

THE OUTCOMES OF U.S. COLONEL W. HASKELL'S MANDATE IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA AND TRANSCAUCASIA IN THE CONTEXT OF ETHNO-POLITICAL AND INTERSTATE CONFLICTS AND TERRITORIAL DELIMITATION IN 1919–1920

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Abstract

U.S. Army Colonel W. Haskell served as the Supreme Commissioner (High Commissioner) of the Allies in the Republic of Armenia from July 5, 1919, until August 17, 1920, replacing General James Harbord.¹ Haskell's conduct was the same "British foresight in the governance of colonies": only the musicians changed, but the music remained the same, following the motto: "Divide and rule, divide with promises."

With his pro-Azerbaijani position, Colonel W. Haskell failed in the issues of territorial demarcation—the realization of the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Armenia in the disputed territories of Karabakh-Artsakh, Nakhichevan, and others. He contributed to the strengthening of Azerbaijan's positions in the region, which led to the fall of the Republic of Armenia, and Haskell himself hastily left Armenia.

Keywords: W. Haskell, USA, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Sharur-Daralagyaz, Nakhichevan, Entente, J. Rey, Karabakh-Artsakh, disputed territory, conflict.

Haskell's residence was in Tiflis. On July 5, 1919, the heads of the Allied delegations adopted a corresponding decision regarding this appointment: "By this

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¹ Haskell, William Nafew [1878-1952] – U.S. Army Colonel, Chief of Military Operations and Deputy Chief of Staff of the 2nd Army of the U.S. Expeditionary Forces; served as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies in the Republic of Armenia from July 5, 1919, until August 17, 1920. In Armenia, he was mainly engaged in providing food, opening orphanages/children's homes, and creating jobs/workshops for the Armenian population. The position Haskell held on the U.S. General Staff and his belonging to any particular branch of the armed forces is not indicated. However, when Haskell was in Soviet Russia in 1921 as the Director of the American Relief Committee, the special services of the Soviet state found out that the former Supreme Commissioner of the Entente and the USA in Armenia was the chief of the Russian department of the intelligence of the U.S. Army General Staff. See in detail: Ohanian D. 2010. On the activities of U. Haskell, see also: Makhmuryan 2017; Hovhannisyan 2014: 231-244.

Council, U.S. Colonel W. N. Haskell is appointed to act in Armenia as High Commissioner on behalf of the Governments of the United States, France, and Italy, with the understanding that Colonel Haskell was to be simultaneously appointed as the Overall Director of the relief measures of the various aid organizations operating in Armenia".²

A resolution introduced by U.S. Secretary of State R. Lansing on July 5, 1919, and adopted by the Council of Five, also stated: "Colonel W. N. Haskell, USA, is appointed by this Council to act as High Commissioner in Armenia on behalf of the Governments of the United States, British, French, and Italian. It is understood that Colonel Haskell is, at the same time, designated to coordinate all operating relief measures in Armenia carried out by the various organizations operating there. All representatives of the United States, British, French, and Italian Governments in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Constantinople should immediately receive instructions to cooperate with Colonel Haskell and assist him".³

These powers were given to Colonel Haskell for both Caucasian Armenia and Turkish Armenia. However, due to the non-publication of his powers, the conviction was created in Caucasian political circles that Colonel Haskell had been given the post of Supreme Commissioner of the entire Caucasus. Based on this term, the representatives of the highlanders of the North Caucasus asked him to assume the role of an arbiter (impartial referee and mediator) between them and General Denikin. The U.S. government did not express satisfaction with the fact of such an expansion of Haskell's powers. In addition, the British military-political authorities in Tiflis, who had assured the Armenian government that the presence of British troops in Armenia was necessary, treated Haskell's arrival with sarcasm, as he was not accompanied by any military force, being convinced that he was just a colonel who would achieve nothing without troops. This led to Haskell's practical isolation, as he did not receive the necessary support from the other Allied missions to the practical degree required for the success of his undertaking.⁴

After the term of the American Relief Administration (ARA) expired in the summer of 1919, when the burden again fell on private agencies, a certain degree of official representation was ensured by appointing Colonel W. Haskell as the Director of the Joint American and Allied Relief, through which the Armenian people received certain food and other aid. Major J. Green was appointed the head of the American Relief Administration (ARA) in Tiflis, and Major Ch. S. Forbes was appointed the director of the Yerevan office. It is noteworthy that from the very first day of Ch. Forbes' service, July 11, A. Khatisyan began discussing the possibility of purchasing military uniforms for

² Hovhannisyan 2014: 66.

³ Hovhannisyan 2005: 371.

⁴ Hovhannisyan 2005: 155.

30,000 Armenian soldiers⁵, which at that moment impressed the Armenians and encouraged the government.

Thus, instead of providing a mandatory power (mandate country), determining exact borders, and ensuring the future of Armenia, the Peace Conference provided a resident-commissioner for advice, supervision, and consolation—though it seems such an intention was never present, as Haskell declared after his arrival at the session of the Armenian Parliament on August 22, 1919: “since that treaty [the ratification of the Treaty of Peace - V.V.] and the League of Nations have not been ratified, the issue of the Mandate for Armenia cannot be made a subject of consideration”.⁶

However, W. Haskell, whose appointment was announced on July 9, had neither administrative abilities nor a strong character to deal with the complexities of the Transcaucasia.⁷ On the contrary, this irritable and sometimes panic-prone man could create greater problems, especially in a poor country like Armenia, and Admiral Mark L. Bristol was also dissatisfied with this appointment.⁸ This is also clearly visible from the telegram of July 11, 1919, sent by Secretary of State R. R. Lansing to his assistant V. V. Phillips in Paris to the American Peace Delegation. It announced the resolution adopted by the member states of the Council of Five with the support of the President, according to which Colonel W. N. Haskell of the U.S. Army General Staff was appointed by this council as the High Commissioner in Armenia, acting on behalf of the Governments of the United States, Britain, France, and Italy. The adopted resolution also emphasized that he was entrusted with managing by all means the provision of aid to the various charitable organizations operating in Armenia. In addition, this resolution instructed all representatives of the Governments of the United States, Britain, France, and Italy in Armenia, Georgia, and Constantinople to support Colonel W. Haskell. It was noted that the Colonel would act as an employee of the State Department in the given region, and a desire was expressed to reach an agreement with Minister N. D. Baker regarding Haskell's long-term appointment to this position. Furthermore, it was stated that he would need a few more officers for the implementation of this task, and the travel and additional expenses of W. Haskell's mission should be covered by aid funds.⁹

Precisely based on these circumstances, as early as July 21, 1919, Khan-Tekinski was demanding from his government that Azerbaijani troops be concentrated on the borders of Armenia and sounding the alarm that Armenian troops continued to move to Sharur, where military operations were taking place: “Armenia is straining all its forces... The appearance of our troops on the borders will sow panic among the Armenians, strengthen desertion, and raise the spirit of the Muslims. I have already informed Aliyev, the military attaché in Tiflis, about the number of Armenian troops, asking him to inform

⁵ National Archives of Armenia (NAA), f. 200, c. 1, d. 304, part 1, l. 13.

⁶ Protocols of the Sessions of the Parliament of Armenia 2009, 253.

⁷ Hovhannisyan 2014: 67.

⁸ Hovhannisyan 2014: 69.

⁹ Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 154-155.

the Minister of War about it. If you want to take advantage of the moment, take swift and decisive measures".¹⁰ "We must immediately declare war on Armenia"¹¹ and "finish with Zangezur within two weeks, move the troops to Ghamarlu," wrote Khan-Tekinski to the President of the Government of Azerbaijan on August 1 and 3, 1919. "Now is the most convenient time. After the arrival of the American Commissioner of Armenia, Colonel Haskell, it will be too late. Organize the attack without declaring war. I strongly urge you to use the moment and not lose time".¹²

According to the Azerbaijani researcher I. Niftaliyev, the most acute issue was that of borders, and Haskell was, of course, aware of the territorial conflicts that took place in the South Caucasus. Haskell knew the position of the former British command regarding the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Karabakh and Zangezur. Therefore, according to I. Niftaliyev, it is no coincidence that one of Haskell's first statements regarding these issues was solidarity with the position of the Entente Allies, which Nasib Bey Usubbekov¹³ announced on August 28, 1919: that Karabakh and Zangezur are an inseparable part of Azerbaijan, simultaneously referencing Haskell's approach in the Armenian Parliament. According to him, the Armenians voiced threats against Azerbaijan, which, according to I. Niftaliyev, Haskell considered not corresponding to reality.¹⁴

According to the Azerbaijani historian B. Najafov, Haskell took the work seriously enough and, despite the Armenians' complaints and demands, adopted a generally objective position: "I am not the 'advocate' of the Armenians, and my task is not to permit inter-ethnic clashes in the Transcaucasia. I have the same benevolent attitude toward all republics".¹⁵

Najafov concluded that according to Haskell's plan, Karabakh and Zangezur (disputed territories) were to be governed by Azerbaijan, while the territories of the districts of Nakhichevan, Sharur, and Daralagyaz were to enter a Neutral Zone under the general leadership of an American Governor-General, but on the condition that the local administration remained in the hands of the Azerbaijani authorities. Najafov insists that, naturally, this position of the American Supreme Commissioner was not to the liking of the Armenian nationalists, who initially flattered Haskell but later began to accuse him of non-objectivity, which was followed by the confusion and uncertainty in the actions of the Armenians themselves at the Paris Peace Conference.¹⁶

¹⁰ Secret Documents 1920, 36.

¹¹ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 14, no. 601; The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920, 2000, 116.

¹² NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 14-15, no. 601, 606.

¹³ Usubbekov Nasib-bek Yusif oglu (1881-1920) was a statesman and publicist of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, who served as Minister of Finance and Education, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Minister of Internal Affairs (1918-1920).

¹⁴ Niftaliyev 2018: 236.

¹⁵ Najafov 1994: 84.

¹⁶ Najafov 1994: 84; "Azerbaijan" 1919, August 31.

