THE VINSON NAVY

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ABSTRACT

THE VINSON NAVY

By

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This study examines the influence of Carl Vinson on the building of the five basic types of warships used by the United States Navy during the period from 1914 to 1964. The implication here is that Vinson in the House Naval Affairs Committee and in Congress was particularly influential after 1932 in promoting the building of a Navy adequate to support American foreign policy. Even taking five-year spans, it would be difficult to find a more significant Congressional supporter of national defense than he.

It is thus maintained that Carl Vinson of Georgia was a substantial force in providing the ships of what has often been called the Roosevelt Navy. Although President Roosevelt was a very important influence in getting legislation through which provided the new American fleet, Chairman Vinson was the individual legislative factor providing the ships which changed American strategy in the Pacific to offensive action during the period of August 7,

1942 to November 14, 1942 when the "end of the beginning" came and carried through to the "beginning of the end" in the evening of October 24, 1944 when the Japanese surface fleet ceased to be an effective fighting unit. The sea force and naval air force which put the Japanese in this predicament was a Roosevelt-Vinson project.

Although the foreboding promise of war during the 1930 to early 1938 interval must be credited with providing some of the impetus for vessel construction, basically it was an executive-legislative endeavor, that is--a Roosevelt-Vinson endeavor. Vinson, as the potent representative of the legislative branch, provided Congressional leadership which coupled with Roosevelt's support brought to fruition this formidable American fleet. As the absence of either element would have destroyed the team, the United States fleet of the Second World War should be designated a Roosevelt-Vinson or even perhaps a Vinson-Roosevelt Navy.

Even after the death of Roosevelt, it was Vinson who most effectively protected the Navy in Congress until he too was converted to the cause of air power, both Navy and Air Force. His post-war career in the House of Representatives promoted the cause of adequate defense and involved the provision of such power as necessary to carry through the American post-war commitment.

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Calvin W. Enders

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PREFACE

In the third of a century from 1930 to 1964, Carl Vinson more than any other one man shaped the modern American Navy. Coming from a land-locked, cotton-growing Georgia district, he secured a place on the House Naval Affairs Committee in 1917 during his second term. That year he watched Josephus Daniels, Franklin Roosevelt, and the admirals rush to build ships for a war that few Americans had believed could come and fewer still had believed could envelop the United States. After the war, he watched, in some dismay, the dismantling of that fleet. Accumulating seniority, Vinson continued an apprenticeship during the 1920's which prepared him to head his chosen committee.

Though he became chairman in 1931 when the Democrats captured control of the House, he found working with President Hoover unrewarding. As should be considering the adequate size of the United States fleet, naval building had been slowed during the ten years after the Washington Conference. A change of policy had to take place, however, if the United States expected to be ready to meet the German and Japanese threats. The necessary build-up could not have begun in August 1939 when the clouds of war were seeded by

the Russo-German "dry ice"--the nonaggression pact announced on August 22, 1939; August of 1939 would have been too late for the initial program to be developed for building battleships, large fleet carriers, and cruisers requiring three or four years of construction. To meet the challenge, Carl Vinson and Franklin Roosevelt led the Naval Affairs Committees and the Congress into authorizing construction of the ships that later carried most of the naval load in World War II. In the later battles of the naval war in the Pacific, victory came to the Vinson-Roosevelt fleet.

After the war he insisted upon mothballing rather than scrapping any surplus ships. When the services were unified in 1946, he continued to foster the Navy, defending its carrier-based planes against the more glamorous air force as he had in the 1920's, in Billy Mitchell's time. For a short period in the late 1940's, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he believed that the air force strategic bomber was the answer to the American defense problem. From 1949 onward, the Cold War gave impetus to his habitual propensity to build new ships and upgrade old ones.

In the last years before his retirement from the House in 1964 he led his committee into vigorous support of the various systems and weapons which he thought would protect the nation. It was most important to him to prevent any recurrence of America's inclination to be militarily unprepared.

Despite the overshadowing attention to Franklin Roosevelt as builder of the World War II Navy, historians have recognized Vinson's key role in extracting from Congress the authorizations and appropriations for the ships that implemented American military policy in three wars. Harvard's Samuel Eliot Morison, the most prominent American naval historian of the Roosevelt Era, wrote in 1963 that Carl Vinson, the "Harbinger of fairer weather for the Navy," not only was well disposed toward the Navy, but "made himself an expert on the Navy's technique and supported its aspirations to help defend the country." To Morison, "among the promoters of a powerful Navy Carl Vinson deserved a high place."[1] Other historians have been less effusive but none has denied his key role.

This is not to say that Vinson's career has been recorded properly. Admirals testified to his contributions, editors accepted his power, and historians have agreed. But naval history has emphasized strategy and battles while domestic history has preferred the politics of social and economic programs. This study of Vinson's Congressional career may serve to explain the power of a committee in making military history.

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[1]Samuel Eliot Morison, The Two-Ocean Navy (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 19.

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While innumerable people have provided assistance on this project, I wish to acknowledge some individually. My dissertation advisor, Madison Kuhn of the Michigan State University History Department, has given unstintingly of his time and energy to guide and keep me within due bounds as I have investigated Vinson's role in the warship authorization process. In addition, both Marjorie Gesner and Charles C. Cumberland have offered valuable editing suggestions. Over the years, I have found myself under a substantial debt of gratitude to Professors Harry Brown, Harold Fields, Marjorie Gesner, Alvin Gluek, Jr., Richard Sullivan and Frederick Williams of the History Department at Michigan State University for timely academic encouragement.

Above all, this project would not have been possible without the aid of my wife, Betty, and our four children. Much has had to stand aside temporarily.

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CHAPTER I

THE APPRENTICESHIP

Carl Vinson's Milledgeville nestles in the hills of Georgia's lower Piedmont country, a quiet community in a rolling land far from the seat of national or international power. When Carl Vinson was born nearby in 1883, it was a cotton market town that had only recently ceased to be the state's capital; in the old Capitol he attended Georgia Military Academy. General Sherman had marched his army through the town but had treated it gently, putting only the state prison to the torch. Edward and Annie (Morris) Vinson farmed in Baldwin County just outside of Milledgeville. They had acquired modest wealth, including the farm and a house in town, and a place of respect in the community.

When Carl returned home in 1902, after studying law at Mercer College in nearby Macon, the town was growing; its three thousand inhabitants of 1890 had increased to four. Here, in this quiet town, with its red dirt streets, he set out on his legal career as junior partner in the office of Judge Edward Hines.[1] The firm of Hines and

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[1]Interview with Carl Vinson, Milledgeville, Georgia, November 19, 1967.

Vinson dealt with the usual wills and contracts that made up the work of a small town law office. But he had not intended to remain in Milledgeville; he had hoped for a place in Atlanta.

A fellow alumnus of Mercer University remembered later a trip which Carl Vinson had made to Atlanta to consult with him on the possibility of becoming a partner in some large law firm there. "Vinse," he inquired, "have you any rich powerful clients to bring with you?" The reply was in the negative. "Let me tell you something," the friend continued. "You cannot carry out your proposed project. You would make a grievous error to come to Atlanta. . . . Do you recall how you bragged during your days at Mercer that someday you would be a Congressman?" He did. "Vinse, my advice to you is to return to your home, and be elected to Congress."[2]

His tutelage for that career included three years as Baldwin County prosecuting attorney and a term in the Georgia legislature where his leadership was recognized in his election as speaker pro tempore. There he gained experience in practical politics which would aid him later in the national House of Representatives and prove invaluable when he became chairman of powerful house committees. There followed two years as judge of the county court, terminated by his election to Congress in 1914.

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[2]Carl F. Hutcheson, The Mercerian (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University, January, 1959).

The New Congressman

His election to Congress occurred in an off year, to fill a vacancy created by the election of his Congressman to succeed a United States Senator who had died earlier in the year, 1914. But by taking his seat in December, 1914, he gained seniority over others, elected in November, who could not be seated before March. That gave him an advantage in committee assignments. His good fortune gradually lost its importance as his colleagues fell away, Congress by Congress, because of retirement, death, or election defeat. Vinson was soon the ranking minority member of a substantial committee and, when the Democrats won control of the House in 1930, he became chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee.

Immediately after he took office in December, 1914, the influential Georgian Tom Watson sent him a stack of private bills that he wanted introduced. Vinson had been warned not to incur Watson's wrath. Sending them back by return mail, he declared that he would "wear no man's collar." That independence appears to have characterized his entire career in Congress: his dedication to naval authorizations and appropriations was his own rather than his district's choice.[3]

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[3] Congressional Record, CIX, 12695-96, editorial reprinted from the Washington Daily News, hereafter cited as Cong. Rec. with the volume number.

Nevertheless, he was responsive to the problems of the people at home. The new Congressman could be interested in the great issues of the day, but his effectiveness revolved around his own constituency. He proposed bills for the erection of public buildings at Sparta, Thomson, and Tennille and the building of dams in the Savannah River.[4] He promoted legislation to regulate cotton futures in the interest of the local cotton farmers.[5] He answered the usual letters and visited with his constituents in the court houses between terms.

Even on national and international issues, he responded to the wishes of his constituents. He introduced bills or resolutions to prevent the United States from sending or receiving church ambassadors, to segregate government clerks of the white race from those of African blood and descent, and to prohibit the intermarriage of whites with Ethiopians, Malays, or Mongolians as well as with the Negroes. He wished to segregate the District of Columbia's transportation system.[6] In contrast, his only apparent concern for the building of warships came in his

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[4] Cong. Rec., LII, 291, 329.

[5] Ibid. For later action relative to cotton futures, see Union-Recorder, December 5, 1929, p. 1; April 17, 1930, p. 1.

[6] Cong. Rec., LII, 631, 3536; LIII, 27; LV, 29, 299.

voting for the erection or purchase of a factory to produce armor plate for such vessels.[7]

During his first term in Washington, Vinson drew two rather uninspiring assignments: the old Pension Committee and the Committee for the District of Columbia. He worked industriously on both but when other committee vacancies opened in his second term, he selected Naval Affairs, taking his seat in January, 1917. Coming from a landlocked, farm-oriented community--the town of Milledgeville lay only on the sluggish Oconee River--it was surprising that Vinson should have chosen to devote his career to ocean defense.[8]

But he had indicated that interest in his first speech before Congress, delivered in May, 1916, a year before he became a member of the Naval Affairs Committee, in which he called for greater military and naval preparedness. This speech set the mold for his philosophy of national defense as he noted that he had neither sectional nor political interests, just the nation's safety in mind. Hence, he intended to give aid and support to such legislation as would increase the efficiency of the Army and the Navy to guarantee proper protection for the American people.[9]

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[7] Ibid., LIII, 14, 9187.

[8] Louis R. Stockstill, "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," Army, Navy, Air Force Journal, (1961) reprinted in the Cong. Rec., CVII, 2488; Gladstone Williams, The Atlanta Constitution, February 4, 1934, p. 6A.

[9] Cong. Rec., LIII, 8807.

Declaring that he believed "a free civil life should be at all times the chief aim of national existence," he spoke of his abhorrence of war and his distaste for that spirit which would allow military despotism to become the overpowering factor in the United States. As he would throughout his Congressional career, he asserted his opposition to any policy promulgated by House legislation which "would give birth to a spirit of militarism in this free land."[10]

To express another tenet which would characterize his Congressional career, he warned that some Americans, and especially many of the country's pacifists misjudge the measure by which peace may be maintained and thereby permit their love of peace to impair its preservation. His duty to God and country led him, he explained, to support an increasing military and naval efficiency in order to "insure peace to America until principalities and powers have gone away forever, and the everlasting Republic is established where the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God are sung to the music of the spheres." Although he could see the benefits of world-wide peace, unilateral disarmament followed by the failure to maintain adequate defense would leave America "an inviting and helpless field for conquest."[11]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid. Forty-seven years later, he still regarded this speech as one of his best, "The Swamp Fox," Time, July 26, 1963, p. 18.

