In the summer of 1920, almost two years after the end of the Great War, much of eastern Europe was still not at peace. Russia had been the scene of a long and bloody civil war in which powerfully armed counter-revolutionary forces sought to overthrow the Soviet Government of Lenin and Trotsky. By early 1920 Soviet armies had defeated their principal internal foes, but they still faced an external enemy in the western borderlands of Russia. This was the Polish Government of Józef Pilsudski, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the army. Pilsudski was an ambitious man and an ardent nationalist who sought to regain the Polish frontiers of 1772 and to re-establish Poland as a Great Power. To this end, he had quarrelled bitterly with the Czechoslovaks and fought for territory with the Lithuanians and western Ukrainians of Galicia. His forces had also engaged Trotsky's Red Army in early 1919 and had made significant territorial gains while the Bolsheviks contended with more dangerous enemies.

At the end of 1919 Pilsudski could look with a certain satisfaction upon the successes his armies had achieved: they had taken Galicia from the Ukrainians, and they had also seized Vilna, which was claimed by Lithuania. But Pilsudsky was still not content with his territorial gains from Russia, and in December 1919 Polish representatives began to ask the French Government, Poland's principal ally, about its attitude towards a spring offensive aimed at seizing Kiev and the western Ukraine. The Quai d'Orsay, then headed by the intransigent anti-Bolshevik Premier Alexandre Millerand, refused to discourage Pilsudski's plans. In the matter of peace, he said, Poland would have to consider its own interests.¹

Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

The Poles eventually launched their offensive at the end of April 1920. Initially everything went as planned and Kiev fell to Polish forces in early May. But success was short-lived, as the Red Army launched a powerful counter-offensive, forcing the Poles to surrender Kiev and then throwing them back westward in headlong disorder. So grave was the Polish defeat that in August Warsaw was threatened and it seemed for a time that Poland might be on the brink of total collapse. The ensuing crisis was the worst to befall the French and British governments since the end of the Great War. David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, raised the possibility of war, to which British labour responded with warnings of 'Hands off Russia' and threats of a general strike. In Paris the government despaired because Poland was its principal ally in eastern Europe: a Polish collapse would undermine the Treaty of Versailles and leave France without an eastern counterweight to Germany.

What then could the French Government do to help its eastern ally? In answer to this question, one British historian, Norman Davies, has said that there was little the French could do and that as a result Millerand sat on his hands and left Lloyd George to fashion Allied policy towards Poland. In fact, the French could not sit still while the Poles collapsed. The French General Staff stated the obvious when it noted that a Polish military defeat would undo much of the Allied victory in the Great War: Germany stood to regain its eastern frontiers of 1914 without firing a shot. Likewise, the German government could claim to be the new rampart against the spread of Bolshevism and insist on a revision of the Treaty of Versailles removing the restrictions against German rearmament. From Berlin the French legation warned that, in the event of a Polish defeat, Allied pressure might not suffice to stop certain German parties from invoking a Red threat to justify an invasion of Polish territory, perhaps in spite of orders from the German Government. The impulse to exploit such a favourable situation, thereby finishing off the Poles and presenting the Allies with a fait accompli, might be too great a temptation.

These fears were only augmented by the continued westward retreat of an apparently disintegrating Polish army. The reports of the French Minister in Warsaw, Hector de Panahiou, painted a dark picture of defeat.

5 Marcilly (French representative in Berlin), no. 329, 28 May 1920, *Pologne*, 71; and also Bulletins mensuels, 2e Bureau, EMA, Bulletin du 1er mai, Service Historique de l'Armée, Vincennes, Section Contemporaine.
The Polish armies in the north, said Panafieu, no longer existed except as a retreating mob of disorganized units. Desertion was rife. Some men had thrown away their arms, while others lacked shoes or proper clothing. Supply lines had collapsed, and some officers had abandoned their units. The military situation was such that the road to Warsaw lay completely open to the Red Army. Conditions among Polish forces to the south were better, but Panafieu feared that they would not hold up much longer under the strain of continued retreat. Indeed, Panafieu advised that if the Red Army were able to assure its lines of supply, the Poles would not be able to stop it from taking Warsaw.6

With the reports of defeat in Poland also came recriminations against the Polish high command and government, and especially against Pilsudski himself. Panafieu accused the Polish General Staff of bungling and the government of ineptitude. He blamed Pilsudski for Warsaw’s overly-ambitious eastern policy and accused him of trying to throw responsibility for Poland’s military disasters on to other shoulders. Indeed, Panafieu even suspected that Pilsudski was preparing to break with the Allies in order to negotiate terms with Moscow.7

Such recriminations were infectious. In Paris the Allied Generalissimo, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, believed that the Allies could do nothing in Poland until they had secured the resignation of Pilsudski. If he did not resign, he would come to terms with the Bolsheviks and organize a communist Poland: Bolshevism would spread to all of eastern Europe and an important link in the chain of defences against Germany would be lost.8 Even Millerand, in consultation with Lloyd George, seemed to give credence to such ideas.9

Aside from the recriminations there were also calls for Allied troops. In early July, Prince Eustachy Sapieha, the Polish Foreign Minister, asked Panafieu whether the French Government would consider the dispatch of troops to Poland.10 Panafieu expressed his doubts on this subject and he was not wrong. At the Allied conference of Spa in early July, Lloyd George had raised the same question with the French delegation. Would the French Government, he asked, be prepared to send troops to Poland?

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6 Unsigned letter by Panafieu, 18 July 1920, Service Historique, Section Contemporaine, Fonds Pologne, no. 12.
7 Panafieu, no. 213, 3 Aug. 1920, Russie 291.
9 Ullman, p. 210, n52.
10 Panafieu to E. de Peretti de la Rocca (Deputy Political Director of the Quai d’Orsay), personal, 6 July 1920, Russie 289.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

if Britain did the same? Foch quickly said no, a response with which Millerand could only concur.\textsuperscript{11}

The calls for French troops, however, did not cease. On 20 July Panafieu warned the Quai d'Orsay that the military situation probably could not be saved unless Allied units were sent immediately to stiffen Polish resistance.\textsuperscript{12} But Foch reiterated that only Poland could stop the Soviet advance. If the French Government committed troops to Poland, said Foch, it 'would set into motion a course of events the consequences of which would be incalculable'.\textsuperscript{13} Foch was no doubt alluding to the danger of war, but he might have added that French troops had a poor record fighting Bolsheviks. In early 1919, French soldiers and sailors in southern Russia had mutinied on such a scale as to frighten thoroughly the French high command.\textsuperscript{14} To have again sent French troops against the Red Army would have risked the same result.