According to E. Ismailov's conviction, Armenia tried to realize its territorial claims against Azerbaijan with the help of the USA, but during the negotiations held in Baku at the end of August 1919, W. Haskell declared the recognition of Karabakh and Zangezur as inseparable parts of Azerbaijan, while simultaneously proposing the creation of a Neutral Zone in the southern part of the former Yerevan province, including the districts of Nakhichevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz, under the leadership of an American Governor-General. On October 24, 1919, he announced the creation of the Governor-Generalship and the appointment of Colonel Daley as the Governor of the Neutral Zone. Ismailov concludes, however, that due to the sharp counter-reaction of the Azerbaijani government and the strong protests of the population of Nakhichevan, the Americans' idea failed, and from that moment, Colonel Daley's activities in Nakhichevan proceeded not as Governor but as a representative of the Paris Conference.

In November 1919, the US proposal to extend the mandate of Haskell's mission to Azerbaijan as well was blocked by the delegations of England and France at the Versailles Conference.¹⁷ According to A. Akhmedov, Haskell's objectives included ensuring a "Modus Vivendi," which was one of the goals of his Transcaucasian mission. Akhmedov nevertheless concludes that Azerbaijan represented a greater interest for the USA, and that Baku oil was at the center of American interests in the Transcaucasia.¹⁸ On January 22, 1920, a treaty was signed in Tiflis between the Republic of Armenia and Colonel Haskell, the Allied Supreme Commissioner in Transcaucasia and Armenia, according to which the Americans were to make purchases for Armenia, including from Azerbaijan, and ship them to Armenia¹⁹, from which the American side received a considerable profit. The price of one *pood* (about 16 kg) of oil brought by the Americans for the Republic of Armenia reached up to 80 rubles, while the actual price did not exceed 38 rubles²⁰, clearly demonstrating the self-interest of the Americans.

And so, after previously holding positions in Bucharest and Constantinople, Haskell arrived in Constantinople on August 2, 1919, and after speaking with Patriarch Zaven Esayan, promised to help and alleviate the condition of the suffering Armenians. W. Haskell immediately traveled from Romania to the Caucasus, while his colleague, Colonel James Ray, and 30 other individuals traveled to Batumi on the ship "Martha Washington".²¹ On August 5, he appealed to Franchet d'Espèrey, the senior Allied commander in Constantinople, protesting the British withdrawal from the Caucasus, when it had been repeatedly stated that "the presence of an adequate number of Allied troops is absolutely necessary for the protection of the relief measures currently being

¹⁷Ismailov 2010: 243.

¹⁸ Akhmedov 2018: 105-111.

¹⁹ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 417, l. 82.

²⁰ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 417, l. 82.

²¹ Hovhannisyan R., Vol. II, 203.

implemented, to prevent the annihilation of the Armenians, as well as to prevent general anarchy in the Caucasus, to halt the universal anarchy throughout the Caucasus”.²²

W. Haskell sent this memorandum to H. Hoover and the Paris Peace Conference, pleading with them to convince the British to stay²³, but to no avail, as information was received from A. Balfour on August 11 that the long-adopted decision to evacuate British troops from the Transcaucasia was an inevitable step. It must be said that the essence of this adopted British position was logically reflected in the words of the high-ranking American military officer, Vice Admiral, and Turcophile, Mark Lambert Bristol, on April 8, 1919. Bristol was against the USA taking on a mandate from European countries, and particularly regarding Armenia, his characteristic description of British policy could be considered: “a practically empty territory, devoid of natural resources and practically without railway communication or any port.”

Bristol, mentally imagining what would happen in case of the possible dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, wrote after a trip to Batumi, Tiflis, and Baku in June: “The fact is that these so-called republics of the Caucasus [Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia] are a complete farce. The members of the government do not represent the people but are the stooges of secret societies that have been trained for years in intrigues and deceptions. With very few exceptions, they are untrustworthy and generally abuse their positions. This situation in the Caucasus is a clear example of what will happen to the rest of Turkey if it is fragmented into small states”.²⁴ This is clearly stated, as Bristol’s starting point was the conviction that “the Turk has certain characteristics of character that are so superior to the characteristics of other peoples that one can only sympathize with the Turk, although one must never forget the bad features of his character, which are manifested in actions against subject nationalities”.²⁵

After his first visit to Armenia, Haskell stated in his appeal that the conditions in the country were indescribably horrific and desolate. He deemed it urgent to keep the supply routes open for the armed forces and to restrain the Muslim rebels, as the actions of the Muslims became increasingly horrific and audacious with the withdrawal of British troops from the region. He believed that the arrival of even just one military unit could decide the fate of the Armenian allies, who could be annihilated if the troops did not hurry.²⁶ This was explained by the entire complexity of the situation, about which Rouben notes: “The Georgians sitting on the road absolutely desired not to permit transport. Although they were pressured by Haskell, the representative of the Allies, and others, on the other hand, the Denikinists were showing their teeth... but Georgia was able to create so many difficulties that instead of receiving millions of poods of grain and

²² Hovhannisyan R. 2007, 167.

²³ Hovhannisyan R. 2007, 167; Hovhannisyan 2014: 133.

²⁴ Hovhannisyan 2005: 361.

²⁵ Hovhannisyan 2005: 356-357.

²⁶ Hovhannisyan 2014: 146.

other materials, perhaps the food we received did not reach 100,000 [poods] (of which over 30,000 was seed grain, through Haskell). Armenia was forced to give the Georgians both a bribe and a percentage of what was brought, sometimes 50 percent, in order to get the grain promised or bought. On the other hand, the Denikinists began to slow down their aid, seeing that the Georgians were taking a share of the shipments, and that circumstance was not in their favor, as they were favorably disposed toward Georgia".²⁷

The situation was alarming, which was also understood by the chief spy of Azerbaijan in Yerevan, the experienced diplomatic representative Tekinski, who, reporting to the Azerbaijani government on August 3, 1919, about sending artillery and shells with 8 trucks to Dilijan, Nor Bayazet, and Basargechar, and the presence of the 4th regiment in those regions, concluded that "the Armenians are making these preparations against the Muslims" and demanded from the government to "take the necessary and essential measures and military preparations".²⁸

As for the High Commissioner Haskell, he arrived in Tiflis on August 15, 1919²⁹, and after meeting with the advisor of the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, M. Tumanyan, and the military attaché, General Hovsep Kishmishyan, as well as the heads of the French and British military-political representations³⁰, he understood Armenia's military weakness and its need for weapons and ammunition for self-defense. Haskell arrived in Yerevan on August 21, accompanied by an honor guard.³¹ The city was decorated with American and Armenian flags. He received a warm welcome from the people, who cherished hopes and looked for a way to salvation.³² These facts were recorded in Haskell's report, adopted by the Allied Supreme Council on August 19, 1919, where it was stated that "the sending of an army to Armenia is strictly necessary, which will save the population from ruin".³³

Being in Yerevan for the second time on August 21³⁴, Haskell declared in a conversation with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, Al. Khatisyan, on August 21, 1919, his intention to "take measures to defend the existing borders of Armenia," that the Paris Congress had instructed him to take on the internal and external security of the Armenian people, their provisioning, and the safety of

²⁷ Rouben 1982: 260-261.

²⁸ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 299, part I, l. 15, no. 616.

²⁹ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 362, l. 81.

³⁰ "Nor Ashkhataavor" 1919, August 16; "Borba" 1919, August 16, August 17, August 21.

³¹ Hovhannisyanyan 2014: 232.

³² "Nor Ashkhataavor" 1919, August 26; "Hayrenik" 1919, November 23; Vratsyan 1928: 274.

³³ Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

³⁴ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 362, l. 81.

immigration³⁵, which at that moment was significantly threatened by the bandit-like Turkish-Muslim uprisings.

W. Haskell had a long interview with the Prime Minister, to whom he reported that “he had instructions from the [Peace] Conference to protect all Armenians, wherever they might be—in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, or Georgia. He cannot give military aid for now, but he has already sent 3 officers to Paris, asking for troops to be immediately sent to Armenia, and has also requested that a part of the British troops be left in Armenia. He will take every measure to protect the borders of Armenia and will demand that the government of Azerbaijan stop the provocative activities among the Muslims of Armenia. He will also take drastic measures for Armenia to receive weapons and military supplies and for the Georgian government not to obstruct their transport. In particular, he will work to secure the provisioning of Armenia and the procurement of food”³⁶, which was in an extremely catastrophic state at that time.

On August 22, 1919, the Supreme Commissioner of Armenia attended the session of the Parliament; the presiding officer, Hovsep Arghutian, welcomed him with warm words. W. Haskell delivered an impressive speech in the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia, which gave hope to the Armenians:

“I am happy to be here and have the opportunity to speak with you... The American people act slowly; they hesitated to participate in this World War, but when they did participate, they exerted their full energy, all necessary means, and reached the final goal. There is no doubt that [Armenia] will receive military aid, not to act against Georgia or Azerbaijan, but to protect the borders of Armenia. With those troops, at least the temporarily defined borders of Armenia will be secured.

I came to the conclusion that Armenia needs military aid, and the British troops must remain in the Transcaucasia until they are replaced by the troops of one of the Allies. When I learned in Constantinople about the order to withdraw the British troops from the Transcaucasia, I immediately expressed my protest to the Peace Conference... I hope my request will be respected, and the English troops will remain in the Transcaucasia. But even if the British troops leave the Transcaucasia, we will find a sufficiently powerful army to replace them. Corresponding arrangements have been made for the provisioning and financial aspects of Armenia, as well as for clothing. But now this is a secondary issue.

The circumstance that Azerbaijan has violated the borders determined by the British government is unquestionable. This phenomenon obligates me to go to Tiflis and then to Baku to warn Azerbaijan that if it does not take measures against the facts already committed and ceases military operations, this will not only have serious consequences for Azerbaijan, but the members of the Azerbaijani government will also be held personally responsible.

³⁵ NAA, f. 200, c. 2, d. 37, l. 1-3, 7-8; Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 193-194.

³⁶ Vratsyan 1993: 320-321.

In Tiflis, I will consult with the British command regarding the issue of immediately providing military aid to Armenia.