Georgia politics gave Carl Vinson one last test in the 1918 Congressional elections. Tom Watson, the old Southern Populist leader, had severely criticized the Wilson Administration's decision to enter the war and had opposed the wartime Conscription Act. In 1918, he decided to challenge Vinson in the Tenth Congressional District. Although he thought the United States should fight through to victory, Watson had not changed his attitude toward the war. Vinson, the "conspicuous patriot," campaigned strongly in support both of the war effort and of Wilson's decision to go to war. Though the results were close, he won. It was the last close election in his long political career.[12]

After the war, Mr. Vinson continued to introduce the ubiquitous local bills to construct public buildings, to allot captured cannon to cities in his district, and to provide pensions.[13] His only apparent interest in the Navy was his faithful attendance in the sessions of the Naval Affairs Committee and his favorable vote, in 1919, to increase the size of the Navy.[14] In 1923 he sat in the balcony and watched the signing of the Washington Naval Disarmament Treaty. Later he recalled with dismay the results of that conference in

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[12]James C. Bonner, The Georgia Story (Chattanooga: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1960), p. 408.

[13]Cong. Rec., LVIII, pp. 378-79.

[14]Ibid., LVII, 3152.

which the United States scrapped ships while Britain and Japan scrapped, for the most part, blueprints.[15] Even as early as March of 1924, he was concerned that the ratios were only a matter of tonnage because the United States still had four battleships carrying 12-inch guns while all eighteen capital ships allowed Britain carried larger guns.[16] He was fearful that the United States was heading for trouble because American relations with both the British and the Japanese had been strained at times in the immediate past.

Carl Vinson began in 1923, after years of little activity on naval matters, to move in support of fleet strength through favoring the modernization of certain warships and questioning the modernization of others. It was his desire to increase the elevation of the turret guns for thirteen of the fourteen battleships still in commission, ships whose keels were laid before the United States had entered the recent war. Such action would increase the range of these guns upgrading their effectiveness in battle. He was adamantly opposed to the destruction under provisions of the Washington Treaty of new or partially completed ships, while the Navy struggled to modernize its old ones. In his opinion, these old ships even if modernized were no substitute for the new ships which could have been available.[17]

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[15]Interview with Carl Vinson, Milledgeville, Georgia, November 17, 1967.

[16]Cong. Rec., LXV, 4578; clipping in possession of Carl Vinson from Washington Herald, February 19, 1933.

[17]Cong. Rec., LXVIII, 4684; LXIV, 3713.

When President Coolidge suggested another naval limitation conference, the House Naval Affairs Committee ordered an investigation of American naval strength. Mr. Vinson's views coincided with those of the majority of the committee. He insisted that Secretary of Navy Curtis Wilbur appear before the committee to make such recommendations as might be necessary to upgrade the fleet. When he was asked whether he would favor an extensive investigation of present American seapower, Carl Vinson replied, "I would be glad of it. The Democrats turned over the greatest fleet on earth and great oil reserves, too, and now we have neither."[18]

The Morrow Board

One of his first opportunities to influence the course of American naval and military thought came when he was appointed to the Morrow Board in 1925. This group of nine was selected to investigate the charges made by General Billy Mitchell. Carl Vinson was one of three members from Congress. A Washington Herald story declared that the President had chosen Congressmen whom he believed he could rely upon to pass on the merits of the situation without political considerations.[19] Yet he was a Democrat, the only one chosen from Congress. A New York Times analysis

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[18]New York Times, December 31, 1924, p. 7.

[19]Clipping in possession of Carl Vinson from the Washington Herald, September 13, 1925.

remarked that he had been "chosen so that he may guide his party colleagues when the findings of this board go before Congress for action." "He ranks," the Times continued, "as a thorough examiner into all questions affecting the national defense."[20] That reputation grew with the years, earning for him a credibility that was a major factor in his great influence.

If he was sympathetic to the Navy, he rejected any criticism of Congress that it might offer. Mr. Vinson, the article noted, at times betrayed no little irritation at the implication of witnesses that conditions might be better had Congress appropriated more money. He dealt with such an implication by eliciting the information that Congress had appropriated the monies which the budget office had requested for the various items, even including aviation.[21]

No critic of aviation in the hearings, he challenged Brigadier General Billy Mitchell's condemnation of the Navy for sending the dirigible Shenandoah on its trip inland where it crashed in Ohio when it ran into a severe storm. When Mitchell contended that the Navy lacked authority for that flight, Vinson asked what provisions of the law were violated. Gen. Mitchell answered, "The section which restricts Navy air activities to sea." Vinson questioned

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[20]September 27, 1925, Section 8, p. 5.

[21]Ibid.

whether the air power advocate was putting a far-fetched interpretation on the law, to which Mitchell replied that the Shenandoah was on a propaganda mission which evaded the law.[22] This exchange revealed Vinson's instant readiness to rush to the defense of the Navy, and especially of its air arm, at the least hint of criticism.

After extensive hearings the Morrow Board presented its findings and its recommendations. The Navy could develop aircraft carriers yet keep its regular surface vessels. In addition, the report discouraged the unification of the armed services. However, these separate forces should continue to retain what was considered an adequate ratio between American air power and the other phases of the nation's military and naval strength. As Vinson declared to this author on November 17, 1967, "The policy set by us then is substantially the policy used today."[23]

To carry out certain recommendations emphasized by the Morrow Board Hearings, Mr. Vinson submitted to the House on June 7, 1926, a report to encourage the development of aviation. Maintaining that the Secretary of the Navy had been handicapped in the procurement of improved designs of

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[22] The Morrow Board Hearings, October, 1925.

[23] Interview, Milledgeville, Georgia; Louis R. Stockstill, "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," reprinted in the Cong. Rec., CVII, 2489.

aircraft "by inadequate, confused, and unnecessarily restrictive laws, that the aviation material of the Navy is inadequate in quantity and inefficient in character, and is suffering from a lack of progress that threatens complete stagnation," the Vinson Report recommended that the Secretary of the Navy be empowered to "stimulate and encourage inventive genius" by making incentive rewards to designers. This action would, if successful, enable the United States to keep abreast of world developments in the "new art" of aviation.[24]

This report supported intensive efforts to encourage the development of the domestic aviation industry by requiring that the planes designed for naval use be manufactured within the country. The latter would keep an active aircraft industry going in the United States which would be available with adequate plans and prototypes to construct the necessary planes in the event America entered another war. Aviation could thus become a potent weapon for carrying out the Navy's defense responsibilities.[25]

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[24]House of Representatives, Report No. 1396, To Encourage Development of Aviation, June 7, 1926, pp. 1-7.

[25]Ibid. According to Alfred F. Hurley, Billy Mitchell Crusader for Air Power (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1964), pp. 106-07, the committee was responsible for new legislation creating the Naval Air Corp.

Warship Modernization

Although deeply interested in a better Navy, Representative Vinson was also anxious that the nation get all that it should for its Navy dollars. In the 1926 hearings to provide better handling and launching arrangements for planes on six coal-burning battleships, he inquired about the future use of the catapults when four of the ships involved--the Florida, the Utah, the Arkansas, and the Wyoming--would be replaced in 1934. If a million dollars were to be wasted when these ships were decommissioned, then he would not support the bill. However, if the catapults were to be removed and used on other ships, then he would consider the money well spent and the legislation worthy of support.[26]

During the hearings on repairs and alterations to the Pennsylvania, the Arizona, the Oklahoma, and the Nevada, Mr. Vinson advocated an amendment to the bill, patterned after the Dallinger amendment on the building of cruisers, which would require that half of the work be done in Navy yards and only half be sent to private yards. Vinson thought that the comparison of the cost of repairs in a private yard with those in a Navy yard would allow the government to ascertain fair charges. Believing that the crew would have better and less expensive facilities in the government

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[26]House of Representatives, Hearings before Committee on Naval Affairs, Sundry Legislation 1925-26, pp. 1676-84.

yard, he tended to favor the latter. Therefore, he felt it would probably be better if repair work were done in the Navy yards while more of the original construction should be done in private yards. Here, as he was to do on numerous occasions, the Georgian made it clear that his district would not benefit from either method or from the lack of building when he stated, "As you already know . . . there is not a navy yard or a private yard that builds ships in my section of the country."[27]

Other questions on the proper use of funds interested the Congressman during these apprenticeship years and he was quick to ask whenever he did not believe the money was being spent properly. Almost two years after his first inquiry into the repairs for the Pennsylvania and the Arizona, Mr. Vinson questioned the lack of bids for repairs and alterations on these two vessels. Having information that the project could be done more cheaply on the West Coast, he wondered why the Navy did not use these shipyards. He did not like the plans for bringing these two battleships from the Pacific fleet to Atlantic facilities in order to provide repairs and alterations which he believed could be done more suitably on the West Coast. Again pointing out that there were no navy yards "down in his part of the

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[27] Ibid., 1928-1929, p. 225; Congress provided for various modernizations during this period, see United States Statutes XLIV, 612; XLV, 25, 1261. Debate in the Cong. Rec., LXX, 101-03, illustrates Vinson's leadership in this legislation while only ranking minority committee member.

country" which would make him interested in where the work was assigned, he was anxious to be informed on the plans as well as to know whether the alternative would be used. He carried on an extensive questioning of Admiral George H. Rock, the Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair for the Navy Department, allowing the Naval Affairs Committee to get a much better idea of the problems at hand.[28]

He pursued his question of bids with Admiral Rock by asking whether there was really any objection to putting a provision in a current bill requiring the Secretary of the Navy to seek "bids both from industrial and other yards for doing this work and then awarding the resultant contract to the lowest bidder."[29] He was interested in getting the best for the least amount and he pushed the Admiral toward revealing information which would support a Vinson amendment to do just that.

In a prelude to his later thinking, Mr. Vinson asked Admiral Rock why the Navy would modernize only three battleships under their 1931 program. He thought the Navy should lay down, in one bill, a three or four year program to modernize all eight battleships which were in need of such attention. Thus, instead of having to come back to Congress every year to go over the same questions and circumstances,

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[28]House of Representatives, Hearings before Committee on Naval Affairs, Sundry Legislation 1929-1930, 3133, 3136.

[29]Ibid., 3145-46.

the Tennessee, the Colorado, the California, the Maryland, and the West Virginia would also be in line for proper attention.[30] In that short period of three to five years, all of them could be put in first class shape. Later, Vinson championed this method of long range planning in the naval building bills which he sent to the floor of the House.

Vinson's inquiry on the Pacific drydock facilities for the Lexington and the Saratoga contained the same cost consciousness. If these ships were to operate with the Pacific fleet, adequate provisions must be provided for their up-keep. If private yards were to be used, the cost would be prohibitive. The expense of bringing these ships from the Pacific to New York, or Philadelphia, or even to Newport News would be excessive in both time and money. Although expensive at first, he was sure that these Pacific coast drydocks, capable of taking care of the two large carriers, would pay for themselves in the long run.[31]

Furthermore, Representative Vinson followed the effects of the Dallinger amendment very closely. If the fifteen projected cruisers were to be built in accordance with this amendment, alternate ships would be built in

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[30] Ibid., 3168. Here Vinson showed his political acumen as, realizing that the present session was almost over and wishing to avoid notifying the world that Congress had refused to modernize these battleships, he postponed further action until December, 1930; Ibid., 3189.