No allied soldiers, therefore, could be sent to fight the Bolsheviks. But without Allied troops, could Poland survive? While the British did not think so, the French took a more positive attitude as well as more positive action. French military intelligence was well informed of the weaknesses of the advancing Red Army and did not share Panafieu's gloomy prognostications. French military missions in the Baltic and in Warsaw reported that the morale of Soviet troops was low in spite of victories and that there was evidence of large-scale desertion. Moreover, Soviet supply lines had been stretched thin and troops at the front were inadequately fed and armed. Indeed, the Red Army continued to advance only because there was no resistance. French intelligence surmised that if the Polish army could regroup, the Bolshevik offensive might be thrown back 'very far'. The situation could still be saved.\textsuperscript{15}

On this assumption, the French Government sought to encourage Polish resistance to move arms, if not men, to Pilsudski's army. In fact, the French had already done a great deal to arm the Polish forces. They had, at a cost of some 350 million francs, trained and equipped the seventy to eighty thousand men of the Haller Army, which had fought on the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ullman, p. 142.
\item \textsuperscript{12} 'Réponse à la demande de Panafieu', signed Foch, 21 July 1920, \textit{ibid}.
\item \textsuperscript{13} M.J. Garley, The French Intervention in the Russian Civil War, November 1917–April 1919 (PhD thesis, Queen's University 1976), pp. 357-478.
\end{itemize}
Western Front and which after the war had been sent to Poland. In 1919 the Quai d'Orsay had also approved the extension to Pilsudski’s govern-ment of credits amounting to 375 million francs for further arms supplies. As a result of these efforts, half the rifles and machine guns and a large portion of Polish artillery were of French manufacture. Likewise, some of Poland’s Austrian and German arms had been acquired with French money and diplomatic support. The French Government also main-tained a large military mission in Poland, some six hundred men who served as instructors and advisers and who were well respected by the Polish officer corps.

This was not a negligible contribution to Poland’s defence. Moreover, when the crisis of the summer began to reach its height, Millerand approved the grant of an additional fifty millions in credits to the Polish Government. The Minister of Finance, Frédéric François-Marsal, pro-tested because the government would have to obtain Parliamentary approval for new credits. As a rule, the Ministry of Finance did not like going to Parliament to ask for extra money to fight the Bolsheviks because of the danger of troublesome debates led by Socialists sympathetic to Soviet Russia. Nevertheless, the government liked the prospect of a Polish collapse even less. Millerand therefore overrode the parsimonious Ministry of Finance and in July approved the new credits.

It was not enough, however, to approve additional credits for arms when Poland’s lines of supply on land and sea were all blocked or being seriously disrupted. These lines of supply went by sea through Danzig, and by rail across Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Germany. All these routes were shut down by striking workers sympathetic to the Soviets or by the German Government, which was not anxious to help the resupply of Poland. In July and August the Quai d’Orsay made démarches to practically every government in Europe in order to get war supplies to Poland moving again. French attention centred on Prague and London, on Prague because the rail-lines leading from the Balkans and southern Europe to Poland crossed Czech territory, and on London because Britain was in charge of administration of Danzig.

The Czech Government, of course, was hostile to Poland because of the territorial dispute over the region of Teschen. But even if Prague had

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16 'Note pour le directeur politique ...', 9 Dec. 1920, Pologne 239.
17 Henrys to General K. Sosnkowski (Polish Deputy Minister of Military Affairs), no. 121 R/4P, 20 June 1920, Pologne 23.
18 Davies, pp. 94–5.
19 François-Marsal to Millerand, no. 10463, 9 July 1920, Pologne 23.
20 Millerand to A. Lefèvre (Minister of War), no. 1729, 10 July 1920, Ibid., and Millerand to Panafieu, no. 1215, 30 July 1920, Pologne 24.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

been more favourably disposed towards Poland, there was little it could have done to help: the government was dependent on an unsteady coalition with the pro-Soviet Social Democratic party and was in no position to coerce Czech railroad workers into moving arms for Poland.21 In any case, the Czech Government had written off the Poles and on 9 August declared its neutrality. Edward Benes, the Czech Foreign Minister, told French representatives in Prague that he thought 'the Allies were beaten' in Poland.22 Nevertheless, the Quai d'Orsay exerted considerable pressure and Jean Pozzi, the French Chargé d'Affaires in Prague, 'had not hesitated' to use the threat of Hungarian intervention through Slovakia (which was Hungarian irredenta) in favour of Poland to move the Czech Government to action.23 Prague apparently began to yield to this pressure, but its co-operation was grudging and half-hearted.21

The Quai d'Orsay was also very dissatisfied with the British handling of the bottleneck at Danzig. The French representative there, Roger Guerrite, complained about the bad faith of the Allied High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Tower, who had failed to take strong measures to compel dockers to unload Polish supplies.25 Millerand put direct pressure on Lloyd George and the French finally managed to unblock Danzig, but only after the Poles had turned back the Bolshevik assault on Warsaw.26

The French Government was also displeased with the disruption of Polish supply trains moving across Germany. The Polish and German Governments had concluded an agreement in 1919 by which a certain number of trains of military or other supplies would be permitted to cross German territory.27 But when the tide of battle turned against the Poles, the German Government began to waver in its adherence to the agreement and finally on 27 July suspended all shipments to Poland. As a result, some trains were either stopped or looted by German railroad workers.28 The Quai d'Orsay initially threatened reprisals, but French representatives in Berlin advised that it would be pointless to try to force the

22 Fernand Couget (French representative in Prague), nos. 215-17, 7 Aug. 1920, Russie 292.
23 See n21 above.
24 Ibid., and Emile Henri Daeschner (French Minister in Bucharest), no. 830, received 11 Aug. 1920, Pologne 24.
26 Ullman, pp. 249-52.
28 Lefèvre to Millerand, no. 277 St/11, 29 July 1920; Marcilly, no. 1432, 3 Aug. 1920, ibid., and Foch to Georges Leygues (then Premier and Foreign Minister), no. 4461/CRF, 30 Sept. 1920, Pologne 25.
Germans to comply.29 All political parties in the country would unite behind the government, enabling it to resist French demands under one pretext or another. Moreover, even if the German Government did cooperate, the railroad workers would not, and France would be forced to move the supplies itself against difficulties of all kinds.30