As a result of the instructions I received from the Peace Conference, I must protect the interests of your country”³⁷ However, on August 23, when Haskell left for Tiflis and then Baku, he forgot about the statements he had made in Yerevan and the promises he had given.³⁸

Ensuring the achievement of the goal, W. Haskell seemed ready to send his officers to Turkey as well, so that, in addition to the aforementioned goal, they would protect the remaining Armenians there (with the exception of Cilicia). Moreover, the Colonel had decided to deliver a note to the Baku authorities, a document in which the entire responsibility for an occupying policy or for provoking the Muslims of Armenia would be placed on the Azerbaijani government. The experienced staff of officers at his disposal³⁹ was handed over to the Republic of Armenia’s hall to become army instructors, and directors in the fields of railways and food.⁴⁰

In a conversation with the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the High Commissioner noted that he planned to contribute to Yerevan receiving military uniforms (bullets, rifles) and to influence the Georgian government to allow them to pass through its roads. The inventory included “a sufficient quantity of full uniforms [accessible] via Batumi-Ardahan, 150 mules with harnesses, Lebel rifles.” Subsequently, he set the task of regulating all territorial disputes in the Transcaucasia.⁴¹

During the very first consultation, Haskell informed Khatisyan that he was responsible for protecting the Armenians of the Caucasus and Anatolia and for regulating relief operations, and had already appealed to Paris regarding the issue of military assistance, that the borders of United Armenia still needed to be determined, and that General J. Harbord would arrive to investigate the related issues and the military situation, while simultaneously advising them to undertake only defensive operations until the final settlement of the issue, promising to warn the Azerbaijani government against provocative steps.⁴²

There were serious expectations and hopes for Haskell as an ally, and in this regard, the speech of Hovsep Arghutian, the chairman of the Parliament, at the session on August 23, 1919, is noteworthy. He believed that the Allies felt an obligation to protect Armenia, to prove that Armenia was not alone, and that the Armenian people had served them with their armed forces for five years⁴³. In response, Haskell offered

³⁷ Protocols of the Sessions of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia 2009, 252-252; “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 27.

³⁸ History of Armenia 2010: 189.

³⁹ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 370, l. 1.

⁴⁰ Issues of Armenian History 2017, Vol. 18, 49-75.

⁴¹ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 370, l. 1-1 rev.

⁴² “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 26, August 27, Tiflis; Vratsyan 1928: 274-275.

⁴³ “Nor Ashkhatavor” 1919, August 27, 1919; “Hayrenik” 1919, October 21.

reassuring words that Americans usually hesitate to do anything, but once a decision is made, they move quickly. At the same time, he said that the issue of the Armenian mandate would hardly be resolved until the Versailles Treaty and the US position on the League of Nations were clarified. Nevertheless, he was called upon as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies to preserve the physical existence of the Armenian people. In this regard, he had already taken steps to ensure the uninterrupted flow of supplies from Batumi and to maintain the British forces or bring other Allied forces to the Caucasus. He would take appropriate steps in Baku because Azerbaijan had violated the temporary borders set by the British authorities.⁴⁴

In a telegram addressed to the President of the Paris Peace Conference, G. Clemenceau, on August 27, 1919, Colonel W. Haskell stated that he had personally investigated the situation in Armenia, considered it indescribably grave, and believed that aid must reach those in need in time to prevent starvation. He found it necessary to be supported by troops, deeming the arrival of cavalry essential in the first place. In that telegram, Haskell believed that forces equivalent to one reinforced American infantry brigade would save the situation in Russian Armenia, emphasizing that Tatars were launching attacks in the east and south, and that Tatar uprisings were escalating daily in all internal regions. He also found that the arrival of even one regiment could decide the fate of their Armenian Allies, who could be destroyed at any moment if the troops did not hurry. Haskell noted that the British were leaving the Caucasus and had already refused even the temporary use of their troops in Armenia, insisting that orders from above forbade the deployment of any British troops in Armenian territory. Haskell believed that if British policy forbade the protection of the Armenians under the aforementioned circumstances, it should be changed, or other troops should be found to arrive immediately, also noting that the British troops remaining in the Transcaucasia were mainly Indian.⁴⁵

However, both Haskell and the British military figures were extremely inconsistent in their positions. Expressing sarcasm about Haskell, the British understood well that without military assistance, he could not achieve any substantial result in any serious matter, especially in the territorial demarcation crucial for the Republic of Armenia. It was clear to the British that their interests would not align with Armenia, and based on the rapid changes in the situation, they leaned toward Azerbaijan and the Muslim world, which also consumed W. Haskell. It became evident that the American commissioner was unable to create the necessary “modus vivendi,” a situation exacerbated by the fact that he simply had pro-Azerbaijani orientations and instructions from his own government.

In this regard, the conclusion of General A. Denikin of the Volunteer Army is remarkable: “Armenian figures, not being seasoned in the political game of world diplomacy and being poorly informed, did not understand that there was no single state

⁴⁴ Vratsyan 1928: 275-276; “Hayrenik” 1919, October 2, Boston; “Borba” 1919, August 28.

⁴⁵ Armenia in the Documents of the U.S. Department of State 1917-1920, 2012, 200.

among the Entente countries that desired to shed blood for the Armenians, that the American Colonel Haskell, the Supreme Commissioner of the Entente in Armenia, who arrived along with a philanthropic mission, came with broad powers and a pre-determined decision: 'not to send a single American soldier to Armenia.' The 'moral image of America' was supposed to stop the bloodshed in the warlike countries of the Near East, where only force instilled respect, fear, and obedience...".⁴⁶

The Georgian leaders partially understood the same thing. Thus, when British Lieutenant General Charles James Briggs⁴⁷ traveled to Tiflis in April 1919 for negotiations between Georgia and the command of the Volunteer Army regarding the withdrawal of Georgian troops from the Sochi region, he faced this very problem. Meeting the complete intractability of the Georgian political figures, the general reproached the Georgians: "The British and Italians will leave, but Russia will remain forever, and friendly relations with her will be the best thing that can be... The League of Nations has not yet taken a definite form... The Peace Conference will end, and Russia will become great and powerful, and you should prepare yourselves for a more favorable future...".⁴⁸

In mid-1919, the British withdrew (at that moment, they remained only in Batumi), and the Transcaucasian military-political and diplomatic environment found itself in new anxieties. Solutions to territorial, border, and other important issues were constantly delayed. Soon, Captain Gould, who was acting as the English arbiter, declared to the representatives of the two interested republics at the end of September that, according to corresponding instructions received from London, they no longer had the right to interfere in the affairs of the Neutral Zone of Lori, and that the solution would henceforth be under the jurisdiction of the Allied Supreme Commissioner, W. Haskell⁴⁹, who invited the representatives of Armenia and Georgia to discuss and resolve the disputed issues.

The government of the Republic of Armenia did not share W. Haskell's position, who was inclined only toward partial solutions, by resolving the problem of the Lori Neutral Zone. They were of a different opinion, believing that border-territorial issues should be considered and resolved entirely (one might say, in one package), and in this situation, W. Haskell's mission failed. The parties were only satisfied with W. Haskell's recommendation to hand over the control of the Neutral Zone to Major Livingston as Governor or Commissioner. And this was just the beginning of the demarcation issues. As a result of the complex situation and Colonel W. Haskell's arbitration mission, and according to his proposal, it was decided that Captain Douglas in his supervisory role could be replaced by one of W. Haskell's staff members, Charles Livingston, for whom Alaverdi was chosen as a residence, which was supposed to ensure the necessary

⁴⁶ Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 317.

⁴⁷ Charles James Briggs [1865-1941]—Head of the British military-political mission to the Armed Forces of South Russia.

⁴⁸ Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 323.

⁴⁹ Tumanyan 2012: 199.

communication.⁵⁰ Colonel Haskell, however, was not distinguished for political impartiality, and at times his actions created real confusion in the process of resolving border disputes, aggravating Armenian–Georgian military-political relations. The Armenian authorities realized that although U. Haskell had been sent with broad authority, he had no actual power behind him that could halt the military operations of the Azerbaijanis and the Turks.⁵¹

The complex situation created in Armenia negatively affected the military-political and economic activity of the government, preventing it from concentrating significant monetary and material resources and solving various military problems.

On August 23, 1919, W. Haskell urgently left for Tiflis, and upon arriving in Baku on August 29, he received a good impression of the Azerbaijani leaders, Prime Minister Nasib Bek Usubbekov and Foreign Minister Mamed Yusif Jafarov. He informed the latter that he had come not as an advocate for the Armenian Question, but as a proponent of humanitarian aid and peaceful coexistence until a political settlement, and to put an end to the provocations and suffering of the Muslim and Armenian populations from both sides. He proposed the creation of a Neutral Zone under American supervision in the southern districts of the Yerevan province.⁵²

W. Haskell's proposal came one week after Khosrov Bek Sultanov had forced the Armenians to recognize his authority in Karabakh-Zangezur, creating a real danger for Zangezur as well. This also weakened the Armenian claims on Sharur and Nakhichevan, and complicated Armenia's path to Syunik-Zangezur. It gave Azerbaijan a real opportunity to expand in the Arax valley, since, as Turkish researcher Erhan Karakoç concludes, the strategic corridor of Karabakh represented the link or barrier connecting the Turkic-Muslims of the Eastern Caucasus and Anatolia, and Asia Minor.⁵³

Naturally, this “Haskellian” maneuver, a draft of proposal with a playful nature aimed at territorial demarcation, was entirely acceptable to Nasib Bek Usubbekov, and he gave his verbal consent to Haskell's proposal—a 21-article draft through which an agreement titled “Neutral Zone” emerged, which contradicted the promises he had given to the Armenians in Yerevan, and was done without consulting the Republic of Armenia.

According to the Agreement: “A Neutral Zone must be immediately established in the districts of Sharur-Daralagyaz and Nakhichevan,” the administration of which was to be carried out by the Governor-General appointed by Colonel W. Haskell. The third point of this agreement stipulated that the local administration was to be Tatar, with the exception of those districts where Armenians constituted a majority.

According to the following points of the Agreement:

4. The Armenian and Azerbaijani governments were to immediately withdraw their troops from the Neutral Zone, and no military unit was to return.

⁵⁰ Hovhannisyan 2014: 187-188.

⁵¹ History of Armenia 2010: 137.

⁵² “Nor Ashkhataavor” 1919, September 1; “Azerbaijan” 1919, August 30-September 5.

⁵³ Ercan 2011: 1016.