[31] Cong. Rec., LXX, 3089-93.

private yards. During the inactivity of the eight years prior to 1929, the United States had allowed its cruiser building facilities to become run-down. Thus, Vinson questioned carefully the amount requested to put certain docks in condition so that they could be used to build cruisers.[32]

In May 1930, he showed further instances of his interest in using the Navy's money in the best possible way. Upon noting the continual difficulties with lighter-than-aircraft, he doubted the wisdom of building another such craft. It would be better to cancel the contract with Goodyear than to spend money and then find that this craft could not do the task for which it was designed. In addition, Vinson and a few others were aware of the limitations of air ships. This type of aircraft was being groomed as a mother ship to carry a number of airplanes for the greater part of the flight to the target where they could bomb the enemy and return. Though the range of the airplane could be extended by hundreds of miles with this scheme, he was more interested in the direct development of the airplane, itself.[33]

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[32] Ibid., 4761-67. Enabling legislation for these cruisers upgrading that category of warship was provided piecemeal, United States Statutes, XLV, 640-41, 1165, 1468-70; XLVI, 575-76, 1449-50. This provision gave the Navy League its only bright spot during the decade, see Navy League, American Sea Sense Grows (Navy League, 1929), passim.

[33] Cong. Rec., LXVIII, 1191-94. Here, Vinson spoke before Congress detailing his support of the airplane itself.

Vinson's insistence on efficiency did not reflect any reluctance to promote the idea of a powerful navy despite the moves for economy that swept the nation in the early years of the depression. In the 1931 Congressional debate he challenged an Idaho opponent to define his moderate naval building program. Would the gentleman from Idaho, he asked, endorse a schedule that would bring America up to the equality with Britain envisioned in the Washington Treaty? Vinson received only an evasive answer.[34]

He similarly resisted a move for economy in the officer-training program that would reduce the Naval Academy nominees allowed each Congressman and Senator from four to three. With twenty-three ships coming off the ways during 1931 and 1932 in need of officers, he thought that this would be a poor time to do anything other than boost the recommendations to the previous four each. He declared that it took two years to build a ship, but "four years to train an officer via Annapolis."[35]

Presidential Attitudes Toward the Navy

During the ten years after the Washington Conference of 1922, years that constituted the most important phase of Carl Vinson's apprenticeship, the United States Navy fared rather poorly. Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert

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[34] *Ibid.*, LXXIV, 4522.

[35] *Ibid.*, 6277.

Hoover were not greatly interested in the Navy and operated within the limits set by the Secretary of the Treasury, Andrew Mellon, who distrusted anything military and favored lowered taxes and a balanced budget. Such a cut in taxes left little room for extensive expenditures on warships. Mellon could see little reason for spending good debt retirement money on "worthless" navy fighting ships.[36]

Moreover, Coolidge opposed the proposal to modernize those American battleships that were becoming obsolete as other nations improved their ships. Certain alterations were permitted by the Washington Treaty which would give added protection against torpedoes and aerial bombs, provide for high-angle fire, and counter other relatively new dangers. When, in 1925, Congress decided to explore the possibilities of bringing these battleships up-to-date, the solid opposition of the President ended the matter. He believed that such changes would be contrary to the Treaty of Washington and would lead to an armament race of serious consequences.[37]

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[36]George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1940), p. 317, 354; Donald W. Mitchell, History of the Modern American Navy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 277; New York Times, February 12, 1931, p. 20, November 14, 1931, p. 1. The Navy League of the United States in its publication, The Treasury Deficit and a Treaty Navy (Washington: The Navy League, 1932), blamed Hoover more than Coolidge for what it called the deplorably weak Navy.

[37]The Baltimore Sun, December 17, 1927 in the Dudley Knox papers, MDLC; Donald W. Mitchell, History of the Modern American Navy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 284.

When, shortly after entering the White House, Hoover held up the building of the first five of the fifteen cruisers which Congress had just ordered built within a definite time schedule, he upset the Navy League leading to an altercation with that organization. Although there was no pressing circumstance at this time which demanded the immediate building of all the proposed cruisers, the Navy League declared this postponement just a friendly gesture which had not been "commensurately copied by other prospective participants" who excelled the United States in under-aged ships built and building. However, Armin Rappaport, in his study of the Navy League, found that this organization had neither the money nor the power either through numbers or importance of membership to make its influence felt. This League, now at its own nadir, could not promote warship building to any substantial degree.[38]

Furthermore, it was not just the Presidents who held back warship building. None of the three Secretaries of the Navy in the Republican years really pushed the building of warships. Probably the least eager of the three was Edwin Denby, Harding's appointee who was responsible, in part, for the transfer of the Navy's prized reserves at

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[38]The Navy League, The President and the Navy (The Navy League, 1931), p. 1; editorial, Chicago Sunday Tribune July 14, 1929, p. 14, in the Dudley Knox papers, MDLC; Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), p. 144. Contrast Navy League tracts with the same title, The President and the Navy--re President Hoover, October 28, 1931 and re President Roosevelt, July 28, 1934.

Elk Hills and Teapot Dome to the Interior Department in what later became one of the worst scandals in Harding's scandal-racked administration. Denby's bureau chiefs had cut the budget to the bone and Denby, for good measure, cut 45 per cent from this.[39]

Congress followed the same course of economy. Several naval radio stations were eliminated, the New Orleans naval base was closed and forces were drastically reduced at other bases. Repairs and alterations to ships were delayed or put off; thus, by 1924, the condition of the United States fleet left much to be desired. Ships limped around as Congress refused to provide the necessary repairs. War maneuvers and complete testing of machinery could not be held because of the cost of the needed fuel. Lacking sufficient funds even to maintain the status quo because an economy minded Congress refused to vote them, the enlisted strength during Secretary Denby's first fiscal year in office decreased from 113,000 to 86,000. Navy ships were lucky if they had an 85 per cent complement and surely there was no room for additional ships which would require supplementary men.[40]

However, the attitude and actions of those in power, whether they be members of the executive branch or Congress,

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[39]Donald W. Mitchell, History of the Modern American Navy (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), p. 278.

[40]Secretary of the Navy, Annual Report 1924, 12-4.

must be considered within the context of their times. The country and the world were influenced by a hope for peace through arms limitations and the outlawing of war. Had the terms of the several treaties negotiated during the 1920's been fulfilled by all signatories, there would have been no need for any extensive warship building. As long as there seemed a sound justification for believing that man would attempt to settle his problems without resort to war, the Presidents and Congresses of the twenties had followed sound policies. In the meantime, the enormous building program needed to meet war needs would be sufficient for the twenties.

The era of the Republicans brought a near void in any serious attempts to raise the operating strength of the United States fleet. Little enthusiasm could be generated either in the executive branch or in the legislative branch. Vinson, as ranking minority member of the House Naval Affairs Committee, could really do little to motivate a building program. The few warship authorizations during this decade ranked it as the low point in the Navy's modern history. Even so, the present was taken care of--but the future might not be.

As the world entered the 1930's the overt aggressions of Japan and the implied aggressions of Italy suggested the need for a careful reappraisal of the previous decade's shipbuilding holiday. Even so, if America's newspaper indicated the attitude of the people, limits had been set.

TABLE 1.--Ships laid down or appropriated for by the leading seapowers from the signing of the Washington Treaty to 1932.

Total		Battleships	Carriers	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines
33	United States	--	--	16	11	6
112	Great Britain	2	1	25	54	30
126	Japan	--	1	20	63	42
158	France	1	--	19	58	81
113	Italy	--	--	17	42	54

Note: Thus the United States was fifth in each of the categories in which she built as well as fifth overall. It would be impossible to match the British fleet or even to maintain superiority over the Japanese navy building at this rate.

Source: Annual Reports of the Navy Department for Fiscal Year 1932 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 5.

Vinson noted that 306 editorials advocated the abolition of battleships while only 33 wanted retention. Furthermore 226 editorials favored a battleship holiday.[41] If America's peace were to depend less upon the Department of State and more upon the Navy, then perhaps the Navy must be brought up to the full treaty strength. This the Japanese were already doing; this the United States was not. Not only was the United States losing its five to three ratio advantage, but its old ships grew obsolete while Japan launched new ones equipped for the kind of war that airplanes and submarines had created. Under the five to three ratio the United States could not match Japan in the western Pacific without weakening its forces elsewhere. The time appeared to approach when it could not do so even if it stripped its power from the eastern Pacific and the Atlantic. This was the situation in 1931 when Carl Vinson, the ranking minority member of the Naval Affairs Committee, reflected on the responsibilities that would be his, as chairman, if the Democrats captured control of Congress.

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[41]U. S., Congress, House, Sundry Legislation 1929-30, 3161.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW CHAIRMAN

On 1 December 1931, Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams and Representative Vinson discussed the possible programs for warship building. Almost certain to become the Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, Vinson could now become a substantial figure in naval planning. The following day, he met with Representative Fred Britten, Republican of Illinois, who had been chairman of the committee during the last session, and Senators Frederick Hale, Republican of Maine, and Claude Swanson, Democrat of Virginia, the chairman and ranking minority member, respectively, of the Senate Naval Committee. Within this leadership, it was agreed that a warship construction program should be submitted to Congress.[1]

When the Democrats reorganized the House of Representatives, the traditional system of seniority succession elevated Vinson to the chairmanship of the Naval Affairs Committee. Certain members opposed this method of

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[1]The New York Times, December 3, 1931, p. 12; December 5, 1931, p. 2.

determining committee leadership and attempted to use Vinson as the prime example of the fallacy built into seniority elevation. They questioned whether a Congressman from a district without a single seaport would be a wise choice to lead the committee most responsible for the proper condition of the American Navy.[2] However, the seniority system prevailed.[3] Accordingly, a news item in the January 10, 1932 New York Times noted the irony in the fact that a "Navy which sees itself in danger of pernicious anemia looks hopefully toward a Georgia country lawyer." Neither the cosmopolitan New York Herald Tribune nor the parochial Union-Recorder of Milledgeville, Georgia feared the selection.[4]

Becoming chairman in January 1931, Vinson inherited substantial power. Congress had tended, through the years, to depend more and more upon the committee's judgment and

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[2]Williams, Atlanta Constitution, p. 6A.

[3]Of the forty-five committee assignments made by the Democrats in 1931, eighteen were appointed outside the seniority system. For an extensive discussion of the seniority system, see Nelson Polsby, Miriam Gallaher, and Barry Rundquist, "The Growth of the Seniority System in the U. S. House of Representatives," The American Political Science Review, (September, 1969), 787-807.

[4]New York Times, January 10, 1932, IX, p. 2; Union-Recorder, November 13, 1940, p. 1; clipping in Carl Vinson's possession from the New York Herald Tribune, January 5, 1932. It is interesting to note that thirty-three years later Newsweek declared that Vinson was "perhaps the best argument ever devised for the seniority system," Newsweek, December 28, 1964, p. 20.

to vote largely as it might recommend. In addition, Vinson, as a strong chairman, could mold his committee to follow his interest in airpower, in federal shipbuilding facilities, and in efficiency. He could shape the bills, summon witnesses, conduct hearings, secure a favorable climate in the House, guide the debate, counsel while a bill was before the Senate, influence the choice of conference committee members, and plead with the President to sign the completed bill.

Between 1885 and 1922, the House Naval Affairs Committee had reported out construction bills which concurrently authorized and appropriated the necessary funds making that period the Navy's greatest building era.[5] When the Naval Affairs Committee could no longer persuade Congress to authorize and, at the same time, appropriate funds to build warships, it was not nearly as easy to put through a building program. However, the committee still retained the power of recommending authorization. This function was very important. Only ships which were authorized could be built--consequently, the committee controlled the limits of construction. This decision

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[5]Robert G. Albion, "The Naval Affairs Committees, 1816-1947," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, (November, 1952), 1228, hereafter cited as Albion, The N. A. C.