It is no wonder that the Quai d'Orsay had trouble with the Germans, because even in Italy and Belgium railroad workers stopped the movement of supplies for Poland. And neither the Italian nor Belgian Governments felt sufficiently strong to risk a confrontation with the railroad unions.31 The situation was so critical that in late June General Kazimierz Sosnkowski, the Polish Deputy Minister of Military Affairs, complained to the Chief of the French Military Mission in Warsaw, General Paul Henrys, that military supplies were no longer getting through and that in effect Poland had been completely blockaded.32 This was Pilsudski's own fault, since he had alienated or quarrelled with all of Poland's neighbours and much of the rest of Europe. Indeed, most Europeans would have been quite content to see the Poles hoisted upon the bayonets of the Red Army.

The lack of sympathy for Pilsudski, especially in Britain, was the principal reason for French difficulties in getting supply lines to Poland reopened. Lloyd George in particular took a very strong dislike to Polish expansionism. Earlier in the year he had suspected that a Polish offensive was in the wind and, unlike the French, he sought to discourage it.33 After the offensive began, Lloyd George warned rather prophetically that the Poles would have 'to take care ... not to get their heads punched' by the Red Army.34 Naturally, when Pilsudski did in fact receive a bad knocking about, Lloyd George had little sympathy for him or the Poles who, in his view, were 'a menace to the peace of Europe' and had only themselves to blame for their troubles.35

Lloyd George's indifference to the Poles was based not only on a personal dislike of Pilsudski but also on a conception of security quite different from that of the French. Whereas the British Prime Minister could contemplate the disappearance of Poland and hence a fundamental revision of Versailles, the French Government could see only disaster in

29 Millerand to Marcilly, nos. 1574-5, 29 July 1920, Russie 290.
31 Camille Barrère (French Ambassador in Rome), no. 1603, 4 Aug. 1920, ibid., and Victor Jaunex (French Chargé d'Affaires in Brussels), nos. 519-20, 17 Aug. 1920.
32 Pologne 25.
33 Sosnkowski to Henrys, no. 5237/MW20, 22 June 1920, Pologne 23.
34 Davies, p. 91; and Ullman, pp. 25-6.
35 Ullman, p. 48.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

such an eventuality; and while the French wanted to preserve their security against Germany by the threat of using overwhelming force, Lloyd George preferred to keep the peace by way of accommodation, perhaps at Poland's expense.36

Lloyd George did not reveal the full extent of his views on this question, but his smug complacency towards the Poles was enough to make the French angry and frustrated. The Polish Crisis thus headed the two allies towards a serious rift, provoked in the long run by their differing attitudes towards Poland, but in the short run by the French relationship with the anti-Bolshevik Russian army of General Baron P.N. Wrangel.

These forces were the last remnants of the Volunteer Army which for almost three years had sought to overthrow the Soviet Government. In October 1919 the Volunteers, then commanded by General A.I. Denikin, had even approached Moscow. But Denikin was soon defeated and in March 1920 the débris of his army, driven from its last stronghold at Novorossiisk in the Kuban, took refuge on the Crimean peninsula. The governments of Britain and France, which had supported the Volunteers in the past, saw no hope for their survival; consequently London, desiring an end to the civil war in Russia, took upon itself the task of negotiating armistice terms for the Volunteers, since they were under the command of General Wrangel. The French Government went along, apparently in the hope of avoiding any unnecessary quarrels with the British, whose support was needed on the crucial issues of German reparations and disarmament.37 As a result, the French cut off their military support for the Volunteers and ordered the withdrawal of most of the small French military mission in the Crimea.38

The Quai d'Orsay did not adopt this policy without incurring a certain amount of criticism. Admirals Gustave LeJay and Ferdinand Jean-Jacques de Bon, who commanded French naval forces in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean, complained in May of the inconsistencies in French policy. De Bon, especially, considered it absurd not to help Wrangel, while the Poles undertook an offensive against the Bolsheviks which, opinion in the cast agreed, could not have been launched without French assistance. Wrangel should be encouraged to resist, stated de Bon, not only in order to support the Poles, but because he might eventually be able to take advantage of unrest in Soviet Russia to extend his authority and perhaps to overthrow the Soviet régime.39

De Bon and LeJay both began to fall under the influence of Wrangel,

36 Ullman, pp. 210–11.
38 Carley, 'Politics of Anti-Bolshevism', pp. 168–70.
39 Lejay to de Bon, no. 177, 9 Apr. 1920, Russie 239; de Bon to M. Landry (Minister of the Navy), no. 46, mss., 11 May 1920; no. 48 mss., 16 May 1920, Russie 240.
who wanted to divorce the policy of the French Government from British policy. He opposed the surrender of his army and stalled the British on the question of armistice talks in the hope of a change of fortune from which he might gain advantage. After the Polish offensive Wrangel thought he saw his chance and asked the French if they would be prepared to encourage the formation of a union of forces with the Poles against the Bolsheviks.40 Wrangel sent his Chief Assistant for Foreign Affairs, P.B. Struve, to Paris to press the French Government in this direction. Struve asked for material support and assistance from France in negotiating a co-operative agreement between Wrangel and the Poles. However, the Quai d'Orsay was not then disposed to become involved as an intermediary between the two sides, since it believed that Polish mistrust of the anti-Bolshevik Russians precluded any chance of an agreement.41

Nevertheless, as the Polish situation deteriorated, French relations with Wrangel improved. Three days after the Polish evacuation of Kiev, Millerand approved the resumption of arms shipments to Wrangel's forces.42 The Quai d'Orsay had been encouraged by Wrangel's apparent progress in reorganizing the remnants of the Volunteer Army. Indeed, his efforts were so successful that in early June he was able to launch a limited offensive into the northern Tauride above the Crimean peninsula. Wrangel was becoming a definite thorn in the flank of Soviet forces facing Poland and the French hoped to drive it deeper into Bolshevik flesh.