5. The Armenian and Azerbaijani governments were to immediately recall their agents and agents of other countries from the Neutral Zone who could incite the local population.
6. Azerbaijan and Armenia were to declare a general amnesty, which would extend to crimes committed against private individuals until September 1, 1919. The amnesty did not apply to crimes already under the jurisdiction of the British military authorities.
7. Local officials in the Neutral Zone could only be appointed by the American Governor-General.
Points 8-9 of the Agreement stated that the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan should use all their influence to calm the Armenian and Tatar populations in the Neutral Zone, the provinces of Yerevan and Zangezur.
10. Both the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan were to take under their protection the lives and property of Armenians and Tatars living in their territories.
11. The railway and telegraph line stretching from Yerevan to the Persian border and passing through Sharur-Daralagyaz was to be immediately restored and was to operate immediately with Armenian and Tatar personnel. The railway was to serve the population without national discrimination.
12. The Azerbaijani government agreed to facilitate in every way the work of the American relief organization "Near East Relief" in provisioning and providing food to the population of the Shushi and Zangezur regions.
13. The Azerbaijani government agreed to implement all measures and provide transport costs for the return of all Armenian refugees located in Azerbaijan that the Governor-General deemed necessary.
14. The Muslim population of Pokr Vedi was to be resettled from that village, under the instructions of the American Governor-General, to another village intended for them in the territory of the Neutral Zone, allowing them to move all their property with them.
15. The Baku-Julfa railway line under construction was to be exclusively under the disposal of the Azerbaijani government.
16. The border between Armenia and the Neutral Zone along the railway was to be the place called Gayli Drunq (Wolf's Gate).
- 17-21. These articles referred to the measures for collecting taxes allocated for administration, financial assistance to be provided by the Azerbaijani government if necessary, the restoration of the daily activities of schools and churches, the establishment of freedom of conscience, and the provision of food aid by "Near East Relief" without national discrimination.⁵⁴

However, the subsequent course of events reversed everything that had been gained, as the decisions on paper were not reinforced by other, more substantial steps.

⁵⁴ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 11, l. 19-24, 46, 46 rev., 47, 47 rev., 51; "Bulletin of Armenian Archives" 1993, 116-119; Harutyunyan 2021, 168.am, August 30; Harutyunyan, Balyan 2021: 59-72.

Thus, “Supreme Commissioner of Armenia” Colonel W. Haskell, acceding to the demands of the Azerbaijanis, declared the regions of Sharur-Daralagyaz-Nakhijevan to be disputed territories. This practically meant that, according to the agreement, the indigenous Armenian territories—Syunik-Zangezur, Nakhijevan, Karabakh, and Sharur-Daralagyaz—were being handed over to Azerbaijan.

The regions of Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz were to form a neutral zone under the jurisdiction of the American governor appointed by Haskell, and the troops were to be withdrawn. Haskell conveyed the bait of “pacifism” offered by Azerbaijan to Khatisyan, convinced that there would be no option to refuse. However, the latter understood this in his own way—that Haskell had allegedly been misled (which, undoubtedly, was not the case; it was simply Khatisyan’s illusion - V.V.) due to insufficient knowledge of the borders and the situation, and that this allowed Azerbaijan to gain a dominant position over the Araks valley and the key corridors and roads, acquiring a wide corridor leading to it and closing the only vital communication route between Yerevan and Syunik-Zangezur.⁵⁵

By Haskell’s decision, on September 1, 1919, Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz were considered a neutral zone, headed by an American General-Governor. However, the decision regarding this was not implemented during that historical period.⁵⁶ Haskell’s project put the Yerevan province on the same plane as Zangezur-Karabakh, seemingly creating a basis for recognizing Azerbaijan’s sovereignty over those territories to the same extent as the sovereignty of the Republic of Armenia over the Yerevan region.⁵⁷

In this regard, let us quote an important expression from Colonel W. Haskell, taken from the article “Caucasus. Colonel Haskell on the Mutual Relations of the Transcaucasian Republics,” published in the Georgian newspaper “Borba” on September 2, 1919: “...the colonel said that he considered it necessary that Karabakh, including Zangezur, should definitively pass to Azerbaijan, and as for Nakhijevan, Sharur, and Daralagyaz, that zone should become a Neutral Zone. That zone should be governed by the local population itself through its elected bodies, and a European or American General-Governor should stand at the head of the administration”.⁵⁸

The extreme importance of the issue compelled Khatisyan to discuss Haskell’s proposal with the ARF Bureau on September 5, 1919, and to inform the Parliament that the formation of an American governorship was fundamentally acceptable, as was Haskell’s call for a ceasefire.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Arsham Khondkaryan criticized the Dashnaks (ARF representatives) for blindly believing in the Allies. He noted that they had done nothing in the Caucasus to protect the fundamental rights of the Armenian people, that the

⁵⁵ Hovhannisyan 2014: 236.

⁵⁶ Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

⁵⁷ NAA, f. 275, c. 1, d. 193, l. 2, 25; Yarrach 1919, 7, 8, October 21-22; Gajiev 2004: 150-151.

⁵⁸ “Borba” 1919, September 2.

lovers and proponents of the neutral zone proposal were simply helping to drown the young republic. He also criticized them for believing Haskell's promise, who had promised just a few days earlier that Azerbaijan would be held accountable for its aggression. However, he did the opposite, and by going to Baku, he became a puppet in the hands of the Khans and Beys, drafting his proposed shameful document without even consulting the government of the Republic of Armenia, calling on the ruling party to revise its foreign policy, abandon the hypocrisy of the West, and turn its face toward Russian democracy:

"The bitter experiences of an entire year have shown that we can expect nothing good from foreign powers. What did the Allies, on whom the Armenian people had placed all their hope, give us? A week ago, Colonel Haskell was the subject of enthusiastic demonstrations in this building by the Parliament and the Armenian people. A week ago, he declared from this podium that it was beyond doubt for him that the government of Azerbaijan had violated the instructions received from England regarding the borders of Armenia, that Azerbaijan was the author of all the recent incidents, and he promised to hold its government personally responsible for this. But now, a week later, after visiting Baku and without even returning to Yerevan and listening to the opinion of our government, sitting in Tiflis, he sends instructions to the government of Armenia for implementation, from which it is clear that he is now shifting that responsibility onto the government of Armenia.

What have the Allies, these lovers of neutral zones, who have been coming to Armenia one after another throughout this year, given us? The British came, and barely two weeks later, they created neutral strips between us and Georgia. The American came, appointed as the Supreme Commissioner of Armenia, and his first words were about new neutral strips. What is Colonel Haskell now proposing to us? To create a series of neutral strips between us and our neighbors, so that the encirclement of Armenia, which is already surrounded on four sides, becomes complete.

It is time to finally fundamentally review our foreign policy".⁵⁹

A part of the Dashnaks was also dissatisfied with the course of events and therefore proposed to consult with Haskell, after which they authorized the government to make its final decision. Moreover, to demonstrate their solidarity with the main part of A. Khondkaryan's criticism, the Dashnaks ensured it appeared in the newspapers "Hayastani Ashkhatavor," "Yarrach," and "Ashkhatavor," where it was emphasized that the enemies of Armenia were in favor of creating a neutral zone in order to maintain the borders imposed on the Republic of Armenia by the Turks in June 1919. It was noted that Haskell might also create another neutral zone in the Kars region, yielding to the wishes of Muslim beys and agents, and that the Allied powers were allowing the richest lands of Russian Armenia to be simply taken away from the Republic of Armenia.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Minutes of the Sessions of the Parliament of the Republic of Armenia 2009, 260-261; Hovhannisyan 2014: 237.

⁶⁰ "Nor Ashkhatavor" 1919, September 11, Tiflis; "Hayrenik" 1919, November 23.

Haskell's letter was discussed at the sessions of the Parliament and the Government of the Republic of Armenia from September 3-6, 1919, where it was decided to send a commission to W. Haskell to clarify the situation.⁶¹ It can be assumed that in this regard, Haskell was not simply misled by the Azerbaijanis (for which Azerbaijani historians praised him), but he had deliberately favored oil-rich Azerbaijan, which was also desirable for Great Britain. For this purpose, he asked Levon Evangulyan, the diplomatic commissioner of Armenia in Tiflis, not to publish his speeches and opinions about his activities in the newspapers.⁶²

On September 6, 1919, Khatisyan, accompanied by R. Ter-Minasyan, traveled to Tiflis to clarify the issue. There, the Prime Minister had six meetings with the author of the project between September 6-14. Nasib bek Usubbekov had also arrived there at Haskell's suggestion, in connection with the Armenian side receiving explanations from Haskell. The demand of the Republic of Armenia was as follows:

1. Sharur-Nakhijevan was accepted as part of Armenia by the British military authorities, and if this was accepted, they would respect Haskell's proposal and agree to the American governorship proposal, considering the inclusion of Daralagyaz in the neutral zone absurd, stating that Azerbaijan had violated the instructions of the Paris Peace Conference, wanting to build a railway from Zangezur to Nakhijevan without preconditions.
2. Zangezur has been and must remain a part of Armenia, which was accepted by General J. Cory and violated by Usubbekov, and the name "Neutral Zone" should be replaced by the name "American General Governorship".⁶³

And so, N. Usubbekov also arrived in Tiflis and insisted on his amendments with new proposals and additions to the points. According to his insistence, the Muslim population was to remain armed, and the governor was to be deprived of the right to dismiss officials. Baku was not only to pay extra compensation but also ensure the circulation of its own bonds (bonuses), reserving the monopoly for the railway to be built up to Julfa. In return, Azerbaijan accepted the supremacy of the Republic of Armenia in Daralagyaz.⁶⁴

During the negotiations, W. Haskell fully accepted the point of view of the Republic of Armenia and reduced his list to nine points. In the final version, the American zone included only Sharur-Nakhijevan, and all administrative expenses were covered by the US or jointly. The existing population in Vedi was disarmed, and the construction of the railway branch leading to Julfa had to be agreed upon with the Republic of Armenia by a separate treaty. During the bilateral discussions, W. Haskell confirmed that Zangezur was unequivocally an Armenian region and suggested to A. Khatisyan to use the

⁶¹ The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920 2000, 119-121.

⁶² NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 175, l. 55.

⁶³ "Nor Ashkhatavor" 1919, September 10.

⁶⁴ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 101, l. 90 rev.

services of A. Denikin's Volunteer Army without concluding official agreements. He admitted that "the arrival of troops is not expected in the near future".⁶⁵

Thus, as in the case of the Azerbaijanis, Haskell considered the Armenians' proposals acceptable, seemingly trying to influence Azerbaijan regarding the changes. However, Usubbekov initially remained inflexible on the issues of Daralagyaz, the use of Azerbaijani currency, and the Baku-Aliat-Julfa railway, believing that the American governor should only play the role of an external supervisor, although he later conceded on the Darayagyaz issue.

