1966; paperback edition published New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 37.

⁸ Dresel would undertake afterwards an important investigatory mission to Berlin before finally becoming American High Commissioner in Germany and negotiating a final treaty of peace with Berlin in 1921, preliminary to the reestablishment of diplomatic contact the next year.

⁹ Heinrichs, American Ambassador, p. 42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

shift nearing its final form, it seemed clear to men like Congressman Rogers and Undersecretary of State Grew that a perilous "new order" required an efficient "new machine," and that for mighty America diplomatic amateurism could have small place in it.

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