In order to encourage French help, Wrangel tried to improve his public image by promising domestic reforms: land for the peasants, a federated union, and representative assemblies based on free elections.43 These reforms were more apparent than real, but an improvement in Wrangel's image was essential if the Quai d'Orsay wanted to avoid provoking domestic opposition to its policies. The French Left, though seriously weakened after strikes and demonstrations in the spring, had not lost all its teeth and could be expected to arouse public opinion against the Government should its relations with Wrangel grow too intimate. This danger could be alleviated to some degree if the Quai d'Orsay were able to present Wrangel as an enlightened leader responsive to the democratic aspirations of the Russian people. It might also be easier to obtain Parliamentary

40 Albert Jules de France (French High Commissioner in Constantinople), no. 800, 13 May 1920, Russie 240.
41 Millerand to Panafieu, nos 1099–1100, 4 July 1920, Russie 241; 'Note pour M. Berthelot ...', 6 May 1920, Russie 240.
42 Millerand to Lefevre, no. 1451, 14 June 1920, Russie 250; Millerand to Landry, no. 427, 9 June 1920, Russie 240.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

approval for the extension of credits to Wrangel for arms and other supplies. It was in this context that the Quai d’Orsay began to contemplate the de facto recognition of the Wrangel government.

This movement in French policy took it further away from the British, who still wanted an armistice between Wrangel and the Soviet Government. Unlike the French, the British were furious when Wrangel launched his June offensive and, as a result, they stopped all aid to his forces. The Quai d’Orsay slowly moved in to fill the gap and on 18 July informed its embassy in London that it was considering the de facto recognition of the Wrangel government. The Quai d’Orsay’s dispatch observed that Wrangel was making progress in the reorganization of his army and that he was seeking popular support through a program of land reform and the creation of democratic institutions. In view of this growing strength the French Government could no longer support the British policy of encouraging an armistice between Wrangel and the Bolsheviks. On the contrary, it was the opinion of the French Government that Wrangel’s government merited de facto recognition similar to that given the Baltic and Caucasian states. Recognition would augment Wrangel’s prestige and allow him to act as a nucleus around which scattered anti-Bolshevik groups could unite. Millerand informed A. de Fleuriau, the French Chargé d’Affaires in London, that he intended to make a statement in the Chamber of Deputies on this question and that recognition would depend on Wrangel’s willingness to accept responsibility for the engagements and obligations of past Russian governments.44

Millerand was referring to the question of the approximately thirteen billion gold francs in French investments of all kinds made in Russia before the war and repudiated by the Bolshevik Government in early 1918. The Quai d’Orsay still clung to the hope of recovering these defaulted investments and sought to extract a commitment from Wrangel to pay the Russian debt to France in exchange for de facto recognition and arms supplies to fight the Bolsheviks.45

On 20 July Millerand duly made his statement in the Chamber of Deputies and three days later Struve informed the Quai d’Orsay that he was authorized to recognize formally all the international agreements contracted by preceding Russian governments.46 There was a further note from the Russian embassy on 5 August indicating that the Wrangel government was undertaking a substantial program of land reform and

44 Millerand to de Fleuriau, nos. 5088–92, 18 July 1920 (draft by Philippe Berthelot, Political Director of the Quai d’Orsay), ibid.
that elections would be held as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{47} Three days later the Russian embassy formally requested the granting of \textit{de facto} recognition.\textsuperscript{48}

While the negotiations with Wrangel proceeded, the Quai d'Orsay also sought to narrow the widening gap with the British over the crisis in Poland. At meetings held at Spa, Boulogne, and Lympne in July and early August, Lloyd George and Millerand sparrled over how to save the Poles. At Spa the question of sending troops to Poland was raised and rejected. Instead, Lloyd George proposed the convocation of a peace conference in London and compelled the Polish Prime Minister, Wladyslaw Grabski, who had come to Spa in hopes of obtaining Allied help, to accept British mediation. In return the Allies undertook to propose an immediate armistice to Moscow and, in the event that the Soviet Government rejected these terms, to give Poland whatever aid they could.\textsuperscript{49}

On 16 July, at the end of the Spa conference, the French and British Governments decided to send a special joint mission to Warsaw. General Maxime Weygand, Foch's Chief of Staff, and J.J. Jusserand, the French Ambassador in Washington on leave in Paris, represented France while Lord d'Abernon, the newly appointed British Ambassador to Berlin, headed the British delegation. The Quai d'Orsay believed that the mission could bolster sagging Polish morale and offer technical assistance to the Polish Government and High Command. Millerand also hoped that the formation of the joint mission would involve the British more closely in the defence of Poland.\textsuperscript{50} From the French point of view this was the mission's most important objective.

This was also the French goal at the meetings at Boulogne and Lympne. Millerand kept pressing for a British commitment to give all possible aid to the Poles and to Wrangel, should Moscow prove unwilling to negotiate. Lloyd George, on the other hand, wanted to encourage a speedy armistice and to involve the French in a conference at London to settle the conflict. Each side succeeded in gaining the grudging adherence of the other to their respective positions, but in reality a widening gap separated the views of the two allies. Lloyd George was anxious to make peace with Soviet Russia, even at the expense of Poland, while Mitterand still hoped for the destruction of the Bolshevik régime and could under no circum-

\textsuperscript{47} N.A. Basily (Russian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris) to Millerand, 8 Aug. 1920. \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{48} Basily to Paléologue, 8 Aug. 1920 (marked received on 10 Aug. in Paléologue's hand). \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{49} Ullman, pp. 148–52.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

stances share Lloyd George's indifference to the Poles. The conflict broke into the open when, on 10 August, on the eve of the battle of Warsaw, the British Government received the Soviet conditions for peace. The terms were not generous but they seemed to allow for the existence of an independent Polish state. At any rate, this was how the majority of the British Cabinet saw it, and the Foreign Office therefore forwarded the terms to Warsaw along with the strong recommendation to the Poles to accept them. The Cabinet decided not to consult with Paris first for fear of a negative French reaction.