Azerbaijan's stubborn adherence to principles was essentially due to the fact that Haskell, not having sufficient military forces at his disposal, would not be able to establish an American General Governorship. Consequently, the Azerbaijani government simply assumed the role of an indifferent and calculating observer, not wanting to be accused of torpedoing Haskell's project, being convinced to the end that Haskell would not dare to establish a governorship in a Muslim-populated region without their consent.

Haskell's game with both the Azerbaijani and Armenian sides was obvious, and Khatisyan, returning to Yerevan on September 14, reported that Haskell had seen the shortcomings of the proposal.⁶⁶ However, this argument merely recorded the momentary situation and nothing more, as no assessment was given to Haskell's changeability. Summarizing the characterization of the figure Haskell, one can conclude that during his mere three weeks in Transcaucasia, he managed to change his position three times, swinging from one extreme to the other, saying one thing in Yerevan, another in Baku, and in Tiflis renouncing a part of the agreement already signed by him. This meant the discrediting of a country and his own person, who had delegated him to Transcaucasia. Haskell's signature had no value, and it seemed that his career should have had a sad end, but the opposite happened some time later. Haskell received a promotion, and his authority was extended to Georgia and Azerbaijan as well.

Trying to explain Haskell's behavior, Prime Minister S. Vratsyan wrote: "Thus, the 'Supreme Commissioner of Armenia' was giving Karabakh-Zangezur to Azerbaijan as well. And the surprise and fury that gripped everyone in Yerevan when Haskell's order was received—to 'sign without delay and send back' the agreement—was understandable." Seeking ill will or enmity in Haskell's step was inappropriate, of course, as the game being played was so open. The man was simply a victim of his ignorance and gullibility and the intrigues spun in Baku. The government of Azerbaijan provided him with inflammatory facts and figures, and the poor man did not know whom to believe or what to do".⁶⁷ S. Vratsyan adds to what was said that in Azerbaijan "at the same time they demanded the formation of 'a mixed investigative body from

⁶⁵ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 101, l. 90 rev.

⁶⁶ Hovhannisyan 2014: 239.

⁶⁷ Vratsyan 1993: 324.

representatives of all the Allies' to investigate 'the violence committed by the Armenian Dashnak bandits against the Azerbaijanis of the Yerevan Vilayet'."

It is understandable that such appeals and facts must have influenced the American Haskell, who was neither familiar with the Caucasian conditions and customs nor endowed with the foresight of an Englishman trained in governing colonies.⁶⁸ It turned out that Haskell's behavior was the same "British far-sightedness in the matter of governing colonies." Only the musicians changed, but the music was the same, as old as the world: "divide and rule"—divide promises that will not be fulfilled, give promises to Armenians on even days, and to Azerbaijanis on odd days, which makes the strategy of American Colonel W. Haskell understandable—that he was merely the expresser and implementer of his government's will, for which the Armenians should have been grateful to the "Armenophile" W. Wilson. Haskell was also the successor to the British anti-Russian policy after the British left Transcaucasia, which was well characterized by Colonel M. Zinkevich, the representative of the Volunteer Army in the Republic of Armenia, who headed the General Staff of the Republic of Armenia for a long time. He simply states: "Haskell demanded from the government of Armenia that it should not have relations with the Commander-in-Chief (Denikin - V.V.), bypassing him. Moreover, in cases where the Americans saw manifestations of sympathy for Russia, they persuaded the Armenians that Russia would never become a great power again and, for that very reason, could not be relied upon for aid".⁶⁹

On September 12, 1919, Khatisyan complained to J. O. Wardrop⁷⁰ that the Allies' delay in helping the Armenians had reduced their prestige in the face of the steps being taken by the Paris Conference. At the same time, great doubts arose regarding Haskell as the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies. It became evident that without military force, he could do nothing, leaving the impression of a harmless American missionary on the Muslims, which caused a negative feeling. Khatisyan's conclusion clearly shows the moment of distrust among the leaders of the Armenian state, who were encouraged when any high-ranking British, American, or other officer seemingly did the opposite, despite the numerous difficulties caused by the latter.⁷¹ From November 1919, W. Haskell received the right to control the relations of the Transcaucasian republics. In his report to the Council of the Allies on November 14, 1919, Colonel W. Haskell informed that the three Transcaucasian republics—Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan—were in a state of relations "drawn with a dagger" in almost all respects.⁷² In November-December 1919, Haskell participated with the Prime Minister of Armenia, A. Khatisyan, in the development of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace treaty.⁷³ From the letter presented by

⁶⁸ Vratsyan 1993: 324-325.

⁶⁹ Denikin 2002, vol. 4, 320.

⁷⁰ Wardrop, John Oliver – British representative in Transcaucasia.

⁷¹ Hovhannisyan 2007: 196.

⁷² Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 223, 321.

⁷³ Armenian Question Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

Major General H. Kishmishyan, the representative of the Military Department accredited to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, to the manager of affairs of the same mission on November 12, 1919 (No. 288), we learn that Lieutenant Bekzadov is the liaison officer attached to the Supreme Commissioner Colonel W. Haskell⁷⁴, and at that time no one was appointed in Azerbaijan due to the disagreement of the parties.⁷⁵ Instead, only the candidacy of a certain Sergeev was nominated until a suitable officer was found. And he was found, and the duties of the military attaché of the Republic of Armenia in Azerbaijan were entrusted to General Pavel Melik-Shahnazaryan.⁷⁶

And so, taking advantage of W. Haskell's leniency, the Muslims left his seemingly correct proposals hanging in the air. Furthermore, they responded with treacherous calls and actions, despite Colonel James Rae informing the Muslim Council of Nakhijevan on September 16, 1919, of the necessity to submit to the American governor, stating that Colonel Edmund L. Daily had already been proposed as governor and was appointed on October 26. Regarding this, Rae urgently departed for Baku to expedite Daily's appointment, after which he left for Yerevan with several American officials and the Vice-Consul of Tiflis, M. Tumanyan, and the Muslim Council and all local military and civilian officials were called upon to participate in the ceremonies.⁷⁷

During this time in Nakhijevan, Samed Bek Dzhamalinsky and the military minister of the Arasdajan Republic, former Russian and Great Britain colonel, descendant and heir of the Nakhijevan Khans, Kyal'-Ali Khan Nakhichevansky, resisted Colonel Rae, who had arrived there. They were joined by the Muslim Council, which boasted that they would not submit even to Baku and would not risk the American governorship when the territory had been handed over to the Armenians. In the end, Rae returned to Yerevan, leaving Daily in Nakhijevan, thereby aborting the American project, for which Rae and Haskell angrily and seemingly seriously declared Azerbaijan guilty of violating its promises.⁷⁸ Azerbaijan accepted this circumstance calmly, and in response, Jafarov noted that his government had merely declared that it would take on the role of an observing spectator.⁷⁹ This was a victory for Baku, as Usubbekov's government clearly understood that, given the absence of Allied armed forces in the region, they could take a tougher position in their Caucasian policy with impunity, a fact that was not well grasped by those who formulated the foreign policy calculations and priorities of the Republic of Armenia.

⁷⁴ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 196, l. 38.

⁷⁵ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 197, l. 34.

⁷⁶ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, d. 177, l. 210.

⁷⁷ Struggle for the Victory of Soviet Power in Azerbaijan 1967, 313-314; "Azerbaijan" 1919, October 23; "Ashkhataavor" 1919, October 24.

⁷⁸ "Ashkhataavor" 1919, November 2, "Hayrenik" 1919, December 30; Great October and the Struggle for Soviet Power in Azerbaijan 1958, 364-370, Hovhannisyan 1982: 204.

⁷⁹ Gadzhiev 2004: 156-157; Zohrabyan 2012: 215-216.

By the second half of October 1919, it was already evident that the establishment of the American governorship in Sharur-Nakhijevan had been thwarted by Azerbaijan, which had conditioned it on the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Zangezur, while the opposite process was underway. Khatisyan called this a pretext to sabotage Haskell's plan, which was not entirely correct.

Finally, one more step seemed to be taken: on October 6, 1919, Jafarov, in a conversation with J. O. Wardrop, expressed doubts about Haskell's authority in the political affairs of Transcaucasia, stating that without renouncing its jurisdiction over Sharur-Nakhijevan, it would not resist the American proposal and, like Armenia, would agree to appoint a representative to escort the American governor to Nakhijevan. Considering himself successful, Haskell departed for Paris to report to Herbert Clark Hoover, head of the "American Relief Administration," to clarify the scope of aid and request an extension of his authority. In his place, the American governorship in Nakhijevan was handed over to the Chief of Staff of the American Mission, Colonel James S. Rae, who served as Acting Supreme Commissioner during Haskell's absence.⁸⁰

The British were also dissatisfied with W. Haskell, a sentiment expressed by George Kidston, head of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office, who said that Haskell should have represented all Allied powers but had arbitrarily indulged in all kinds of orders without informing the Allies of anything.⁸¹ In a conversation with Crow in Paris on November 28, 1919, he stressed that Haskell's appointment initially inspired confidence, but by comparing information from several people arriving from the Caucasus, he had concluded that Haskell was the last person who could be entrusted with such a delicate and difficult task and was absolutely unsuitable for dealing with Orientals.⁸²

Meanwhile, the Muslim world was consolidating, spreading toward Transcaucasia, toward their brethren. T. Devoyants, the resident-intelligence officer of the Republic of Armenia in Constantinople and head of the agency network, made the following interesting note in a report (No 32) addressed to General G. Ghorghanyan on October 6, 1919: he reported that three Georgian and two Azerbaijani officers were present with Mustafa Kemal Pasha at the meeting convened in Sivas and participated in the Sivas Congress⁸³ to discuss the issue of defending the Turkish borders, finally undertaking all measures to strengthen army units and Kurdish-Tatar bands along the entire length of the Armenian border. He cited a telegram sent by the commander of the 15th Turkish Corps from Erzurum to the Minister of War in Constantinople, which emphasized that preparatory measures were being taken on the Armenian border in connection with the approaching events. The report stressed that these preparations were not, in fact,

⁸⁰ Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 313, 612.

⁸¹ Hovhannisyan 2014: 240.

⁸² Hovhannisyan 2014: 478.