TABLE 2.--Ships authorized and keels laid for the modern American Navy.

	Battleships	Carriers	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines	Total
Cleveland	2/1		11/6			13/7
Harrison	4/4		3/9			7/13
Cleveland	5/6		0/1			5/7
McKinley	8/4		15/9	16/16	8/8	47/37
Roosevelt	15/15		7/13	20/10	24/12	66/50
Taft	5/8		0/0	20/24	20/20	45/52
Wilson	16/15		17/17[a]	301/291	113/122	447/445
Harding	0/1		0/0	0/0	0/3	0/3
Coolidge	0/0	1/0	20/8	0/0	6/3	27/11
Hoover	0/0	0/1	0/7	0/0	0/3	0/11
Roosevelt	17/12	34/34[b]	122/97	466/466[c]	293/293	932/902

[a]Only ten of these ships were completed as light cruisers, five were canceled and two others became the Saratoga and the Lexington, the first substantial American aircraft carriers.

[b]In addition, nine cruiser hulls were converted into light carriers and 105 escort carriers were built.

[c]In addition, 509 destroyer escorts were completed.

Source: Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963, 1964), Volume I, pp. 189-328, Volume II, pp. 462-74.

could influence naval policy. The size and makeup of this force would determine to a large extent American foreign policy in the 1930's.[6]

While the size and composition of the Navy interlocked with the contemplated United States foreign policy, the size and composition of the Army did not have anywhere near the same effect. The Navy was a mobile force which could make its weight felt quickly in distant locations. The United States Navy and, to some extent, the Air Force could not be increased by any great amount in the 1920's and the 1930's without certain other nations being very sensitive to the change of power. The American Army could have been increased to twice its numbers and the reaction of foreign nations would have been that it had been foolish to waste so much money. The American Navy would have expanded where it would be in conflict with other nations; the Army would not.

If the authorization function were in the hands of a committee headed by a very astute chairman, the size and composition of the fleet would be radically changed. The seniority system meant that usually the senior members of the Naval Affairs Committee, the chairman and the ranking minority member of the committee, would have the best grasp of naval affairs and, consequently, could speak

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[6] Ibid., pp. 1227-28.

with the greatest authority. Eventually, power tended to concentrate in the hands of the chairman.[7]

As the committee system evolved, the chairmanships of the committees became seniority positions held by Congressmen from "safe" constituencies. Thus, the two outstanding chairmen of the Senate and the House committees on naval affairs have come from Maine and Georgia, respectively. The extended experience involved often made this official more influential than the concurrent Secretary of Navy. The chairman's leadership would depend to a great extent upon his interest in and his knowledge of naval affairs. His power, accordingly, "could be tremendous." Although he had only one vote in a showdown, the chairman had certain prerogatives which enhanced his power. Having the power to screen the bills prior to their consideration by the full committee, the chairman could kill building proposals. Even a weak chairman could maintain his control in this fashion.[8]

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[7]Upon being informed by a committee member that he had voted with the chairman, Vinson is supposed to have replied, "What the hell do you think I put you on the committee for?" "Air Marshall Vinson," Newsweek, March 28, 1949, p. 19. An incident which perhaps illustrated that power as well as the outcropping of a sixteen-year habit was noted in the December 20, 1931 New York Times (Section II, p. 6). In the first meeting of the new committee, new chairman Vinson turned to former chairman Republican Fred Britten of Illinois and said: "Now, Mr. Chairman."

[8]For a most astute treatment of the chairman's position, see Albion, The N.A.C., 1227-1236. Later Beverly Smith asked Chairman Vinson as to how he got

Even more significantly, a strong chairman would exhibit his legislative strength by directing or maneuvering his legislation through the debates. With the usual Congressional load, it was necessary to get the reported bill out on the floor for consideration. Except on the most important or highly controversial issues, the favorable action of the committee was tantamount to passage.[9]

The seniority system brought Carl Vinson to the top in 1930. Eliot Janeway wrote that Vinson ran the Navy because the Constitution states that he should run it.[10] Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution states that Congress shall have the power "to provide and maintain a Navy." As determined by practical usage, the chairman may end up almost running the Navy. The authorization and appropriations bills which he affected built and operated the Navy. As chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, Vinson was to have only two military measures rejected in the next sixteen years. Either he had a very effective control of his committee and his legislation, or he had been so cautious in proposing

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results with his committee. His cryptic answer was "All I do is fuss with them." Saturday Evening Post, March 10, 1951, p. 136.

[9]Albion, The N.A.C., 1233.

[10]Eliot Janeway, "The Man Who Owns the Navy," Saturday Evening Post, December 15, 1945, p. 17.

legislation that he advocated only that which he was sure would pass in the House of Representatives.[11]

Initial Vinson Naval Construction Attempt

Following his earlier conference with Secretary Charles Francis Adams, Vinson announced that he would not pattern his bill after Chairman Fred Britten's proposed lump authorization of $760 million during the last session. Whereas the new chairman had wished to develop a new bill through public hearings conducted before his House Naval Affairs Committee, an agreement came out of the Vinson-Adams conference to bring the Navy up to the London treaty ratio. In line with America's failure to build up to the latter specifications, Vinson wished to investigate "whether or not the budget cuts have impaired the national defense, or if the President has infringed upon Congressional prerogatives in handling the naval establishment."[12]

He announced the impending introduction into Congress of two proposals, either of which would bring the Navy up to the limits allowed by the London Treaty. One provided a ten year period, while the other named fifteen years of building before the limits would be reached. Although naval officers would prefer the shorter program,

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[11]Vance Packard, "Carl Vinson, Watchdog of Defense," American Magazine, CXLIX (April, 1950), 31.

[12]The New York Times, December 3, 1931, p. 12.

they would support the fifteen year program. Mr. Vinson did not express his view on the length of the program, but called for a definite building policy which would provide a treaty fleet "within a specified time." While the Britten plan would have authorized a full treaty force, it did not call for a definite time limit for completion. In contrast, Vinson declared that he proposed to fight for a schedule which would lay down ships rather than blueprints. Thus he was opposed to any program which would not provide for the construction allowed the United States by the London naval treaty.[13]

Although he was strongly interested in the Navy, his goal was to provide a suitable sea force for the taxpayers' money. It was his belief, and he intended to develop testimony to support it, that a treaty navy could operate more economically than the existing fleet.[14] Over the long haul, this policy would bring more to the Navy of permanent value than a crash program fraught with corruption, inefficiency, and gross expenditures. A building program established with the intent of getting the most for the amount of money available would be more likely to

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[13] Ibid., December 5, 1931, p. 2; Washington Post, January 2, 1932, p. 1; clipping in Carl Vinson's possession from the New York Sun, January, 1932.

[14] Atlanta Constitution, January 5, 1932, p. 20; Washington Post, January 5, 1932, p. 2. See also Vinson's questions on the Ranger in hearings before Committee on Naval Affairs, Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment 1932-1933, 3057.

be followed by others of a similar nature as they should become necessary. A continuing plan was more important to Vinson than any expensive scheme which a Shearer or the Navy League might try to jam through Congress by fraud or pressure. Both William B. Shearer, an "active" observer thought by many to have wrecked the Geneva Conference while in the employ of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, and the American Brown Boveri Electric Corporation whom he sued in 1929 for nonpayment of fees, and the Navy League which had maintained pressure to promote a large Navy, alarmed people more than they had favorably influenced naval legislation.[15]

In January 1932, the new chairman began to formulate a bill which would provide for a ten year construction program. This schedule would involve, in the first year, one aircraft carrier, two light cruisers, nine destroyers, and six submarines. By 1942, it would have added three aircraft carriers, nine light cruisers, eighty-five destroyers, and twenty-three submarines to the American

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[15]Thomas A. Bailey, The Man in the Street (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 291-92; see also Carl Schriftgiesser, The Lobbyist (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), pp. 53-7. That author maintained that after the Shearer investigation and the Senate debate over the London Treaty, "The Navy League's standing as an effective lobby was pretty well demolished. . . ."

fleet.[16] This, he believed, would bring the Navy up to the size permitted by old treaties and, in the same time, assure the highest quality possible under their terms. He wanted an adequate Navy, or as he put it, "And by adequate, I mean one that we can rely upon for victory beyond the shadow of a doubt."[17]

The Republican Secretary of the Navy, Charles Francis Adams, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William V. Pratt, endorsed this replacement bill. But Adams was quick to disclaim authorship. "It was Mr. Vinson's bill." Inasmuch as President Hoover was not expected to assume any initial leadership in the impending Geneva disarmament conference, it seemed likely that the President would not be "unfriendly to the general construction policies carried in the bill." Without the expectation of change in the world armament situation during the Geneva conference, Vinson was hopeful that an ideal time had arrived to push through his program.[18]

A news item in the New York Times reported that "on all hands Mr. Vinson, the new Democratic chairman, was congratulated on the bill he drafted." In less than 500

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[16]Cong. Rec., LXXV, 1248-50, 1275, 2561; Atlanta Constitution, January 4, 1932, p. 1; New York Times, January 4, 1932, p. 1.

[17]New York Times, January 17, 1932, p. 23.

[18]Ibid., January 5, 1932, p. 16; January 6, 1932, p. 1; January 7, 1932, p. 8.

words it had taken care of "every angle of a vast ten-year replacement program involving 120 ships of the auxiliary types."[19] Such brevity in a Congressional bill should certainly have received compliments.

Hanson W. Baldwin, the noted military-naval analyst, praised the program:

> Mr. Vinson's bill is a forward-looking measure. After many years, here is a proposal which recognizes that ships cannot be built in a day: that same naval construction means steady, progressive work, not annual appropriations voted with no thought to the future. . . . Lump construction has been the bugbear of American naval designers for decades. Spasmodic building is the result, and spasmodic building has never meant the best ships, has never meant a continuously well-balanced navy, has never meant an even, continued demand for shipbuilding materials.[20]

Vinson was disturbed over the dangers of building at the same time great numbers of destroyers susceptible to mass obsolescence. By building one or two at a time, the faults could be corrected by testing. The alternative was to build many with the very same faults.

When the Naval Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives endorsed the bill by a vote of 17-2 and the Democratic leadership prevented Vinson from bringing it to the floor, the Navy League could not bring enough pressure to bear to reverse the trend.[21] However, as

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[19] Ibid., January 6, 1932, p. 1.

[20] Ibid., January 10, 1932, pp. 1-2.

[21] Cong. Rec., LXXV, 2663; The Atlanta Constitution, January 24, 1932, p. 4; January 26, 1932, p. 1. Vinson,

Armin Rappaport has declared, the League was "at perhaps the lowest point since the early years of its life." Of the 3,607 members, 2,104 had life memberships eliminating the payment of annual dues. Funds for publicity were practically nonexistent and the League could not even answer Charles Beard's polemic The Navy: Defense or Portent. When Vinson's 120 vessel construction program "raised a howl of protest," the Navy League had insufficient funds even to support his program.[22]

Moreover, the Navy League could have done even less to persuade the President to back such legislation. Even had relations between Hoover and the League been amicable--which they were not--it would have been difficult to get favorable action. With the depression intensifying, a call for authorization, even without appropriation, would be unwelcomed. Vinson could only look to November for the election of a President more willing to enlarge the Navy.

Not content simply to await the election outcome, Carl Vinson joined the movement to elect just such a President. When a Roosevelt Club was organized in Baldwin County, he became a member of the executive committee.