The British fear was justified, and Millerand's displeasure was redoubled by the British failure to consult him on the Soviet proposals. The Quai d'Orsay regarded these terms as a thinly-veiled device to put Poland at the mercy of the Bolsheviks. Millerand therefore sought to counteract British policy by dissociating the French Government from the Foreign Office démarche and by encouraging the Poles to fight on. At the same time the Quai d'Orsay returned to the question of recognition for the government of General Wrangel. The French had been considering this step for almost a month and the Russian embassy's formal request for recognition was waiting for Millerand when he returned to Paris from Lympne on 10 August. Hence, on the following morning, Millerand decided to go ahead with the de facto recognition of Wrangel's régime.

According to his published account, the French Premier acted in order to improve Polish morale and also to encourage Wrangel to launch a diversionary attack on the left flank of the Red Army. Millerand might have added that his government meant to sabotage British policy in Poland. London suspected as much and responded angrily, construing the recognition as retaliation for the unilateral démarche made to Warsaw the evening before. Although Millerand would have been quite justified in paying the British in their own coin, he denied that he had done so, and

51 Soviet conditions provided for a frontier along the so-called Curzon line (ie, more or less along Poland's present eastern boundary) with rectifications in favour of Poland: a reduction of the Polish army to 50,000 men; demobilization within a period of one month; the surrendering of all arms over those required for the peacetime army and for a civil militia; dismantling of all war industries; the prohibition of the entry of foreign troops or war supplies, and so on. For the complete list of Soviet terms, see Earl of Derby (British Ambassador in Paris) to Millerand, 11 Aug. 1920, Russie 293.
52 Millerand to Jusserand, nos. 1324, 1328, 11 Aug. 1920, Pologne 293.
53 A. Millerand, 'Au secours de la Pologne (août 1920)', Revue de France, 12e année, 4e tome (juillet-août 1921), 586.
54 Millerand, 'Au secours de la Pologne', 586, 588; see also Millerand to Fleuriau, no. 5500, 11 Aug. 1920, dispatched 2.40 PM, Russie 241.
55 Ullman, p. 239.
Michael Jabara Carley

stated that the decision to recognize Wrangel had been taken on the morning of 11 August, a few hours before news of the British déclaration became known. Nevertheless, whatever the sequence of events, there can be no doubt that the Quai d'Orsay did indeed want to prevent a Russo-Polish peace on Soviet terms, even at the price of a serious disagreement with the British.

This view was not uniform throughout the French Government. Foch let it be known to Maurice Paleologue, the Secretary-General of the Quai d'Orsay, that he was 'very preoccupied' by the Franco-British rift over Poland. It was his view that the Poles 'should immediately accept the conditions offered by the Soviets'. Without British aid, said Foch, it would be impossible for France 'to give the least assistance to either Poland or Wrangel'. Millerand, who was on a tour of the war-devastated areas of northeastern France, would have nothing to do with such advice and directed that Foch be told, 'sous la forme la plus modérée mais la plus nette', to get in line with government policy. That so determined an opponent of Bolshevism should have advocated the acceptance of Soviet terms is an indication of Foch's alarm over the growing split in Franco-British relations. But Millerand reckoned that it was more important to do everything possible, short of sending troops, to save Poland. Any problems with the British could be settled later.

The recognition of Wrangel, of course, was part of the French effort to support Poland. Although it was intended to boost morale in Warsaw, it was also meant to facilitate the extension of credits to Wrangel, about which the tight-fisted ministry of finance was constantly complaining. Although in late May the Russian embassy had presented to the Quai d'Orsay a formal request for arms and supplies, the French Government was rather slow to respond. However, in the middle of August, at the height of the Polish crisis, Millerand ordered the extension of credit to Wrangel, which in fact violated statutes forbidding such action without Parliamentary approval. French recognition of Wrangel, said Millerand,

56 Millerand to Fleuriau, no. 5541, 19 Aug. 1920, Russie 241. In fact, the recognition could well have been pure retaliation because the cable announcing it was sent at 2:40 PM (see n. 54 above), almost three hours after Millerand said he had learned of the British advice to Warsaw and forty minutes after the Quai d'Orsay informed Jusserand of its strong disapproval of British policy (no. 1928, dispatched at 2:00 PM, see n. 52 above).

57 Paleologue was the last French Ambassador to the court of Tsar Nicholas II and was closely associated with the old régime.

58 Untitled note by Paleologue, 12 Aug. 1920, Russie 903.

59 '[Millerand] a téléphéne d'Arras à 20h.5', 12 Aug. 1920, ibid.

60 Note by General Maxime Weygand (Foch's Chief of Staff), 9 June 1920, plus enclosure from the Russian embassy in Paris, 30 May 1920, Russie 250.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

gave a 'particular urgency' to the supply of war matériel to the south Russian government.81

The French also made efforts to free, for Wrangel's use, Russian supplies held by the Romanian Government since the Soviet withdrawal from the war in early 1918. But Bucharest categorically refused, distrust- ing Wrangel and fearing that he might eventually try to recover Bessa-rabia, seized by Romania in January 1918.62 As the crisis in Poland mounted, however, the Quai d'Orsay put increasing pressure on the Romanian Government to furnish at least some military supplies for Russian use. Marshal Joseph Joffre, who visited Romania in August, was enlisted in this effort and Bucharest finally consented to allow a small quantity of arms and munitions to be sent to Wrangel, with France acting as intermediary. But the Romanians would do no more, saying in effect that they could not be certain that the guns they sent Wrangel might not one day be turned against them.63 The Wrangel government, though attempting to be flexible on the question of border disputes with its neighbours, had to pay for the sins of its predecessors. Denikin and Admiral A.V. Kolchak, who had headed the defunct anti-Bolshevik gov- ernment in Siberia, had both been intractable on this issue and had alienated the border states which might otherwise have been persuaded to help them against the Bolsheviks.64

It was this animosity that led to the failure of a final French effort to foster a union of anti-Bolshevik forces against Moscow. This effort began at the end of August, in the aftermath of the Polish victory over the Red Army in the battle of Warsaw. The Quai d'Orsay, which had been relieved and then overjoyed by the Polish victory, thought that at last the Bolshevik Government might be on the brink of collapse. Hence, on 28 August the Quai d'Orsay instructed the French Minister in Bucharest, Emile Henri Daeschner, to invite the Romanian Government to join in a general offensive against the Bolsheviks. The Allied powers, said the Quai d'Orsay directive, had a great interest in profiting from recent Polish victories 'in order to ruin Bolshevik power once and for all'. The state of the Russian economy on the eve of the Polish offensive, in April (termed