⁸³ Archive of the Republic of Armenia (Boston), No. 17/17, store. 12, d. 3, l. 40.

delayed. As proof of the activation of Turkish forces in the areas adjacent to the Armenian border, the report mentioned the maneuvers of Turkish units confirmed by intelligence data, particularly the movement of the 9th Turkish Division in the direction of the Olti region, the operations of the 11th Division in the areas adjacent to the Sharur-Nakhijevan and Zangibasar regions, and the regrouping of the 3rd and 12th Divisions in the Trebizond and Erzurum regions, which were also confirmed by other sources.

This document recorded that small groups of *chetniks* (irregulars) were heading to the Caucasus from the Erznka and Shinikh-Garahisar regions via Erzurum. In addition, it was stated that the “Milli” organization was expanding more successfully in the Tortum region, with separate detachments heading to the Olti, Alashkert valleys, Sarighamish, Kaghzvan, Kulpi, and Sharur-Nakhijevan regions.⁸⁴ The report also made an important conclusion that, parallel to the successes of the Bolsheviks, Turkey had been encouraged and was rushing to use it to strengthen its Pan-Islamist goals with the aim of destroying the Armenian Question. At the same time, Captain Vahagn Muradyants also expressed alarm regarding the possibility of the Allies showing possible indifferent behavior towards them, noting that the nightmare of the past year could be repeated in more horrifying forms. Based on this, one of the main intelligence officers of Armenia, Captain V. Muradyants, concluded that it was necessary to immediately inform the Allies about everything so that they could take timely measures to ensure the physical existence of the Armenians.

Muradyants then addressed another important circumstance. He noted that the Turks, taking advantage of the fact that they had refrained from all kinds of punitive measures against the rebellious Tatars—who were committing illegal acts on legitimate Armenian territory—in accordance with the proposal of Supreme Commissioner Haskell, were continuously supplying the rebels with weapons, ammunition, and even artillery, organizing the Tatars in all the villages of Zangibasar, Vedibasar, Sharur, and Nakhijevan. Muradyants also referred to the anti-Armenian activities of Khalil Pasha in Nakhijevan, where the latter called for unification with Turkey in his speeches. At the same time, other concrete facts were noted: at the beginning of December, a representative of Azerbaijan sent about 100 Turkish officers from Constantinople to Baku, and Miralay Riza Bey, who had worked as a police chief for the Turks, was again sent by Nuri Pasha to Azerbaijan to take up his old post, and so on. There is a note by Major General H. Akhverdyan on this highly important report, in which the latter emphasized his complete agreement with the facts and views presented in Captain Muradyants’ report.⁸⁵

The result was that on November 23, 1919, through the arbitration of Colonel Rae, and with the aim of overcoming the crisis, a compromise agreement was adopted, signed by the Prime Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, by which the parties undertook to open the roads leading to Zangezur and to end the clashes through

⁸⁴ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 271, l. 85-86.

⁸⁵ NAA, f. 204, c. 1, d. 133, l. 26-27; f. 200, c. 1, d. 271, l. 86.

peaceful negotiations. The document entered into force from the moment of signing but was subject to ratification. J. Rae, Acting Supreme Commissioner, was recognized as the principal and neutral arbitrator for every issue. The process of ratifying this agreement is also attested to by the Georgian Foreign Minister E. Gegechkori.⁸⁶

The issues of disarmament, refugees, the inviolability of semi-autonomous enclaves, and the status of Karabakh and Sharur-Nakhijevan were omitted from the agreement⁸⁷, which led the issue to a dead end. On December 3, W. Haskell, who had returned to the Caucasus, was angered by the failure of the American governorship. He blamed Halil Bey and the Azerbaijanis, but then unnecessarily blamed Rae and demanded that Khatisyan recall the Armenian troops from Zangezur and adopt a more conciliatory position toward Azerbaijan.

Haskell took other steps, which gave Admiral M. Bristol cause to criticize Haskell, who then blamed Rae, causing the latter to resign and sever his ties with the American aid agencies.⁸⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Edmund L. Daily replaced Rae as Haskell's Chief of Staff. In this context, Admiral M. Bristol in Constantinople protested to Haskell, saying that Rae and the other Americans in Tiflis had failed to distinguish fact from propaganda, as they had swallowed the Armenian line about a major Turkish-Azerbaijani plan to unite on the Karabakh-Zangezur-Nakhijevan land bridge. He stated that he did not believe the forces attacking Zangezur from Nakhijevan were led by regular Turkish officers, but he had no doubt that those forces merely included Turkish deserters, officers, and men, and that the British were indeed at fault because they initially supported one side and then the other, while the Caucasian races, like the Greeks, considered it right to kill, plunder, and expel all other peoples.⁸⁹

Azerbaijani authors also wrote about W. Haskell's authority and thus the conditionality of the Nakhijevan Neutral Zone he drew, testifying that Azerbaijan was not uninvolved in hindering Haskell's plans. N. Jamalova writes about this, noting that the attempts of Colonel William Haskell, the Supreme Commissioner of the Allies in the South Caucasus, to create a Neutral Zone and hand over Nakhijevan to the Armenian administration failed due to the efforts of the ADR government, particularly citing the conference held in Baku on August 29, 1919, with Haskell's participation. At the conference, it was proposed to create a Neutral Zone in Sharur-Daralyagyaz and Nakhijevan under the leadership of an American governor. The American administrator appointed by Haskell was entrusted with the governance of the neutral zone, the interests of Azerbaijan and Armenia were to be equal in the Neutral Zone, the Baku-Julfa railway was to be under supervision, and the Azerbaijanis and both sides in general were obliged to withdraw their troops. N. Gozalova believes that the

⁸⁶ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 282, l. 35-36; Nagorno-Karabakh in 1918-1923 1992, 352-353; The Republic of Armenia 1918-1920 2000, 140-141.

⁸⁷ Hovhannisyan 2014: 263-264.

⁸⁸ "Yarrach" 1920, January 22; "Ashkhatavor" 1919, December 18.

⁸⁹ Hovhannisyan 1982: 227.

government of Azerbaijan did not approve of Haskell interfering in its internal affairs. Haskell's proposal for a neutral zone was viewed as interference in the borders of the Azerbaijani state. To prevent the interference, the Azerbaijani government gave diplomatic initiative privileges to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister M. Y. Jafarov, who was concerned about the deviations from the agreements, addressing British High Commissioner Oliver Wardrop with a diplomatic message about this on October 9.⁹⁰ However, according to N. Gozalova, although Azerbaijan agreed to the creation of a neutral zone, it simultaneously considered that the mentioned territories were part of Azerbaijan, and a demand was put before Haskell to defend the unification of these territories with Azerbaijan during the Paris Peace Conference. And finally, in N. Gozalova's conclusion, Azerbaijan presented objections that Haskell played an important role in favor of Azerbaijan by resolving issues through bilateral agreement, which led to Armenia's dissatisfaction. As a result, the Azerbaijani government was able to achieve territorial supremacy by establishing relations with the representatives of foreign countries in the South Caucasus, and the British, Turkish, American, and Italian representatives supported the position of the Azerbaijani government regarding the Nakhijevan and Sharur-Daralagyaz regions.⁹¹

And so, in November 1919, Haskell returned to Paris to report on the conditions in Armenia and to request that his authority be extended to Georgia and Azerbaijan.⁹² He then presented a report to the Peace Conference that Armenia was still isolated and vulnerable to pressure from the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan, which controlled transport routes, railway workshops, and fuel supplies. W. Haskell's request to be vested with broader powers was granted, despite the reservations of the British, who had already sent J. Oliver Wardrop to Tiflis as the Supreme Commissioner for the Caucasus, not trusting the abilities of the American officer.⁹³ W. Haskell was not unequivocally accepted by the main rivals of the Entente. J. Kidston, in a letter to Eyre Crowe on November 28, again addressing the issue of extending W. Haskell's authority, had stated that according to information received from the Caucasus, they had concluded that Haskell could not be trusted with such a delicate and difficult task, also accusing him of ignorance, arbitrary imposition, and lack of knowledge of Eastern affairs. A similar view was held by the acting commander of the French military mission in the Caucasus, Commander Émile de Nonancourt, who had complained to his government as early as October 12, emphasizing that Haskell was very ambitious⁹⁴. This idea is also confirmed by Al. Khatysyan in a telegram sent to the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Washington, Garegin Pasternadjan (Armen Garo), on November 18, 1919: "After the departure of the English, we are under

⁹⁰ Jamalova 2023: 166.

⁹¹ Jamalova 2023: 167.

⁹² Mahmudov 2008 (ed.): 270.

⁹³ Ismailov 2010: 185-186.

⁹⁴ Hovhannisyan 2007: 300.

the protection of the Americans, but that protection is only platonic, because the Americans, being deprived of military force, have no opportunity to force the Tatars and Turks to carry out their orders... Thanks to Haskell's intervention, an agreement has already been adopted by which the regions of Sharur, Nakhijevan, and Goghtan were to form an American Governorship, a neutral zone, until the conference".⁹⁵

On December 9, 1919, after a meeting with J. O. Wardrop⁹⁶ and W. Haskell, Evangulyan came to the not very confident assumption that before concluding any treaty, it was important to smooth out the border disputes; that reaching an agreement with Georgia was a priority, believing that this would compel its ally, Azerbaijan, to be accommodating towards Armenia, adding that the final resolution was hindered by the Alaverdi mines.⁹⁷ Evangulyan had concluded that they had been unable to reach any constructive agreement the previous year, and the Georgians had used the very arbitration agreement concluded with the Armenians to submit the dispute to arbitration.⁹⁸ Ultimately, according to Evangulyan, the parties came to a preliminary agreement that Akhaltsikhe should be ceded to Georgia, and the Neutral Zone, without the Alaverdi region, should be ceded to Armenia, leaving the Alaverdi region under Georgia's control as a disputed territory until a decision was reached by the Paris Peace Conference.⁹⁹ And finally, whom was L. Evangulyan proposing to take on the role of arbitrator in the Armenian-Georgian dispute? L. Evangulyan considered possible the head of the Greek representation, Stavridakis, who was less an Armenophile than a Turcophobe, speaking against the candidacy of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Armenia, W. Haskell, who was an advocate of rapprochement with the Muslims.¹⁰⁰

On December 18, 1919, the Head of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, Alkhazov, reporting on a consultation held with Colonel W. Haskell, stated that the Government of the Republic of Armenia, through General J. O. Wardrop and Captain J. Gracey, had raised the issue before the British government of sending military instructors to Armenia. In connection with this, Colonel W. Haskell, who spoke at the consultation, expressed his readiness to assist in this matter, promising that there would be no obstacles and that the Government of the Republic of Armenia could submit the corresponding request¹⁰¹, but it did not materialize and remained on paper.

