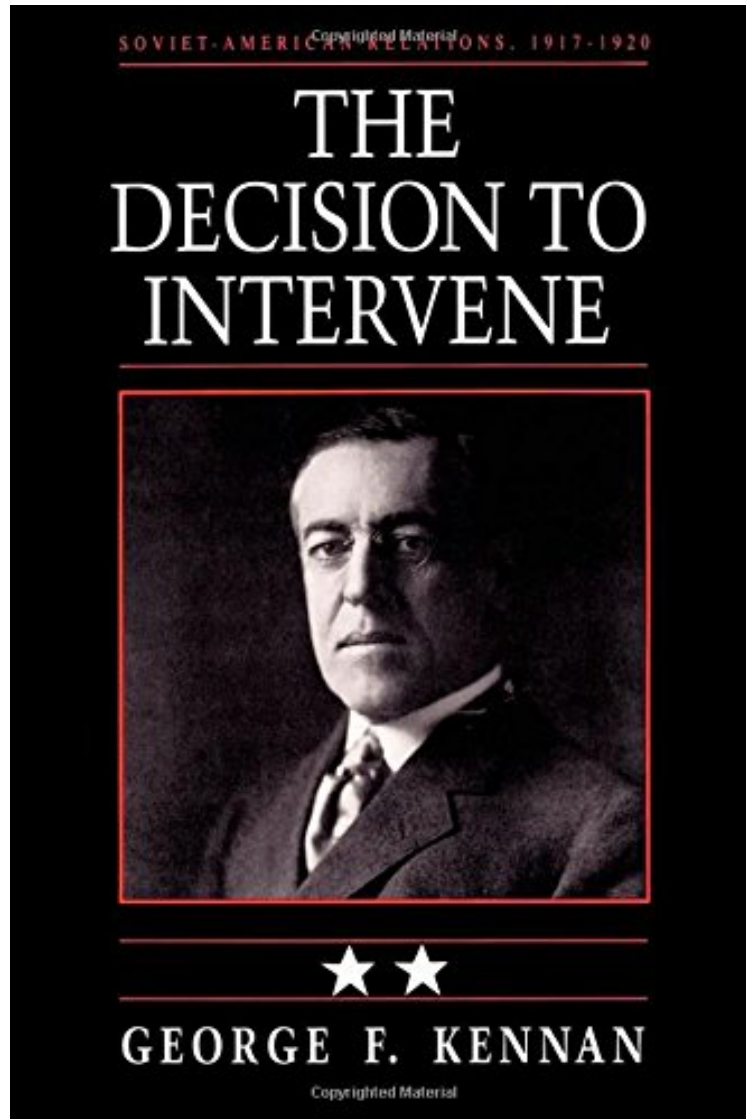


(Ebook pdf) The Decision to Intervene: Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920, Vol. 2

The Decision to Intervene: Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920, Vol. 2

George Frost Kennan

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



 Download

 Read Online

#1407953 in Books Princeton University Press 1989-11-01 1989-11-21 Original language: English PDF # 1
9.00 x 1.36 x 6.00l, 1.73 #File Name: 0691008426513 pages | File size: 61.Mb

George Frost Kennan : The Decision to Intervene: Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920, Vol. 2 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Decision to Intervene: Soviet-American Relations 1917-1920, Vol. 2:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Indecision Instead of DecisionBy Leonard J. WilsonThe Decision to Intervene by George F. Kennan is Volume II of his History of Soviet-American Relations, 1917-1920. (See my