82 See n60 above.
84 Carley, 'Politics of Anti-Bolshevism', pp. 164–5. For Romanian views, see also Henri Cambon (French Chargé d'Affaires in Bucharest), no. 120, 12 Oct. 1920, Roumanie 55.
Michael Jabara Carley

'Soviet aggression against Poland' by Millerand) was disastrous, especially in the cities. Soviet attempts to gain European recognition were part of an effort to remedy this situation. Military setbacks suffered by the Red Army in Poland had only compounded these economic difficulties and had created a 'morale crisis' for the Moscow régime. The number of Soviet prisoners taken by the Poles, the quantity of captured war matériel, as well as the inadequacy of Russian armaments, gave reason to believe that the continuation of military operations against the Bolsheviks would lead to the collapse of the Red Army and to a popular uprising against the Soviet Government. On the other hand, if this opportunity were lost and the Soviet Government could reorganize during the winter, the border states would be compelled to maintain their military establishments in a permanent state of mobilization. This in turn would prevent the normalization of their strained economies and would encourage the Germans to delay the implementation of the Treaty of Versailles because of the continued Bolshevik danger. However, a 'decisive blow' against Moscow could probably only be delivered by a concerted effort of the Poles, Romanians, and anti-Bolshevik Russians. The Romanian role in this effort could be limited to holding down substantial Bolshevik forces on their front while the Poles and Wrangel carried on the main burden of offensive operations.65

The Quai d'Orsay made the same approach to Poland, but the French ran into special difficulties in Warsaw because they had been trying since the successful outcome of the battle of Warsaw to restrain the renascent territorial ambitions of Pilsudski. The Poles, of course, had been pursuing the retreating Red Army towards the east and the Quai d'Orsay wished to prevent Poland from penetrating too far into non-Polish territories.66 In Warsaw Panafieu found these instructions somewhat difficult to reconcile with those concerning the joint offensive against the Bolsheviks. He informed Paris that Pilsudski was not interested in an immediate peace with Moscow. But Pilsudski had warned him that if he were compelled to stay on the frontier lines recommended by the Allies, Poland would have no other option but to end the war as quickly as possible. Panafieu drew the obvious conclusion that the French Government could not expect Pilsudski's co-operation and at the same time seek to limit his freedom of action. The French Minister reported that he had tried to give consistency

66 Millerand to Panafieu, nos. 1400–1. 22 Aug. 1920, Russie 294. For the Quai d'Orsay, too far meant in the south beyond the line of German trenches during the Great War or beyond the River Styr and in the north beyond the line Suwalki, Grodno, Pinsk. Above all, the Quai d'Orsay indicated that it did not approve of a Polish advance on Vilna, which the Poles had given up during the summer and which was then in the possession of Lithuania (see Millerand to Panafieu, nos. 1426–9, 26 Aug. 1920, Russie 295).
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

to his instructions by telling the Poles that Wrangel’s army would bear the main burden of offensive operations against the Bolsheviks.67

This was a rather free interpretation of the Quai d’Orsay’s instructions which envisaged that both Wrangel and the Poles would take the offensive against Moscow. Panafieu’s need to adopt this diplomatic legerdemain should have been ample warning to Millerand and Paléologue that the joint offensive would never work, but they persisted in trying to reconcile the contradictory policies of encouraging the offensive and at the same time complaining about Polish military operations beyond their previously recommended lines.68 The Quai d’Orsay viewed these operations unfavourably because they would arouse the hostility of the other Allied powers and would provoke a new conflict between Poland and Lithuania. If this advance continued, warned the Quai d’Orsay, France might feel compelled to disassociate itself publicly from any responsibility for Polish actions.69

Panafieu cabled Paris that these new instructions only accentuated the contradiction in French policy. To try to restrain Polish military operations, he reiterated, would only encourage Warsaw to conclude peace with the Bolsheviks, leaving Wrangel to suffer the full fury of the Red Army.70 Paléologue, who appears to have been responsible for the idea of the joint offensive, finally had to respond directly to Panafieu’s complaints. The Quai d’Orsay, he said, was trying to prevent a premature peace between Poland and Soviet Russia which would permit the Bolsheviks to destroy their enemies one by one. If the Red Army defeated Wrangel during the winter, it might again turn on Poland in the following spring. On the other hand, the French Government could not approve an extension of Polish frontiers which would become a source of weakness by diminishing the homogeneity of its territory while laying the basis for new conflicts with a reconstructed Russia. Paléologue then stated that the Polish army would not have to carry the battle into Russia, which would risk the awakening of Russian nationalism, but it could strongly fortify well-chosen positions in order to hold down Soviet troops while Wrangel, as Panafieu had previously suggested, took the offensive against Moscow. With this in mind, Paléologue instructed his minister to encourage the Polish Government to delay the conclusion of peace.71

68 Millerand (signed Paléologue) to Panafieu, no. 1476, 2 Sept. 1920; and Millerand to Panafieu, nos. 1472–3, 2 Sept. 1920 (draft by Paléologue), Russie 895.
69 Millerand to Panafieu, nos. 1472–3, 2 Sept. 1920, ibid.
70 Panafieu, no. 969, 4 Sept. 1920, ibid.
71 Paléologue to Panafieu, nos. 1482–5, 6 Sept. 1920, ibid.
Michael Jabara Carley

For the moment, while he pushed his army forward to take back as much territory as he could from the Bolsheviks, Pilsudski was only too glad to oblige the French. He also continued to probe the French Government to see how far it was willing to go in acquiring Polish support for Wrangel. In mid-September Pilsudski told Henrys that because of the public clamour for peace in Poland, he would have to terminate hostilities as soon as possible. However, he was prepared to entertain the idea of continuing the war ‘for a certain time’ in exchange for an agreement with Wrangel ‘assuring to Poland territorial advantages more favourable than those put forth by the Allied powers’. If such an agreement were not forthcoming, said Pilsudski, he could only envisage a very rapid conclusion of peace.\(^{72}\) In this same vein General Todeusz Rozwadowski, the Polish Chief of Staff, told Panafieu that an agreement with Wrangel was essential in order to mollify Polish opinion. To this end, the Polish Government would have to be able to produce ‘political and economic concessions in White Russia and the Ukraine agreed to by the government of south Russia’. In exchange Rozwadowski offered the generous observation that Wrangel could direct Russian energies towards the Urals and Siberia, which could serve as the basis for rapid Russian economic recovery.\(^{73}\)