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however, presented his defense of such a program before Congress on February 18, 1932, Cong. Rec., LXXV, 4263-66.

[22]Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States, pp. 150-51. Daniel Carrison, in his The United States Navy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 190 regarded the Navy League's successes as "more often a reflection of the excitement of the times rather than the result of a determined propaganda campaign."

Knowing Mr. Roosevelt as a pro-Navy Assistant Secretary of the Navy during the World War, Vinson advocated a draft for the New York governor. He thought Roosevelt would be most receptive to a naval construction program.[23]

The New President

After his long absence from intimate naval legislation circles, Franklin Roosevelt would find Carl Vinson to be the official who could provide knowledge of the Navy's prospects in the House of Representatives. With the election over, Chairman Vinson met with Mr. Roosevelt at Warm Springs, Georgia in late November 1932, to form a Democratic naval program. Out of this conference came a much different plan than that which Vinson proposed earlier in the year. Where a fullblown naval building program might be expected from Franklin D. Roosevelt, he wished to postpone much of the proposed new naval construction. In order to balance the budget, he would stress efficiency rather than numbers.[24] The official contact between the two men most responsible for providing new warships failed to produce a building schedule.

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[23] Union-Recorder, June 18, 1931, p. 1. In an interview, Milledgeville, Georgia, November 17, 1967, Vinson indicated that he knew Mr. Roosevelt when he and Secretary of Navy Josephus Daniels "came up the hill."

[24] Ibid., November 30, 1932, p. 1. Although Roosevelt had declared himself in favor of an adequate navy, he could safely postpone construction because he had never defined "adequate navy." See the New York Times, April 1, 1933, p. 6.

Following the meeting, Vinson wrote to the President-elect deploring the short time which was available for consideration of the "future naval policies" necessary for the defense of the United States. In spite of feeling that the recent conversation was "both gratifying and encouraging," he believed, after giving much thought to particular items relative to their discussions, that it was essential that he "set forth at some length some of the major problems concerning the Navy" which confronted the President and himself. Emphasizing his long experience on the Naval Affairs Committee which had enabled him to keep "in close touch with the Navy, with its development, and with its needs," Vinson promised to state his own views and asked the President-elect to reciprocate. The exchange would develop "a clearly defined end toward which to work" in order to "obtain the greatest value for the money expended on the Navy."[25]

Chairman Vinson was asking for a clearly defined policy for the handling of the Navy during the coming Democratic term. The new Secretary of the Navy, unless Josephus Daniels were chosen, would be a neophite, and Vinson would be the likely individual to provide the transition from the Republican to the Democratic naval program. The impression which the Congressman made at

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[25]Letter from Carl Vinson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 28, 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, PPF 5901.

this point could be influential in getting the best treatment possible for the Navy. On the other hand, it would be possible that the Navy would be given less money with which to perform its normal tasks.

Vinson reminded Roosevelt that "the United States has led the world in its efforts to reduce and limit armaments" by initiating the conference which resulted in the Washington Treaty of 1922. Hoping that other nations would follow its example, the United States had, he noted, neglected building warships while other nations constructed those ships not limited by the Washington Treaty. Thus the British replacement program involved 148 ships with the total tonnage of 472,000 tons and Japan's effort totaled 164 ships of 410,000 tons, America built 40 ships of 197,000 tons.[26]

The Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee provided for the President-elect a table showing that France had made provision for 196 ships of two and a half times United States tonnage construction and Italy had made allowances for 140 ships with tonnage total approximately 100,000 tons above the American replacements. Even France and Italy, who were not expected to be naval powers, were becoming so when compared to the weak American endeavors.

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[26] Ibid.

TABLE 3.--Ships laid down or appropriated for since the Washington Treaty (as of late 1932).

	United States	Great Britain	Japan	France	Italy
Battleships	--	2	--	1	--
Carriers	1	--	1	--	--
Cruisers	16	25	20	19	17
Destroyers	11	54	63	58	42
Submarines	6	30	42	81	54
Miscellaneous	6	37	38	37	27
Totals	40	148	164	196	140

Source: Letter from Carl Vinson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 28, 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, PPF 5901.

His chart showed that the tonnage of underage vessels which the United States and Japan had actually completed was almost the same for 31 December, 1932. The Washington Treaty set an effective life of twenty years for battleships while similar action at the 1930 London Conference designated a sixteen-year life for cruisers and destroyers and thirteen years for submarines. While it was obvious that an arbitrary figure cannot any more than suggest when a particular ship was overage, these rules of thumb were used. They certainly provided a general indication of a navy's health.[27]

[27] Ibid.

At this time, Japan would have a balanced fleet in full commission or fully manned of ten battleships, four carriers, twenty-nine cruisers, seventy-two destroyers, and sixty-nine submarines. In contrast, the United States

TABLE 4.--1932 number of combatant ships in full commission or fully manned.

	United States	Great Britain	Japan
Battleships	11	14	10
Carriers	3	3	4
Cruisers	19	42	32
Destroyers	72	74	80
Submarines	42	44	62

Navy would have fewer ships ready in four of the major categories. Only in battleships where America had a one ship edge was it ahead. Furthermore, over half of its tonnage was in battleships which would shortly become overaged.[28] As of 31 December, 1936, Japan's ten battleships as well as America's fourteen would be overage by treaty definition. Beyond this, the Japanese fleet would remain a balanced force. However, the American fleet would have only eleven destroyers and twenty submarines which would not be considered overaged. Japan would have seven

[28]Secretary of the Navy, Annual Reports of the Navy 1932, p. 6.

times as many modern destroyers as the United States and over twice as many modern submarines. The American up-to-date effective fleet would be weaker than that of France, and, aside from aircraft carriers, smaller than the Italian fleet. Overage ships could be useful in any future engagement but they could be less seaworthy, less reliable, less accurate, less powerful, and slower than younger ships. In battle they could handicap the whole operation.[29]

In this same December letter to President Roosevelt, Representative Vinson proposed that the United States lay down each year a specified number of the various types of ships. Although he admitted that this suggestion involved "merely an authorization bill," and the appropriations for building the ships thus authorized would necessitate yearly Congressional approval, he believed that the enactment of his bill would greatly strengthen the position of the American delegation at the 1935 Limitation of Armaments Conference.[30]

In addition, Vinson observed that passage would provide for construction of ships in an orderly and systematic manner resulting in "great economies." Using the five-year aeronautical program as an example, he invited President

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[29] Ibid., Letter from Carl Vinson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 28, 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, PPF 9501.

[30] Ibid.

Roosevelt's attention to the savings which would be obtained through systematic planning. By operating through a progressive program providing for a definite number of planes to be built each year, a proposed expenditure of eighty-five million dollars was cut to fifty-eight million dollars. He believed that similar economies could be effected in constructing warships; economies that could not be obtained through a haphazard approach to providing a naval building program.[31]

Chairman Vinson capped his appeal to Mr. Roosevelt with his belief that "we should make every endeavor to lay down a continuing construction program whose aim should be the bringing of our Navy up to Treaty strength in a given length of time: that in this program should be laid down, year by year, the number of ships to be authorized and appropriated for in that year." Should subsequent treaties require, he was willing to modify the continuous program to meet their terms.[32]

If the November Vinson visit influenced the President-elect, there was no immediate evidence. On November 30, 1932, Mr. Roosevelt announced that he planned to cut $100 million a year from the Navy's operating budget. At the time when Vinson was hoping to develop a schedule which would bring the American Navy up tc the goals which the United States position in the world demanded, he had to admit that

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

depression conditions had forced the President to propose a program which would ultimately allow the Japanese Navy to replace the American fleet as the world's second strongest.[33]

Under these circumstances, Vinson planning for the build-up of the Navy had to be slowed down until Roosevelt had assembled his full administration. A sympathetic Secretary of the Navy along with a renewed and possibly more substantial Democratic majority in Congress could help him persuade the President. In early January, 1933, an article in the New York Times reported that Vinson refused to discuss the prospects. It was "learned on excellent authority" that the Democrats would do nothing more about the navy "until they have consulted President-elect Roosevelt." It was still a matter of conjecture as to how far Mr. Roosevelt felt justified in proceeding with naval construction while the country was experiencing so strained an economic situation and whether he was willing to have any naval legislation included in the program "of the now almost indubitable special session."[34]

In the meantime, Vinson did not hesitate to keep before Congress and the public various comments which would be

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[33]The New York Times, December 1, 1932, p. 1.

[34]Ibid., January 3, 1933, p. 13; January 11, 1933, p. 1.

helpful in providing the proper climate for building a suitable Navy. He noted that 85 per cent of the money spent building warships would be paid to workers. Therefore, the benefits of this program would "percolate" into every state in the United States and would greatly aid the national employment picture.[35]

In an article which he wrote for the Washington Herald, Vinson noted that "the twelve years of Republican control have been sad years for the Navy." That service had declined, he continued, to the extent that the United States had fewer underaged aircraft carriers, heavy and light cruisers, destroyers and submarines than Japan. Furthermore, he declared:

> This is an astounding situation, and one of great importance to our country. Our position as a world power and the strength of our policies are closely related to the strength of our Navy. Without doubt our influence in the Far East has been greatly lessened with the weakening of our Navy and the decrease in its strength relative to that of Japan.[36]

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[35] Ibid., p. 7; clipping in Carl Vinson's possession from the Washington Herald of February 19, 1933; see also Hanson Baldwin's evaluation of the measure's value to labor in the New York Times, January 10, 1932, p. 2. It was estimated by Navy League Vice President N. M. Hubbard, Jr. that the contemplated naval construction would provide employment for 260,000 persons from 116 trades. N. M. Hubbard, Jr., Employment Plus Security (Washington: Navy League, 1933), p. 2; CNO W. V. Pratt to Sec. Navy Swanson, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, OF18--Misc. Naval Building 1933-1936; Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States, pp. 157-58.

[36] Ibid.

The Hundred Days in the spring of 1933 marked Vinson's first victory. Although an emergency relief-and-recovery session of Congress was hardly a place for ten-year naval planning or a place in which to appropriate money for ships, Vinson and Roosevelt found a way to begin. In June President Roosevelt, in part through Vinson's influence, allocated by executive order $230 million from the Public Works Administration funds.[37] This order provided for two carriers, the Yorktown and the Enterprise, and sixteen destroyers. This allocation was a start toward the fleet which the United States would have available in the first few months of the Second World War.[38] Though this program was terminal and not self-generating and would contribute little to Vinson's goal of continuing construction, this move to almost double the carrier force was an omen of Roosevelt-Vinson cooperation when, in succeeding years, there was more time to plan a great navy and more national income to construct its ships.

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[37]Louis R. Stockstill, "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," Army, Navy, Air Force Journal (1961) reprinted in the Cong. Rec., CVII, 2489.

[38]United States Statutes, XLVIII, 201-02; Annual Report Secretary of the Navy 1933.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST VINSON ACT

Whereas executive or Congressional opposition had formerly prevented the build-up of the Navy to treaty strength, Chairman Vinson now hoped to find solid backing from Franklin D. Roosevelt and the strong Democratic majority in Congress. Together they might seize the opportunity to fill the gap which had developed in the Navy during the decade after the Washington Conference. He could expect debate and even disagreement on any bill that he might introduce, but even in the poverty of the depression, prospects were better than at any time since Wilson left the White House.

Following the precedent established by Roosevelt in his June 16, 1933 executive order, Vinson announced on 8 January, 1934 that he would seek additional millions of public works funds to provide forty ships in 1935-36. America's most serious weakness at sea, he told the House, was more a matter of fleet obsolescence than fleet size. Notifying Congress that the only way in which the United

States could manifest sea power was by building a sea power navy, he activated his program.[1]

He knew that the naval construction legislative goal ahead was no deep secret. Figures had shown that the United States needed 102 ships to bring its strength up to treaty standards. While Britain's position was

TABLE 5.--Ships necessary to bring navy to treaty strength (as of November 1, 1933).