review of Volume I, *Russia Leaves the War*.) The Decision to Intervene picks up in early 1918. The Bolsheviks had overthrown the democratically-oriented Provisional Government of Russia which came to power in February 1917 and had negotiated a separate truce with the Germans, taking Russia out of WWI. The details of a formal Russian-German peace treaty were undergoing tortuous negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. In the course of the war, Russia's allies, Britain, France, Italy, and, later, the US and Japan, had supplied significant quantities of strategic raw materials, arms, and munitions to Russia. Large stockpiles were still present at Vladivostok in the Far East and Archangel in the far northwest. Fearing that these strategic materials might be seized by or transferred to the Germans, the French, British and Italians favored landing allied troops to safeguard them. The Japanese supported this position, provided that they could unilaterally land their troops in Vladivostok, with American blessing, to create a bridgehead into Manchuria and Siberia. At this time there was also allied great concern that large numbers of German troops would be transferred from the eastern to the western front for a major offensive. By introducing some allied troops into Russia, the allies hoped to tie down an even larger number of German forces who might otherwise be sent west. For roughly the first half of 1918, President Wilson opposed intervention, and this opposition was sufficient to deter the allies. Around May of 1918, Raymond Robins, whom we met in Volume I as head of the American Red Cross mission to Russia and our informal point of contact with the Bolsheviks, was withdrawn from Russia. His self-appointed role as advocate of recognition of and aid to the Bolsheviks had come to naught, though he did not realize it for some months to come. At almost the same time as Robins' departure, the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia was attacked by Red Guards. Czechoslovakia was then part of the Austrian Empire but its population dreamed of independence. The Czech Legion, about 30,000 well trained troops, fought against the Germans and Austrians alongside the Russian Army until Russia left the war. The Czechs had no intention of making peace with the Germans and Austrians but could not continue fighting on Russian territory. Consequently, they attempted to make their way east to Vladivostok from which point they hoped the allies would provide sea transport to the western front. The Bolsheviks, perhaps in response to German pressure, demanded that the Czechs surrender most of their arms and repeatedly delayed their passage along the Trans-Siberian Railway. When the Czechs refused to disarm, Red Guards ambushed them at Irkutsk. The Czechs fought back quite effectively, eventually capturing the Trans-Siberian Railway all the way from Vladivostok to the Urals, and were joined by various anti-communist Russian forces. This was the start of the Russian Civil War. By this time, the Bolsheviks had acceded to all German conditions and signed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, permanently taking Russia out of the war. Also, the British had landed a few troops in Archangel and Murmansk in the north and the Japanese had landed a major force in Vladivostok. Finally, the Bolsheviks had murdered the Tsar and all his family. These combined events prompted the other allies to again approach President Wilson with another request for support for intervention. This time Wilson acceded, partly out of emotional support for the Czechs and partly because he feared he had refused the allies' requests too many times already. However, his decision was not coordinated with the allies or anyone else, including the rest of the US Government. His orders to US troops sent to Russia were incredibly contradictory. For example: (1) Support the Czechs but do not get involved in internal Russian conflicts. (How do you do that when the Czechs are fighting the Bolsheviks?) (2) Proceed to Murmansk and report to the senior British officer who is to command all allied forces there. However, do not leave the port area for the interior. (How do you respond when the British commander says "Go!") During the entire period from the February 1917 Revolution through the intervention, Wilson never consulted with his ambassador in Russia. He ran a one-man foreign policy. Worse, his decisions were half-hearted, more often indecisions than decisions. Kennan summarizes Wilson's role in the intervention eloquently: "By failing, in this way, to follow through on the implementation of his own decision, the President contrived to get the worst of all possible worlds: he irritated the British and French with his obiter dicta and drew onto himself, ultimately, the blame for the failure of the entire venture (on the grounds that the United States contribution had been too little and too late); he did not prevent the US units from being used for precisely the purposes for which he said they should not be used; nor did he withdraw them, as he said he would, when they were thus used; yet he did prevent them from having any proper understanding of the purposes for which they were being used; finally, he rendered the US vulnerable to the charge, which Soviet propagandists have never ceased to exploit, of interfering by armed force in Soviet domestic affairs." (page 421) That's some condemnation. The antidote for this type of disaster is the (Colin) Powell Doctrine: Don't enter into armed conflict unless you do so with an overwhelmingly superior force and the determination to see the conflict through to a successful conclusion.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. United States sent troops to Russia

By SB This book is a gem about the little known period of time, when American troops were in Russia as part of a coalition with Britain and Japan. Although Pres. Wilson may have sent the troops to support an eastern front during WWI, the troops were not commanded by Gen. Pershing, arrived a few days before Bolsheviks took over the Russian government, US companies had loaned Russia a lot of money and equipment to improve the Russian Railway system and the Armistice was signed before the last troops left in 1922. The book is well researched diplomatic history that may provide background for current US-Russia relations.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Great View of Events

By J. Housman Kennan was one of the leading intellects behind the post-WW2 US policy regarding the Soviet Union. However, while writing the seminal documents of that policy, he strongly disagreed with how his analyses were interpreted by policy makers. Kennan was a serious student of the development of the USSR. These two

volumes (Volume 1 is titled "Russia Leaves the War") chronicle the events surrounding the surrender of Soviet Russia to Germany in 1918 and the subsequent "invasion" of Russia by France, Great Britain and the United States. Hardly anyone writing in the English language is better qualified to tell this story.

In 1918 the U.S. government decided to involve itself with the Russian Revolution by sending troops to Siberia. This book re-creates that unhappily memorable story: the arrival of British marines at Murmansk, the diplomatic maneuvering, the growing Russian hostility, the uprising of Czechoslovak troops in central Siberia which threatened to overturn the Bolsheviks, the acquisitive ambitions of the Japanese in Manchuria, and finally the decision by President Wilson to intervene with American troops. Of this period Kennan writes, "Never, surely, in the history of American diplomacy, has so much been paid for so little."