Franco-Polish negotiations on a co-operative agreement with Wrangel had thus become a sort of dialogue of the deaf, with the Quai d’Orsay advising restraint and the Polish Government demanding French support and Wrangel’s consent for its annexationist policies. However, if Pilsudski’s ambitions remained unsated, those of Romania did not. The Bucharest government informed Paris that it could not consider participation in any joint offensive against the Bolsheviks. Public opinion would never support it and Wrangel’s government did not inspire sufficient confidence. Moreover, France was far away while the Red Army sat crouched upon the borders of Romania. The Romanian Government, therefore, would co-operate where possible, but without risking Soviet military reprisals.\(^{74}\)

Although the French proposal for a joint offensive did not succeed, separate bilateral negotiations continued between representatives of Wrangel and the French and Polish Governments. Wrangel’s Chief of Staff, General P.S. Makhrov, arrived in Warsaw in September to try to

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\(^{73}\) Panafieu, nos. 404–7, 17 Sept. 1920, *ibid*.

\(^{74}\) Daeschner, nos. 373–80, 15 Sept., and nos. 385–6, 21 Sept. 1920, *Roumanie* 55. Prior to Pilsudski’s April offensive the Romanians had turned down a Polish invitation to partition southwestern Russia. Romania was to receive Odessa (see Couget, nos. 334–5, 23 Aug. 1920, *Russe* 294; and also Carley, ‘Politics of Anti-Bolshevism’, p. 177n61).
negotiate a co-operative agreement with the Polish Government, but these
talks were unproductive and Makhrov had to limit his efforts to regroup-
ing diverse Russian military units then in Poland. In Paris negotiations
also continued. Wrangel put forth the idea of a unified Russo-Polish front
under French direction and offered to come to Paris to talk directly with
Polish representatives. Foch was prepared to consider Wrangel's propos-
als, but Paléologue opposed any direct involvement of the French High
Command in military operations in southern Russia. Wrangel's position
was 'too precarious' to risk the prestige of the French General Staff.
Paléologue also opposed Wrangel's journey to Paris since it might prompt
'polemics and perhaps even very troublesome demonstrations'. The
French Government, minute Paléologue, was prepared to receive in
Paris representatives of Wrangel and the Polish Government in order to
facilitate the conclusion of an agreement, but beyond this it would not
go. Plans for such a meeting were discussed, but never led to any
agreement.

Nor did the economic negotiations which were also underway in Paris.
These talks were a carry-over from the summer and were intended by the
Russians to obtain French material support for Wrangel. The Russian
Ambassador in Paris, V.A. Makhlov, presented Paléologue in early
September with a formal request for a credit of 250 million francs. To
encourage French interest, Makhlov held out the prospect of a reoccupa-
tion of the Donetz basin which would furnish plentiful exportable re-
sources to pay for the needs of the Wrangel government abroad. The
Quai d'Orsay was slow to respond to the Russian démarche and eventually
Makhlov whittled down his request to eighty-six million francs. Negotia-
tions then followed for the conclusion of a 100-million franc credit for war
matériel and other supplies. The talks dragged on until October, but

75 Panafieu, nos. 385–8, 11 Sept. 1920, Russie 295.
76 Note by Paléologue, 12 Sept. 1920, and Foch to Millerand, no. 715/2, 11 Sept. 1920,
Russie 242.
77 Makhlov to Paléologue, 8 Sept. 1920, Russie 251.
78 Makhlov to Millerand 10 Sept. 1920, Russie 243.
79 In exchange, the Wrangel government was required to sell in France at world prices 50
per cent of all its exports in natural resources. Half the total value of these exports (ie, 50
per cent of 50 per cent) would be applied to the amortization of the loan. This figure was
dropped to 50 per cent, but the Russians still found the contract unacceptable ('Projet du
contrat...', 11 Oct. 1920; and 'Note pour le secrétaire-général du département',
Europe, not signed (ns), 19 Oct. 1920, Russie 25a). There is no evidence in the French
documents to confirm the rather scandalous conditions for an agreement described by
George Brinkley, The Volunteer Army and the Allied Intervention in South Russia, 1917–1921
(Notre Dame, 196), pp. 963–4. This is not to say, of course, that the French Government
did not have acquisitive economic objectives in Russia (see n45 above). Perhaps symboli-
cally, the only grain sent to France by Wrangel was found on arrival to be rotten and had
Michael Jabara Carley

Wrangel's representative did not like the French terms and never signed an agreement. In any case, by early October the Polish and Soviet Governments were on the verge of concluding an armistice, Pilsudski having finally been compelled to yield to domestic political pressure for peace. At the same time, the ministry of finance in Paris again began to complain vociferously about granting credits to Wrangel. Even the Quai d'Orsay, no longer under the sway of Paléologue, who had resigned in late September, lost interest in the negotiations. In fact, French interest declined to such an extent that F.A. Kammerer, formerly chief of the Quai d'Orsay's Service des Affaires Russes, scribbled out a minute to the effect that the government should 'first help the Armenians a little' before doing more for Wrangel. Such was the status to which the Wrangel government had sunk on the scale of French priorities. Remaining negotiations between the two sides amounted to quibbling over the cession of a few millions' worth of surplus war supplies and broken-down guns. But the Quai d'Orsay estimated that Wrangel needed some five to six hundred million francs' worth of war matériel to resist the Red Army. Since the French Government could not supply any such quantities of arms, the Quai d'Orsay drew the inevitable conclusion that Wrangel's days were numbered.

In this the French were not wrong. The Soviet Government was anxious to finish with Wrangel and, after concluding an armistice with Poland in mid-October, turned its full might against anti-Bolshevik forces in the Crimea. Wrangel could not hold out and was driven from Sebastopol in November 1920. The fall of this last anti-Bolshevik redoubt marked an end to the period of French and Allied intervention in Soviet Russia.