	United States	Great Britain	Japan
Battleships	0	0	0
Carriers	1	2	0
Cruisers	6	15	0
Destroyers	65	39	0
Submarines	30	8	0
Totals	102	64	0

Source: Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1589.

similar to that of America's, the figures for Japan indicated the potentially dangerous situation. Japan was already, in reality, above designated parity with the United States in both destroyers and submarines and could easily close the small gap in aircraft carriers and cruisers. Although

[1]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1607-08; Washington Post, January 9, 1934, p. 9; Herbert Corey in the December, 1934 issue of Current History, XLI, 266-67, gave an excellent overview of the American naval problem.

former chairmen of Naval Affairs Committees in their respective houses, Representative Fred Britten and Frederick Hale had similar information and had introduced similar legislation earlier; perhaps a different floor manager in the House could be successful. Vinson would attempt to prove this.[2]

Having set the stage for consideration of his bill to authorize building up to treaty limits, Vinson began hearings.[3] Fortunately for Vinson, he had the support not only of the Democratic members but of the Republican members of the Naval Affairs Committee. Congressman Fred Britten, the ranking Republican member and immediate past chairman, moved that the chairman be instructed to use such parliamentary tactics as necessary to attach this bill to the pending naval appropriation bill, and should that fail, to ask the Rules Committee for a special rule to move this legislation to the front of the calendar. Mr. Britten's backing was indicative of a bipartisan

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[2]For a discussion of the changed situation, see The Literary Digest, January 6, 1934, p. 11.

[3]Union Calendar, H.R. 6604, Report No. 338 in The National Archives 1-3; 1933-1934 Hearings, H.R. 6604, p. 157; letter from Carl Vinson to Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson, Jacket of H.R. 6604, National Archives, H.R. 73A-D23; letters from Carl Vinson to Representatives W. A. Ayres, W. D. Oliver, and Patrick H. Drewry, January 25, 1934; because Swanson was ill, the Assistant Secretary H. L. Roosevelt testified in his place. He was aided by Admirals William Standley and Emory Scott Land.

support.[4] Nearly every member of the committee, the Christian Science Monitor reported, had expressed the hope that this measure would be passed immediately. Republicans and Democrats alike were regarded as being in favor of a big navy and Chairman Vinson reported his bill out without a negative vote.[5]

Opposition

Harmony within the committee was not matched within the nation. The most vigorous and most vocal opponent of Vinson's program was the National Council for the Prevention of War led by its executive secretary, Frederick J. Libby. Mr. Libby accused Vinson of rushing the bill through Congress before the rising opposition to further naval increases would make their weight felt.[6] He continued his fight against ship building by charging, in a letter to Chairman Park Trammell of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, that the Vinson Bill was being "railroaded" through the House Committee and that the hearings as held were

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[4] 1933-1934 Hearings, H.R. 6604, p. 212; New York Times, January 31, 1934, p. 1.

[5] January 22, 1934, p. 4; Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1956; The Atlanta Journal, January 24, 1934, p. 8; The Washington Post, January 24, 1934, p. 6; January 25, 1934, p. 9; January 26, 1934, p. 6; New York Times, January 25, 1934, p. 4; The Atlanta Constitution, January 25, 1934, p. 3; January 26, 1934, p. 1.

[6] Washington Post, January 24, 1934, p. 6.

"perfunctory," without an adequate opportunity for opponents of the bill to present their side.[7] When the Vinson plans were introduced in the Senate by Mr. Trammell, Libby warned that "the peace organizations are terribly disturbed by this Vinson naval building program on which you are taking action under Mr. Trammell's name."[8]

The Council's associate secretary, former Congresswoman Jeanette Rankin of Montana, declared that an enemy could not land on our shore and therefore, the United States did not need these ships for protection. Their only value would be to provide contracts for the shipbuilders and the munitions makers. In her opinion, there was no reason for the United States to fear English or Japanese action which might bring on a war at this time. Neither nation favored hostilities with America. "These war scares come," she said, "every time the shipbuilders want a big building program; and so the real reason that we are having this war scare is so that the shipbuilders can make more profits in peacetime."[9]

Furthermore, the lady from Montana warned that even if these ships were built they would be ineffective because

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[7] New York Times, January 29, 1934, p. 2.

[8] Hearings, S2493, p. 17; The Atlanta Journal, January 30, 1934, p. 2.

[9] Hearings, S2493, pp. 13-14. Similar views were expressed in The Nation of January 17, 1934, p. 57.

they would be dependent upon radio communication. In battle, enemy interference and the vibration of the guns would knock out the radios leaving a fleet of "deaf and dumb" ships. She climaxed her argument on this point by declaring, "This is an obsolete Navy that we are trying to build; it is deaf, dumb, and blind." Such a program, she insisted, had nothing to do with the defense of the United States.[10]

Oswald Garrison Villard, long-time editor of The Nation, told reporters, following a conference with the President, that he believed that the United States was courting disaster by embarking on a naval race with Great Britain and Japan. He protested that any warship building program would very likely offset any recent improvements in foreign relations such as that achieved by Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy. Villard's attention was on Vinson's proposals which he saw as a move to enlist the United States in the naval armaments race. Particularly disturbing was the Committee's haste in pushing through its naval building scheme before the opposition could express its views.[11]

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[10] Hearings, S2493, pp. 13-14; Representative Shoemaker had taken a similar position in House debate declaring that most of the ships lost at Jutland were sunk running into each other in the dense clouds of smoke; Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1632. See also Kopplemann [Connecticut], Ibid., 1603.

[11] Washington Post, January 27, 1934, p. 9.

The opinions given by Libby, Rankin, and Villard were echoed in many quarters. Secretary of State Cordell Hull informed Vinson that over 200 letters and telegrams a day had been received at the White House in relation to the Navy bill. With very few exceptions, "certainly less than one percent," these letters were in opposition.[12] In addition to letters from individuals, protests had come from scores of organizations. Twenty-one city chapters of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom communicated their opposition. They came from presumably isolationist cities like Boston, Milwaukee, and Champaign, Illinois; but they also came from Bayonne, New Jersey, Nashville, and San Antonio. In the list of protesters presented in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park are such diverse groups as the following:

> Brooklyn Ethical Cultural Society, Brooklyn, New York
> Fairfield Quarterly Meeting of Friends, Midland, Ohio
> Federation of Protestant Church Women, Sioux City, Iowa
> Fellowship of Reconciliation, Philadelphia
> Houston Council Federated Church Women
> Manasquan and Plainfield Half Yearly Society, Manasquan, New Jersey
> National Council of Jewish Women, El Paso, Texas
> Pilgram Congregational Church Forum, Seattle, Washington [sic]
> Presbyterian College of Christian Education, Chicago
> Provisional Newark Committee of American League Against War and Fascism, Newark, New Jersey
> Ridgewood New Jersey Council for Furtherance International Understanding

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[12]Statement within State Department on letters received regarding Vinson Bill, Alphabetical File, Carl Vinson, 1933-45, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, OF-404-A, 2-21-34.

Seahurst Monitor Study Group, Seattle, Washington
Seattle Council Against War
Toledo Ohio Council on Cause and Cure of War
Waltham Massachusetts Committee for Peace Action
Webster Groves Peace Council, Webster Groves, Missouri

Of the 140 groups listed, only one, the Civil Works Administration Asphalt Workers, Project 1385 Crew No. 2 of Chicago, Illinois, favored the Vinson Navy Bill. That the men on one of Harry Hopkins' projects were the only recorded adherents only emphasized the vulnerability of the program. Consensus cannot be ascertained from protest letters alone but, in the absence of polls, they offer some index of popular sentiment. More important, they testify to the determination of the opposition.[13]

Furthermore, dissenters showed their rather pungent attitude toward naval building in communications to Chairman Vinson still on file in the National Archives. Representative of these were a resolution from the Evangelical and Reform Ministers Association (representing some forty-five churches in the Buffalo District) and a letter from E. A. E. Palmquist, Executive Secretary of the Philadelphia Federation of Churches. The Buffalo ministers declared that a consummated Vinson naval bill "would launch the most gigantic battleship-building program in history, precipitate a dangerous armament race between nations,

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[13]Louis McHowe, Secretary of the President to Secretary of the Navy, February 2, 1934, listing of those disapproving the Vinson Navy Bill, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

destroy good will and foment suspicion especially in the nervous Pacific and play directly into the hands of the meddlesome munitions-makers and eventuate ultimately in war." Therefore they resolved to use their influence to defeat the Vinson bill which, to them, constituted a most serious threat to world peace and goodwill. Mr. Palmquist wrote that "the Vinson Naval Bill clearly demands that our sons and our grandsons must go to some Flanders Field and the flower of a coming generation [be] slaughtered to satisfy the ambitions of munitions makers the world round." Furthermore, in his judgment it was "unpatriotic and inhuman and destructive of all that is wholesome."[14]

In addition, an opponent of the Vinson program, Senator William E. Borah, Republican of Idaho, received a letter from Roy B. Damron writing for the Boise Ministerial Association urging that the Senator refuse to support the use of the name "Boise" as recommended by the Boise Chamber of Commerce for one of the new cruisers to be built under the Vincent [sic] Bill. Out of a union meeting of young peoples' church groups representing 250 Christian young people of that same city came a like protest because they did not believe "it would honor either our city or state to participate in any way in the

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[14]Communication from the Evangelical and Reformed Ministers Association to Carl Vinson, February 5, 1934, National Archives, H.R. 73A-A15.3, Naval Affairs; E. A. E. Palmquist to Carl Vinson, February 6, 1934, National Archives, H.R. 73A-H15.3.

carrying out of this measure." Pressure was brought to bear upon both the executive and the legislative branches of the government to stifle the culmination of the Vinson goals.[15]

Much the same sort of opposition spoke up when the Vinson measure reached the floor of the House as Representatives from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Mississippi pointed out that the only ones who would gain from the current naval program would be those who made their money from shipbuilding.[16] It was difficult for Carl Vinson, as it would have been for any Chairman guiding a naval authorization bill through Congress at this time, to remove the taint of the nefarious activities of certain special economic interest groups from the public or the Congressional mind. Through investigations and other disclosures, the image conjured up was that of the greedy monsters representing the steel, shipbuilding, and munitions industries ever ready to dip deeply into the public treasury. It was not without cause that people such as Congressman Frear of Wisconsin questioned the motives of the private interests promoting the building of new ships. However,

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[15]Letter from Roy B. Damron to William E. Borah March 15, 1934, Borah Papers, Box 357 LCMD; letter from Mildred Burgess, March 18, 1934, Borah Papers, Box 357 LCMD. The same source contained letters to Senator Borah from the Boise Chamber of Commerce and the Boise Navy Club supporting the naming of a Vinson program cruiser.

[16]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1606, 1616-18, 1621.