From December 18-21, 1919, during his visit as High Commissioner to Armenia, he traveled to Kars, Alexandropol, and Karakilisa. On the first day of the trip, in Yerevan, he met with A. Khatisyan, the Minister of Finance and Provisioning S.

⁹⁵ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, d. 395, l. 4.

⁹⁶ Wardrop John Oliver – British representative in Transcaucasia.

⁹⁷ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 125.

⁹⁸ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, reverse side of sheet 125.

⁹⁹ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 125.

¹⁰⁰ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheet 126.

¹⁰¹ NAA, f. 201, c. 1, inv. 427, part I, sheets 28-28a; Virabyan 1999: 38.

Araratyan, and the Minister of Welfare and Labour A. Babalyan. In the debates, the republic's authorities complained about being kept out of the distribution of their provisions.¹⁰²

As of December 21, 1919, the acting Chief of Staff reported that despite some disagreements among the leaders of the Turkish national circles, Kazim Karabekir Pasha and Rauf Bey themselves, relying on the indecisiveness of the Entente "Allied" countries, and the absence of sufficient forces at their disposal, wanted to immediately seize Smyrna (Izmir, Symrna) and the northern part of the territory up to Arpachay with their own forces, considering this the most opportune moment for enthusiasm and for creating general sentiments among like-minded people, given their belief in the possibility of realizing these ideas. And secondly, in order to present the Paris Conference with a *fait accompli* by seizing the territory of Turkey with national forces and strengthening the propaganda of the principle of Turkey's indivisibility, thereby bringing about the annulment of the Armenian Question.

The mentioned document also stated that reliable intelligence sources had revealed that a congress of the commanders of the Turkish corps was to be held in Erzurum at the end of November 1919, with the participation of representatives of Kurds, Ajars, the Azerbaijani military, and Russian Bolsheviks, with the aim of acting against Armenia and the strengthening of the Allies, hindering the dismemberment of Turkey's territory, and ultimately, developing a general plan of action against Turkey's enemies.

Losing extremely valuable time, the Armenians relied until the very end on W. Haskell's promises and assurances.

It must be emphasized that Haskell's personality cannot be evaluated unequivocally. The latter stressed his impartiality and sometimes his pro-Armenian position, but in reality, his position was unstable, not subject to certain standards, and ultimately, like his country's policy, was two-faced, inconsistent, and built upon great political self-interest, hence subject to change. This is evidenced by his following noteworthy expression (November-December 1919): "The Yerevan politicians are doing everything to provoke a massacre, and it looks like they truly want it, so that they can announce it to the whole world and create a new uproar in these spheres. They are speculating on this in vain; if this continues indefinitely, the whole world will know the truth and stop believing. The Tatars are all the same to me, and the interests of the Armenians are dear to me as the High Commissioner of Armenia, and it would be painful for me if these things were known".¹⁰³ What wonderful demagoguery, which was sometimes believed, and sometimes taken seriously, harming Armenian interests.

According to the telegram (No. 1064) of the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, Evangulyan, dated February 21, 1920, he concluded that

¹⁰² NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 638, sheets 1-2, inv. 362, sheet 99.

¹⁰³ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 183, sheet 146.

both Wardrop and Haskell were against the return of Russia to the Caucasus.¹⁰⁴ Evangulyan insisted that in this situation, both Wardrop, Haskell, Gabba, and Nonancourt, and even Venizelos [who had a reputation as a friend of the Armenians - V.V.], were proposing the realization of the idea of a confederation as a way out of the situation. However, according to Evangulyan, the issue of “forming a union with Georgia and Azerbaijan” for the Republic of Armenia had a “direct connection” with the “Volunteer Army”¹⁰⁵, and that no matter how bad the situation was with the latter, they should not take any steps of an absolutely aggressive nature against Russia.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, the representative of the Republic of Armenia concludes: “My conversations with Haskell and Wardrop personally leave the impression that their governments are against the return of the Caucasus to Russia. I even think that the Allies will not allow the command of the Volunteer Army to cross the line it currently holds. Colonel Haskell, according to reliable information, assured Vakilov, the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Georgia, that Russia would not enter the borders of Azerbaijan. W. Haskell told Abdurakhman-bek Hakhverdov, the representative of Azerbaijan in Armenia, that if the Armenian-Azerbaijani conference yielded no results, he intended to attach the Armenian part of Zangezur to Armenia, and Nakhichevan to Azerbaijan”¹⁰⁷, obliging them to allow the return of refugees and let the nomads pass.¹⁰⁸

On May 14, 1920, during the Bolshevik uprising, W. Haskell issued a statement that if the rebels did not lay down their arms, the USA would refuse to provide material assistance¹⁰⁹, which sounded like a direct threat. In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs dated May 16, 1920, T. Bekzadyan reported on a meeting with Colonel Haskell on May 13, according to which W. Haskell’s main observation was that he had expressed alarm over the seizure of American warehouses by Bolsheviks in Alexandropol, demanding decisive action against the Bolsheviks. In response, T. Bekzadyan assured him that, thanks to the drastic measures taken by the government, these issues would be resolved within 2-3 days, and train traffic would be regularized. Addressing the complexity of their relations with the Georgians, T. Bekzadyan informed Haskell that the Government of Georgia had promised not to create obstacles to the regular delivery of cargo.¹¹⁰ T. Bekzadyan also reported that Haskell, after being assured of the Armenian government’s anti-Bolshevik disposition, only then confirmed that the American Committee would be obliged to hand over the provisions to the

¹⁰⁴ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, reverse side of sheet 123; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 440, sheet 1.

¹⁰⁵ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 116, sheets 124-124 reverse side.

¹⁰⁶ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 440, sheet 3.

¹⁰⁷ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheet 123.

¹⁰⁸ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheets 125-126.

¹⁰⁹ Armenian Question. Encyclopedia 1996, 281; Tigran Bekzadyan. Diary of the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Armenia in Azerbaijan Tigran Bekzadyan (March 11, 1919 – August 27, 1919). Edited by VI. Harutyunyan, Yerevan, Author’s publication, 2025, pp. 156, 158.

¹¹⁰ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 116, sheets 125-126; Armenian Question. Encyclopedia 1996, 281.

Government of the Republic of Armenia in Batumi, and therefore there needed to be a person in Batumi to whom the goods could be entrusted. Haskell was assured of the full readiness of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, proposing the candidacies of Yer. Ter-Minasyan or Consul General M. Atabekyan for the position of authorized representative. The issue of the military attaché was also addressed, suggesting that Captain Bekzadyan, an officer of the communication service, be sent to Batumi to Haskell, stating that the latter was well acquainted with their customs and would always keep them informed about the state of affairs, which would prevent many surprises.¹¹¹

The May Uprising of 1920 caused deep demoralization for the Republic of Armenia; two years later, the army did not remain completely loyal to national independence, and the officer corps proved to be inept and indecisive. These events were fatal in Haskell's contradictory activity in the Transcaucasia, during which he ordered his relief workers in Yerevan to leave the country, and he himself departed via Batumi, about which Lieutenant Colonel Charles Livingston informed Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan, saying that he had received an order to evacuate all military personnel. At the moment of his hasty departure, W. Haskell had issued an order to suspend American grain shipments and to reroute cargo destined for Batumi to other European ports.¹¹² On May 3, Ch. Livingston informed Prime Minister Ohanjanyan that he had been ordered to withdraw all military personnel, as well as the women of the Near East Relief, and Dr. Clarence Usher was left behind to take responsibility for further relief operations.¹¹³

Haskell's flight caused dissatisfaction among the Allied representatives in Tiflis, which showed that the symbolic partnership with the Allies was useful only when confined to charitable work. H. Luke reported that they had learned about this two hours before Haskell's departure, that it had caused slight panic and a sense of shame among them, and Commander Charles-Marie de Nonancourt complained that Haskell and other American officers in the Caucasus were "rude, clumsy, ignorant of local conditions." Haskell was described as "personally antipathetic to the Armenians, who criticize him for his lack of intelligence and his complete and persistent ignorance of the country and its inhabitants".¹¹⁴ And Sh. M. de Nonancourt, the head of French mission in the Caucasus, approached the matter more strictly, finding that Haskell and many other American officers in the Caucasus behaved rudely, inconsiderately, were unaware of the local conditions, and that he had become personally antipathetic to the Armenians, who accused him of intellectual poverty and complete and persistent ignorance of the country and its inhabitants.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ NAA, f. 275. c. 5, inv. 212, sheet 80.

¹¹² NAA, f. 199, c. 1, inv. 128, sheet 64; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 412, sheet 52.

¹¹³ Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

¹¹⁴ Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

¹¹⁵ Hovhannisyan 2015: 302.

Historian Christopher Walker presents Haskell as a swindler who was about to be exposed as an embezzler: "On May 5, 1920, when the Caucasus was shaken by the uncertainty caused by the Bolshevik coup in Transcaucasia and the uprising in Armenia, Haskell received notice that a financial investigation commission was on its way, along with inspecting auditors. With lightning speed, he and his staff fled Tiflis, scattering evidence right and left. His justification was his concern about the spread of Bolshevism. Haskell issued an order that the records should be destroyed. His staff in Yerevan received a similar order".¹¹⁶

After suppressing the May Uprising, Haskell authorized the last shipment intended for Armenia. Haskell then briefly returned to the Caucasus, but did not dare to leave Batumi, requesting that the Government of the Republic of Armenia appoint a representative with whom he could deal. After several warm messages with Ohanjanyan, at the end of June 1920, he departed from Batumi once again, never to return. Colonel C. Telford placed the aid organized by the American and Allied states under the private patronage of the Near East Relief.¹¹⁷

In Armenia, Colonel C. Telford transferred aid sponsored by the American and Allied governments to the private patronage of the Near East Relief, where he called the Armenians ungrateful, "professional beggars." Subsequently, the following month, Haskell visited the Foreign Office in London and, in a speech there, used the same words against the Armenians as C. Telford. The British government, in turn, had little faith in the administrative capabilities of the Armenians, and the May Uprising provided a convenient pretext to further delay the supply of arms and equipment for the Armenian army.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile, taking advantage of the permissiveness of Haskell and the other Allies, the Georgian side had become active, openly claiming the disputed and neutral territories. On July 31, 1920, Ohanjanyan, reporting that he had received a private secret letter of July 29, demanded that the Armenian Ambassador in Tiflis, T. Bekzadyan, strongly protest to the Georgian government and point out the consequences that such an aggressive policy could entail at a time when they were sparing no means to end the border disputes by mutual agreement, including in the Neutral Zone. He also informed him about Colonel Haskell's letter, which recalled the Governor-General of the Neutral Zone of Borchalu District, Major Mark Alpin, suggesting negotiations with the Georgian government to work out a new form of administration for that region, or to temporarily divide the region into two districts with Armenian and Georgian administrations, or to form a joint administration whose head

¹¹⁶Walker 1980: 287.