Finally, in summing up French eastern policy in the months between June and November 1920, it is important to stress the primordial French concern to save Poland. The Poles were essential to the preservation of the Versailles settlement in the east. As Jusserand put it during the crisis, if Poland fell there would be nothing to put in its place. Of course, Jusserand was not entirely correct in this regard, since Germany would certainly have claimed to be the new eastern bulwark against Bolshevism and would also have sought to reoccupy territories previously ceded to Poland. France could have done little in such circumstances. To be sure,

to be destroyed (Derby to Curzon [British Foreign Secretary], 10 Oct. 1920, India Office, London, Curzon Papers, Box 22).
81 Basily to Berthelot, 23 Oct. 1920 (see Kammerer's marginal note), Russie 252.
82 'Note pour la direction politique ...', Service Financier, ns, 5 Nov. 1920, ibid.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

Millerand threatened to occupy the right bank of the Rhine, and he envisaged the creation of a new anti-Bolshevik barrier in central Europe anchored by the Czechs and Romanians. But would Millerand have compelled Germany to stay out of territory likely to become part of a Red Poland? And would France have been able to resist German claims to be the new bulwark against the spread of Bolshevism? It does not seem likely, and it illustrates the extreme fragility of the Versailles settlement in the summer of 1920.

Consequently, the French Government did everything it could to help the Poles short of sending troops, but not short of a serious rift with Britain which was only patched up in the aftermath of the Polish crisis. The most important aspect of French efforts to help Poland was the recognition of Wrangel. One Quai d'Orsay post-mortem assessment claimed that recognition had been intended to strengthen Polish morals when London was pressing for the acceptance of a Soviet peace. Recognition was also part of an effort to create 'a useful diversion' in southern Russia to draw Soviet troops away from the Polish front.

In this respect there is no doubt that French policy was successful. The Soviet Government did indeed become concerned about the growing threat of Wrangel. In late July, Bolshevik leaders became increasingly favourable to a quick peace with Poland in order to free Soviet forces to deal with the danger. Lenin wanted General S.M. Budenny's redoubtable First Cavalry Army withheld from the campaign in Poland in order to free it for action in the Crimea. In fact, so great was Moscow's concern that at the height of the battle for Warsaw the Soviet High Command informed General M.N. Tukhachevskii, commander of Soviet forces advancing on Warsaw, that it would have to strengthen the Crimean front at his expense. Soviet anxiety was augmented by the ostentatious French show of support for Wrangel's government and hastened the military preparations being made to drive him out of the Crimea.

This is not to say, however, that the Quai d'Orsay saw Wrangel exclusively in terms of support for Poland. As long as Paléologue remained in the Quai d'Orsay, the anti-Bolshevik Russians had within the French Government an influential friend who sought to aid their cause whenever he could. The proposal of 28 August for a joint offensive against the

84 Millerand to Fleuriau, nos. 5360–5, 4 Aug. 1920, Russie 291; and also Millerand to Panafieu, nos. 1396–7, and to all French diplomatic posts, 11 Aug. 1920, Russie 293.
85 'Note pour le directeur des affaires politiques et commerciales', Europe, nos. 17 Nov. 1920, Russie 245; also 'Reconnaissance du général Wrangel, Note de M. Sabatier', 15 Nov. 1920, Russie 244.
Michael Jabara Carley

Bolsheviks, which was probably Paléologue’s work, represented a final, ill-conceived effort to help Wrangel overthrow the Soviet Government. It failed because the Poles and Romanians, like the other border nationalities, were irreconcilably hostile to the anti-Bolshevik Russians. They preferred to deal with the Soviets, who seemed less of a threat to their survival. Other permanent officials of the Quai d’Orsay like Philippe Berthelot were only too well aware of this animosity, but Paléologue apparently succeeded in pushing them aside temporarily. However, when Paléologue resigned in September, Berthelot became the real power at the Quai d’Orsay and he returned French policy to the purely defensive orientation of former Premier Georges Clemenceau’s cordon sanitaire.

Nevertheless, the 28 August proposal for a joint offensive remains symbolic of previous French policy towards the Bolsheviks, which had almost always been based on wishful thinking and inadequate resources. To the Quai d’Orsay, the Soviet régime often appeared to be a lurching, moribund beast teetering on the brink of collapse. But the government was stymied in its efforts to shove this beast over the precipice, first by French soldiers who would not fight the Bolsheviks, and second by hostile Parliamentary and public opinion which threatened undesirable ‘polemics’ should the government seek to obtain additional money for its anti-Bolshevik activities. Paris therefore adopted a policy of expedients, faisant flèche de tout bois, in order to overthrow the Soviet régime. In 1920 this meant turning a blind eye to Pilsudski’s dangerous April offensive and then trying to fashion a plan, completely unworkable, for a joint military operation against Moscow. The French Government, which could not itself wage war against the Bolsheviks, sought surrogates to carry on the battle. But the latter were never completely up to the task, or never wanted to be, and the French Government ended up the frustrated victim of its own inadequacies. Yet driven by the lost Franco-Russian alliance and the thirteen billions which had helped to finance it, the French government persisted along this course to the bitter end, until the last expedient had been tried and found wanting.

This almost fanatical anti-Bolshevism seemed to bring out the worst in French policy. The Quai d’Orsay and even the more realistic Clemenceau appeared ready at times to tilt at any windmill in order to overthrow the Soviets. Only repeated failures and near disasters persuaded the French to cast aside the last splintered lance of a quixotic campaign against the Bolsheviks. Yet the quixotism of the French vis-à-vis Soviet Russia must be

87 See for example Panafieu, no. 222, 30 Aug. 1919, Russie 295.
88 On the rivalry between Paléologue and Berthelot, see Carley, ‘Politics of Anti-Bolshevism’, pp. 185–6, 189–4, 187.
Anti-Bolshevism in French Foreign Policy

juxtaposed against its determined, more realistic effort to aid the Poles. It was a Polish army which threw back the Soviet offensive, but it was the French Government which helped it when the rest of Europe was ready to leave Pilsudski and his minions to the tender mercies of the Red Army. French eastern policy in 1920 was thus a bizarre Jekyll and Hyde mixture of madness and determination – madness because of the failure to discourage the Polish April offensive and because of the consideration of a new version of it in August, but also determination because of French assistance to a needy and needed ally in eastern Europe.