Mr. Vinson wished to find a way to check the profits of these companies so that although they would receive just due for their contracts, they would not be allowed to take advantage of the American people. In other words, he believed that there were occasions when the world situation required that the nation build warships to defend itself and consequently, every build-up should not be considered the dark, devious work of the ship-building companies interested only in their own profit.[17]

Further Congressional opposition revolved around the President's involvement in this legislation. An Oklahoma Democrat noted that the President had always inserted a monetary limitation in any bills prepared under his direction. Finding a discrepancy, he did not believe the President or the Bureau of Budget likely to approve a "wide-open" bill to provide continuing authorization for years to come. Such a bill had all the makings of a blank check. However, as the debate went on, Mr. Vinson reminded those present that it was impossible to estimate the cost

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[17]Wayne Cole, in his book, Senator Nye (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1962), presented that senator's views and motives on the shipbuilding question, p. 26. For extensive criticism of this sort, see "A Navy for War," The Nation, CXXXVIII (February 28, 1934), 236. It should be kept in mind that two of the best known books publicizing this position were published in 1934, George Seldes, Iron, Blood and Profits (New York: Harper, 1934) and H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen, Merchants of Death (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934).

of specific ships five years in the future. Thus it would be unwise to fix maximums and minimums at this time.[18]

Equally basic to the issue was the threat of usurpation of Congressional prerogative by the executive department. Inasmuch as a precedent could be created in turning over to the executive branch the privilege of spending such undefined amounts, a Congressman from Kansas emphasized the action taken by the Constitutional Convention in delegating to the legislative rather than the executive branch responsibility for appropriations. However, under current legislation, the President could never have taken over the power of Congress to provide the money for building up the Navy. Whatever Mr. Roosevelt might say or do, there was no way in which he could get this bill into steel ships rather than paper ships without a favorable decision by Congress.[19]

Criticism of the Vinson plan included certain arguments on the cost of the warships to be built. This contest involved the additional amount required if the building were subject to the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the National Recovery Administration which Representative Eugene Cox, Democrat of Georgia, warned would add 25 per cent to the cost of the program. Cox believed that the government should hold the line at

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[18] Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1594, 1628-29.

[19] Ibid., 1594, 1604.

380 million dollars as projected originally and thus not include the extra 25 per cent. The annual expenditure of ninety million dollars for the next five years seemed exorbitant to Representative Cox. On the other hand, Vinson was not as much concerned with the total amount as in the possibilities of the money being used in the best fashion. If National Industrial Recovery Act requirements added ninety million to the cost, this additional money would be available to help the people of the country economically and, therefore, would not be a burden on the taxpayer. Thus, in contrast, this stimulus would aid economic recovery and please Representative Vinson.[20]

The Chairman's Defense

Using the Atlanta Constitution especially, and other newspapers and Congressional speeches, Vinson, in the early months of 1934, elaborated the reasons for his proposal to authorize naval construction. He declared that the American policy of disarmament-by-example had not been a positive factor in achieving world peace, but had become a menace to peace. Furthermore, "undue weakness of a rich nation invariably invites aggression from its neighbors and a war breeding violation of its rights." Although he could see that the United States had contributed to and supported whole-heartedly the limitation of armaments,

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[20] New York Times, January 29, 1934, p. 2.

Vinson emphasized that this system would never work unless "the various powers should maintain about the same proportion of the maximum strength permitted." Otherwise, they were defeating the intent of the 1922 treaty. All must maintain the ratios agreed upon or an imbalance might permit a stronger naval power to attack a nation which had not continued building.[21]

As other countries had progressed much farther toward the goal of full treaty strength, Mr. Vinson declared that America could either induce them to reduce their naval strength to its level or should build up to their standards. As the first had been tried repeatedly with no success and only the second course could succeed, he advocated a United States Navy maintained at treaty ratios as one of the strongest guarantees of peace.[22] Sharply, he directed public attention to the Washington Conference where "as an altruistic contribution to world peace," the United States had taken the unprecedented action of surrendering voluntarily its pending naval supremacy. The United States, in his opinion, had agreed to scrap some of the most powerful capital ships ever designed while "no other country [had] made a contribution to the cause

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[21]U.S., Congress, House, 1933-1934 Hearings, H.R. 6604, p. 203; The Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A; January 31, 1934, pp. 1, 6; see also Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1610, 1615 for supporting positions.

[22]The Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

of disarmament which can even be mentioned in the same breath."[23]

Furthermore, he noted that the United States did not even build up to its treaty possibilities while other nations were actively moving forward in the classes of ships in which there were no limitations. During the decade after the Washington Conference, Great Britain had provided for 134 new combatant ships, Japan for 130, France for 166, and Italy for 115. In contrast, the United States made provisions for only 34 ships. In the four years of the Hoover administration, no new ships were authorized for the United States Navy.[24] Rather than maintaining the parity to Great Britain so long sought and the superiority to all others to which it obligated itself, America allowed its strength in light cruisers, destroyers, and submarines slip to fifth place and "a very poor fifth at that." He stressed that America must continue to keep its Navy at the specified level. If it did not do so, the United States could not guard its interests or discharge its responsibilities.[25]

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[23]The New York Times, January 13, 1934, p. 4; The Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

[24]Ibid.; U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 338 to accompany H.R. 6604.

[25]The Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A; New York Times, January 23, 1934, p. 4.

Vinson warned that America's destroyer strength was "shockingly and dangerously deficient." Although it had enough destroyers, every one of them would become overage in the next few months, compromising their military usefulness. Between 1922 and 1932, while the Japanese had laid down forty-three vessels of this type, the Italians thirty-nine, the British thirty-six, and the French fifty-five, the United States had not brought a single destroyer off the ways. A gap existed in the fleet which would need rectification.[26]

A start had been made, under the leadership of President Roosevelt, to remedy a bad situation. Thirty-two destroyers were under construction at this time. "However," as Mr. Vinson evaluated the circumstances, "this program must be recognized as a start only and it is imperative that we continue uniformly." There could be no starts and stops, in his estimation, if the nation was to be adequately prepared. Without destroyers to carry out the multitudinous tasks assigned to them, the fleet just simply could not operate as an effective part of the national defense. Four-stackers would be adequate at first for anti-submarine convoy duty, but for little else. These World War vessels were just simply not up to the duties of a modern day destroyer.[27]

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[26] Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

[27] Ibid.; U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 338 to accompany H.R. 6604; Donald W. Mitchell in the Yale

Furthermore it was to Chairman Vinson's advantage, in getting his building schedule through, to point out that the Japanese would probably ask for parity with the United States and Britain three years hence.[28] In February of 1934, Admiral Osumi's figures showed that by the end of 1936, Japan's navy would be 68 per cent that of the United States or if only the underage tonnage were considered, the Japanese fleet would be 81 per cent that of the American fleet. Of the 372 ships in the American Navy on December 30, 1933, only 84 were underage. Of the underage tonnage, over half came from battleships which were, in reality although not in treaty definition, over-aged. If the Japanese underage cruisers, destroyers, and submarines were compared to the American underage vessels of these categories, the Japanese would have 103 per cent of the American strength. Japan would soon approach parity without the permission of either the United States or Great Britain.[29] Even worse could be anticipated because

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Review, XXIX (1939/40), 565-88; for an extensive treatment of problems of using the fifty four-stack destroyers traded to Britain in the destroyer-bases deal, see Philip Goodhart, Fifty Ships That Saved the World (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965).

[28]Washington Post, January 23, 1934, p. 1; editorial, Washington Post, February 1, 1934, p. 8; February 2, 1934, p. 2; Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. III, The Rising Sun in the Pacific (Boston: Atlantic, Little, Brown, 1951), p. 27, hereafter cited as Morison with volume number and title.

[29]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1597; Atlanta Constitution, March 23, 1934, p. 7; Washington Post, February 1, 1934,

when the current agreements expired, Japan need no longer abide by the treaties, but could build as she wished.

Vinson chided America, warning that as long as conditions continued as at present with the Japanese Navy built up to the limit in all categories and the American Navy far short of her limits, the cause of peace was certainly gravely jeopardized. He related that the Japanese had already provided for the full naval strength which had been permitted it under the terms of the various treaties and that Great Britain was almost sure to do so also. In contrast, the Georgian warned of an American Navy very dangerously deficient in modern ships, a condition which would continue even when all of the vessels under construction were done. He declared that the bill which he was sponsoring would remedy this situation, and hence he urged that Congress undertake its passage without further delay.[30]

He pointed out the weaknesses of our overaged ships which were hampered with their slower speed, their

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p. 1. Furthermore, it was thought by some that the Japanese Mogami class cruiser, previously rated at 8,500-ton, actually were a more powerful 10,000-ton warship. See Time, January 1, 1934, p. 11.

[30]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1598, 1602; George Grassmuck in his Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1951) provided an excellent evaluation of the peoples' interest in preparedness. Atlanta Journal, January 19, 1934, p. 12; January 22, 1934, p. 1; Atlanta Constitution, January 31, 1934, p. 1; Washington Post, January 10, 1934, p. 5.

deteriorated hulls and machinery and warned that these "decrepits" would become "floating coffins" if they should be sent into battle against modern ships which were being built during this period by other nations. The Chairman believed that they were being kept because they were better than nothing at all. Very specifically he commented that these should not be the ships on which the youth of this country should be sent to battle with an enemy because "no country has a moral right to demand that her sailors go into battle with strength and equipment inferior to an opponent's." Yet unless the United States prepared adequately in times of peace, that was the inevitable necessity when war came.[31]

In his opinion, the United States had to adopt a definite naval policy if it expected to have an orderly building program in the future. Vinson believed that such a plan would not only be more economical but would "contribute to better designs, better workmanship, less disruption of industry," and maintain the national defense at a higher level than would be possible "under old wasteful methods of building a navy by alternate spasms of intense activity and practically complete idleness."[32]

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[31] Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1598.

[32] U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 338 to accompany H.R. 6604, p. 2.

Writing in The Atlanta Constitution that it would take approximately three years to complete the vessels then being built, Vinson declared that the United States must be ready to lay a new keel to replace each launched vessel. His method would "break away from the old hit or miss system, with alternating periods of intense activity and complete idleness."[33]

If many ships of a certain type are built at the same time, this situation could become a trap with the potential enemy country which had been spreading its building out over several years having at least a substantial portion of her ships underage at any point of crisis. The country building great numbers of a certain type in a very short span would, in contrast, be ready for anything and everything thrown at it for a number of years but would then find itself in a prolonged period of weakness which could be very embarrassing.

A second difficulty with building in great numbers involved the limited use of the lessons which might come from the testing of the earlier versions of a series of ships. The more recent members of a class could be immensely changed to conform with the information gained from the testing of their predecessors. This can be easily illustrated by the comparison of the changes necessary for the destroyers built in the period from 1934 to

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[33]Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

1936 with those constructed in 1940. The Mahan destroyer class of 1934-1936 went through almost 200 changes in design during its construction period. This costly, time-consuming process was lowered to from twenty to fifty changes on the destroyers of 1940.[34] Had America been building destroyers during the 1920's, its building would have become more efficient earlier. Five cruisers, the Augusta, the Chicago, the Northampton, the Chester, and the Louisville, had to have new sternposts shortly after their shakedown cruises.[35] It would have been possible that this defect could have been discovered on the first ship of the series and compensation made before five ships contained the same weakness.

Vinson cautioned that the United States was unable to replace all overage units within a short space of time. Such action would place an excessive drain on the treasury, tax already full shipbuilding facilities, and prevent the spread-out program involving a steady work load which was essential to economical construction. Thus, he believed that a schedule of building over several years to attain

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[34] New York Times, February 13, 1939, p. 1; July 21, 1940, p. 13.