¹¹⁷ NAA, f. 200, c. 1, inv. 412, sheets 52-53; f. 200, c. 1, inv. 442, part II, sheets 553-554; "Yarraj" 1920, August 3.

¹¹⁸ Hovhannisyan 1996: 248.

would be chosen by mutual consent.¹¹⁹ He also suggested negotiating with the Georgians regarding Batumi, with certain guarantees for the Republic of Armenia.

However, none of this prevented the Armenian side from showing a certain overt servitude and presenting a gift to W. Haskell. Thus, in a letter (No. 0289) from the Chief of Staff Baghdasarov on August 4, 1920, addressed to General H. A. Kishmishyan, military attaché to the diplomatic mission of the Republic of Armenia in Tiflis, the issue was raised for the chargé d'affaires Bekzadyan to purchase a Caucasian sword for Colonel W. Haskell as a memorial and thank you for the assistance he provided in the matter of the people's salvation. The letter requested that the best sword be bought, regardless of the price, and that an inscription be placed on it.¹²⁰

With this, the US government aid program ended, and the new General Director of the Caucasian branch of the Near East Relief, the famous missionary, participant in the Defense of Van and the First Congress of Western Armenians, E. Yarrow, moved his residence from Tiflis to Alexandropol.¹²¹

On August 6, 1920 (No. 2752), the diplomatic representative of the Republic of Armenia addressed the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, reporting that, according to a message received from High Commissioner W. Haskell, they were leaving Transcaucasia, recalling the Governor-General of the Neutral Zone of the Borchalu district. Accordingly, the Governments of Georgia and Armenia were advised to agree on matters of future governance. The chargé d'affaires proposed, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, to immediately jointly discuss the final territorial affiliation of the zone, asking the Georgian government to promptly submit its considerations.¹²² In a telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on August 17, 1920 (No. 2892), the diplomatic representative reported that he had appealed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia to reach an agreement on the further administration of the Neutral Zone, saying that he was waiting for instructions from the government regarding negotiations with the Government of Georgia.¹²³

It was precisely this way that the Allies, W. Haskell, and others further deepened the quarrels among the Transcaucasian republics and abandoned them when they were no longer within the sphere of their interests. And generally, it must be noted that there are some noteworthy facts that the Allied representatives in Transcaucasia and Armenia, taking advantage of the cover of their official duties, even dedicated time to solving personal problems and enriching themselves, which left an extremely oppressive impression on the public. In this regard, S. Vratsyan recorded an incident, again related to Colonel W. Haskell's departure from Transcaucasia: "There was much talk about Haskell's activities, but the result obtained was insignificant... On the way,

¹¹⁹NAA. f., inv. 139, sheets 31-32; f. 275, c. 5, inv. 211, sheet 222.

¹²⁰ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 114, sheets 10-12.

¹²¹ Makhmuryan 2016: 108-109.

¹²² NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 207, sheet 100.

¹²³ NAA, f. 275, c. 5, inv. 207, sheet 117.

near Trabzon, Haskell's ship was attacked by a group of masked robbers who snatched a bag of diamonds and other precious stones from Mrs. Haskell, which Mrs. Haskell had collected while accompanying her husband and was now taking to America. It was said that the Georgians had organized the act, which was not far from the truth".¹²⁴

Essentially, the US representatives were overly self-centered in their actions, the foundation of which was only bare self-interest. After Colonel Haskell's flight and the suspension of American aid, the Government's position became difficult; outwardly belligerent and self-assured, it was nevertheless shaken by the army's unreliability during the recent unrest, the skepticism shown by the Allied forces towards Armenia, the concentration of the Red Army along the borders, and the spiraling intensity of popular discontent, terrible inflation, and food shortages. The government's military achievements against the Muslim rebels were nullified; generally, a much more difficult situation was recorded in internal affairs.

The final addressee of T. Bekzadyan's continuous appeals to US Consul Charles Moser was E. Yarrow, who took over the post of Director of American relief operations in Armenia after Haskell's departure. After Haskell left, E. Yarrow assumed responsibility for relief work, which included caring for over 20,000 orphans, including about 10,000 in Alexandropol, 6,000 in Kars, and 3,000 in Yerevan.¹²⁵

On October 5, 1920, Yarrow reported that the Turks had attacked Merdenek, Sarighamish, and Kagzvan without warning, causing the flight of more than 50,000 Armenian refugees. He concluded that Armenia had very few resources left, lacked money for external purchases, and appealed to America for aid. The petition regarding this was transmitted through Vice Admiral M. Bristol, the US High Commissioner in Constantinople, to the State Department, which did not believe the reports transmitted by the Armenians, even asserting that the Armenians were the cause of the troubles, having been the first to enter Olti in the summer. Furthermore, in his letter of October 5 to the US State Department, considering the fact of the existence of the Armenian republic to be vague and unrealistic, he concluded that the Armenians' assurances of being against Bolshevism should not be taken at face value, and that the Armenians were merely trying to extort aid and money with their actions.¹²⁶

P.S. – Before his final departure for America, High Commissioner W. Haskell bade farewell to the Government of the Republic of Armenia, expressing desperate joy over the successes of the Armenian people and donating \$15,000 for the benefit of the army. In his farewell speech, he also expressed hope that the resilience and striving for life shown by the Armenian people would ensure that the aid provided would not be in vain, and that the Americans understood this well.¹²⁷

¹²⁴Vratsyan 1966: 63, 65.

¹²⁵ Hovhannisyan 1996: 278.

¹²⁶ Hovhannisyan 2016: 243-244.

¹²⁷ Tumanyan 2012: 323.

These emotional outpourings in no way prevented the “humanitarian” Colonel W. Haskell, without the slightest hesitation and with his pro-Azerbaijani position, from completely derailing the vital interests of the Republic of Armenia in matters of territorial demarcation—in the Karabakh-Artsakh, Nakhichevan, and other disputed territorial disputes. He hindered the realization of the priorities deemed important for the foreign policy interests of the Republic of Armenia and essentially contributed to the strengthening of Azerbaijan’s positions, just like his Entente partners, and particularly the British. This ultimately led to the isolation and capitulation of the Republic of Armenia before Turkey and Bolshevik Russia, and its brutal dismemberment by them, while W. Haskell hastily left Armenia, where he no longer had anything to say and, in essence, nothing to do.

In any case, there were expectations towards the Allies, which were illusory but without an alternative. St. Ghorghanyan, Governor of Kars, well described the moment of this delusion: “...from recognized Europe, from the great ‘Allied’ Allies, we thought that one way or another, we were under pan-European patronage. And all these conditions forced us to believe that those exploding bombs, the nervous comings and goings, the panic, and the everywhere clatter of weapons were merely a sweet dream. That threatening and feverish atmosphere disposed people to be enchanted once again by national ideals, and all of us, with very high spirits towards right and truth, followed that current, which was so easily alluring and so unsparing”.¹²⁸ The Armenians nevertheless harbored hopes that “Against the allied forces of our internal and external enemies, we must oppose our nationally educated and disposed army, and we must direct our state sails in the same direction”.¹²⁹

In terms of completing the colorful image of Colonel W. Haskell, it is characteristic that after the May events of 1920, fearing those movements, he quickly departed for Tiflis, by which his activities in Armenia essentially reached a dead end. In this regard, Al. Khatisian’s words are remarkable: “If we also mention the certain political role that Col. Haskell tried to play, we can consider the role of the ‘Allies’ in the Caucasus, and especially in Armenia, to be exhausted”.¹³⁰ Zurab Avalov (Avalishvili), the Georgian representative, diplomat, and historian at the Paris Peace Conference, expressed a very apt opinion about W. Haskell: “Unfortunately, the idea of an Armenian mandate encountered many obstacles. True, Armenia received the most extensive charitable aid. The Supreme Council sent the American Colonel Haskell as a special commissioner (with very broad and vague powers), who, on behalf of the Allies, provided special official assistance to all persons and organizations working in Armenia. It seems that he was mainly a high-ranking ‘tow-truck’ for wagons with flour, condensed milk, and other goods sent from Batumi to Armenia. ‘Condensed milk... instead of a mandate’—this, it seems, is how the result of the American plans and the hopes associated with them in

¹²⁸ The Province of Kars within the Republic of Armenia 2018: 442.

¹²⁹ The Province of Kars within the Republic of Armenia 2018: 101-102.

¹³⁰ Khatisyan 1968: 192-193.

the field of the Armenian Question can be briefly expressed. ...Assurances that Armenia's fate would be secured in any case. Harbord and Haskell spoke in this sense—that Mustafa Kemal's national movement was somewhat of a bluff, and so on. It must be admitted that even the most careless person could believe in the reality of the American assurances".¹³¹

Haskell assumed this position from the Allied Conference merely to give advice, supervise, and console the Armenian people. With his appointment, the European Allies of the Republic of Armenia seemingly thwarted the positive actions aimed at the formation of the Armenian state and their contradictory approaches and resolutions aimed at solving the Armenian Question. As a result, Armenia found itself in a dead-end situation in terms of selecting future political prospects. The security interests of the Republic of Armenia were essentially jeopardized, and the Turkish-Armenian War of 1920 offered no other possibility or foreign-policy option besides self-sacrifice and forced Sovietization. W. Haskell also "contributed his share" to this, whom is sometimes unfairly presented as a "humanitarian, naive" American commissioner who was "misled" in the dark labyrinths of the Caucasus. This, in reality, was Colonel W. Haskell, the Allied High Commissioner in Armenia and Transcaucasia, with all the colorful layers of his character.

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¹³¹ Avalov 1924: 227, 232.

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