[35] U.S., Congress, House, 1933--Report, Subcommittee on Naval Appropriations, January 25, 1933, p. 67; New York Times, July 21, 1931, p. 1; Atlanta Constitution, January 4, 1932, p. 1. Some possibilities of causes for both the cruiser and the destroyer difficulties are given by T. R. B. in the June 3, 1940 edition of The New Republic, p. 752 and by Donald W. Mitchell, Ibid., September 30, 1940, pp. 437-39.

a treaty Navy would suffice and promote a policy which would be much wiser than a crash program.[36]

The plans which he visualized would have ameliorated all phases of the difficulties discussed above. One must keep in mind the pitfalls of building great numbers of ships of one type so rapidly. An unbalanced fleet would present many difficulties. The effective fleet would have proper balance in the various types of ships. In a supernationalistic mood, people could demand and, at times, have demanded that a warship building plan be pushed to the utmost and to the detriment of the overall program of naval defense.[37]

Carl Vinson's stand on this issue was without question favorable to an orderly building program. In the hearings on his building program, he used the experience of naval officers such as the Chief of Naval Operations William Standley and the Chief Naval Constructor Emory S. Land to buttress his considered opinion that it would surely be wrong to attempt to build in the shortest time possible all of the new tonnage which might come out of any peacetime building program. If this crash program were adopted, Vinson believed the nation would need to

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[36] Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

[37] Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1597; Christian Science Monitor, January 23, 1934, p. 4; Ernest J. King, U.S. Navy, Report Combat Operations (London: 1944), passim; New York Times, December 5, 1931, p. 2.

build a new Navy in fifteen or twenty years. In his opinion, "by building our treaty tonnage in an orderly but successive plan, without interruption once it is started, we will virtually be building replacements."

In the 1934 Hearings on the Vinson Bill, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt affirmed that passage of this legislation would lay the foundation for an orderly building program consistent with America's financial ability. Roosevelt emphasized that "unless there is authority for making appropriations, the Navy Department cannot even request the Director of Budget for funds." If this program or one similar to it did not pass, there could be no planning for the future. Any building of warships, therefore, had to begin in the Vinson Committee.[38]

Hearings completed, the Vinson measure moved onto the House floor where a Roosevelt majority seemed ready to support it. One of the reasons for this support was the contemplated stimulus to the economy expected when raw materials were utilized from nearly every state of the Union and when many unemployed would find work providing these supplies. Eighty-five per cent of the total cost of each ship, according to Mr. Vinson, would go to labor either in a direct fashion or by indirect means. Although it would be a negative solution, he would count

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[38]U.S., Congress, House, 1933-1934 Hearing, H.R. 6604, pp. 160-68, 183.

on the depression and the need for drastic relief measures to aid him in the fight for a treaty navy.[39]

In most able fashion, he continued to guide his bill through the House, He opened his argument declaring that although the United States had always intended to maintain a Navy of sufficient strength to support its national policies and to guard its commerce and possessions, both continental and overseas, it had never had such a fleet and never would until a program of the type he was advocating was enacted into law. Mr. Vinson emphasized that Congress as well as the American people should realize policies of the Government cannot be supported by obsolete ships. Noting that for the first time in American history, an attempt was being made to provide an orderly plan for the maintenance of a Navy sufficient to meet any emergency, he succinctly defended his legislation. He declared that his measure would never offend nor threaten any other country and that it would place the least possible burden on the taxpayer.[40] Moreover, so the Vinson argument went, the United States would, upon the completion of this

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[39]Congressmen Snyder and Darrow, both from Pennsylvania, gave Vinson additional support on the feasibility of warship building stimulating the economy. See Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1265-66, 1612-13.

[40]Ibid., 1957. According to Colgate Darden, Jr., the Vinson program would cost 70¢ per person in the United States, Ibid., 1918.

building, be able to defend itself and hence would not need to depend upon the generosity of others.[41]

In the course of the debate, Vinson gave the most poignant argument existing to show the effectiveness of Congressional power in building warships as well as the limitation of Presidential power when he noted that until Congress authorized the money, Mr. Roosevelt could not replace a single ship. When a Wisconsin Representative declared that this new legislation would enable the President to build warships as he pleased, Carl Vinson emphasized Congressional prerogative by reminding all that Congress, by appropriation, would continue to control the rapidity and rate at which ships could be built, and equally important, it would still determine the cost of each vessel.[42] The President might be most enthusiastically favorable to the Navy, but unless he could get the votes in Congress for his program he would find his plans sterile indeed. However, authorization sets naval policy and Vinson wished to translate this into the actual building of ships.

Democrats and Republicans worked together to speed action on the Vinson measure.[43] Nearly always, and

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[41] Atlanta Constitution, January 28, 1934, p. 7A.

[42] Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1622.

[43] Robert C. Albright, Washington Post, January 23, 1934, p. 1; New York Times, January 29, 1934, p. 2; January 31, 1934, p. 1. Among those shown by the

always at critical points, Chairman Vinson was supported by former Chairman Britten of Illinois. This was not strictly an administration measure for its support was much wider than the Roosevelt following. In his reenforcement of the Vinson position, Representative Britten "assailed Democrats and pacifists alike" reminding Congress that the Vinson Bill was, in reality, the same bill which had been considered before as the Hale-Britten plan. Although correct because each of these bills had the same goal--the production of 102 ships to bring the Navy up to treaty limitations, Britten had not, as Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, been able to get his bill through Congress.[44]

In the six hours of debate, amendments were added which would limit profits made by the builder to 10 per cent and would require that contracts, other than for the anticipated aircraft carrier, be alternated between private and Navy facilities. These changes were agreeable to Vinson for they only strengthened his overall program for up-grading the American fleet.[45]

Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, to be supporting Vinson were Representatives Snyder [Pennsylvania], 1266, Swick [Pennsylvania], 1614, Burnham [California], 1605, Wolverton [New Jersey], 1609, 1612, McGrath [California], 1609, Dockweiler [California], 1615, and Andrew [Massachusetts], 1613.

[44]New York Times, January 31, 1934, p. 51.

[45]R. C. Albright, Washington Post, January 31, 1934, p. 1; February 19, 1934, p. 4.

These amendments passed, only thirteen rose in the House to ask for yeas and nays as the bill passed by a voice vote.[46] An article in the Atlanta Constitution took pride in the achievement of "a Georgia member [to whom had] fallen the lot of piloting through the lower house the most stupendous naval building program ever undertaken in the peacetime history of the United States." Recognized by his colleagues as neither a militarist nor a pacifist, Vinson had "demanded and received overwhelming support" for a bill to construct 102 new American warships and 1,194 fighting planes, requiring the outlay of over $500 million.[47]

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[46]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1638.

[47]Gladstone Williams, Atlanta Constitution, February 4, 1934, p. 6A.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST VINSON ACT: REALIZATION

Although it should have been Senator Trammell's complete obligation to maintain the momentum provided by his counterpart in the House, Vinson continued to exert the necessary pressure to aid the progress of his naval expansion plans in the Senate. He furnished the liaison between the materialized Vinson Bill and the impending Trammell measure in the Senate. Having been regarded by some as a "little navy" man prior to appointment to the chairmanship, it was not surprising that Trammell needed assistance.[1]

While Vinson was able to put his version of the naval replacement bill through the House in a month's time, Trammell needed almost two months to push it through the Senate. It was not that Trammell did not try to make headway, but that he found the Senate quite resistant. Fearing that Senate pacifists might filibuster the program to death should its consideration be delayed, he tried to obtain preferred status for his bill, but he was to be blocked by Senators interested in other legislation. Two

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[1]Washington Post, February 1, 1934, p. 5; New York Times, March 8, 1933, p. 9.

western opponents of the measure even objected when he did not read the proposed legislation to the assembled Senators.[2]

Although most of the Senate criticism repeated House arguments, some new objections appeared. Senator Pope, the Idaho Democrat, thought that the bill would place an undue expense upon the "already overburdened taxpayers." In his estimation, the American Navy, as then constituted, was capable of defending the United States. While willing to vote for the Trammell measure, Senator Kenneth McKellar, Democrat of Tennessee, was not going to vote for any bill, knowingly, which would provide ships for the American diplomats to sink at some future conference.[3]

When the House had originally passed the Vinson bill, it specified that one-half of the ship tonnage should be constructed in government yards. Whereas Congress had overwhelmingly favored a large Navy, it had also decided to prevent the armament manufacturers from making such large profits. Ultimately, the terms which were reached by the House and Senate conferees, provided for alternate

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[2]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1816, 1840, 1851, 2582, 2728, 3814; Washington Post, February 3, 1934, p. 5; March 7, 1934, p. 1; March 19, 1934, p. 9.

[3]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 3482, especially vehement objections were registered by Senators Nye [North Dakota] and King [Utah], Ibid., 3785, 5106.

ships in each category to be built in government yards, put a limit of 10 per cent on profits, and called for 10 per cent of the planes to be constructed in government yards. These provisions were prompted in part by the Nye Committee investigation of the munitions industry.[4]

An article in the Atlanta Constitution noted that the Vinson-Trammell Act took "the first major step in years to extract some of the profits out of the building of armaments by private manufacturers." This would counter the argument that the pressure for building armaments was only a conspiracy on the part of the manufacturers in this field trying to cheat the government.[5]

In the Senate vote on the Vinson-Trammell bill, party was less important than region. Just over 80 per cent of the Democrats and about 78 per cent of the Republicans supported the bill. Eighteen Senators opposed the bill, including seven Republicans, six of whom were considered Progressives, ten Democrats, and one Farm Labor Senator.

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[4] Ibid., 3905-06, 4009-10, 4930, 5021-28, 5077, 5171-74; Washington Post, March 20, 1934, p. 1.

[5] Atlanta Constitution, March 23, 1934, p. 7. Earlier inquiries had involved profits on planes as well. See Washington Post, February 2, 1934, p. 1. The report from the Graduate School Business Administration, Harvard University, p. 202, regarded the alternating plans from the 1929 Dallinger amendment, the 1934 Vinson-Trammell Act, and the 1935-36 Senate investigation of the munitions industry as important strengtheners of the practice of building in Navy yards.

Of the ten Democrats, all except Carter Glass of Virginia were from the interior. Aside from Glass and Senator Huey Long of Louisiana, all of the dissenters were from the West.[6]

Immediately after the acceptance of the conference report by both houses of Congress in March of 1934, Carl Vinson hailed it as "the biggest naval program ever authorized at one time by Congress." Noting that it provided for 65 destroyers, 32 submarines, 4 cruisers, 1 aircraft carrier, and 1,184 airplanes at a cost of $580 million, Vinson believed that the measure would, either directly or indirectly, provide employment for thousands. He was delighted with his success and took for granted, at this point, that only the President's signature remained before consummation.[7]

Unfortunately, things were just not that simple. A mass meeting, sponsored by the Women's International League, had been held in the Belasco Theater on February 25, 1934 to oppose the "billion-dollar" appropriation for increased naval armament. That gave Vinson far more credit than he deserved; he was asking for only a half billion. Perhaps a "billion dollars" could stir the emotions much more vividly than just a paltry half billion. One thousand

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[6]Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 3814; Washington Post, March 7, 1934, pp. 1, 4; New York Times, March 7, 1934, p. 1.

[7]Atlanta Constitution, March 23, 1934, p. 7.

people heard Senator Gerald Nye of North Dakota predict that night that if an honest investigation into the activities of the munitions makers were undertaken, the Vinson naval building bill would never pass. He had recently introduced a bill for such an inquiry. "No nation on earth spends so much money to get ready for war as our country," he argued, "and yet we set ourselves as an example for the rest of the world to follow in preserving peace." Harvey O'Connor, the author of the critical Mellon's Millions, maintained that Mr. Mellon was thoroughly in sympathy with the Vinson bill inasmuch as he held a monopoly on aluminum which was a potentially salable commodity to the United States government. He noted that "there's a billion dollars for the Vinson Bill, but not one cent for CWA [work relief] funds after May 1." Another such meeting was held in mid-March to honor the Congressmen who had fought the Vinson Bill. This opposition prompted Representative Britten to urge that a Congressional investigation be initiated into the activities of the various organizations opposing the Vinson bill.[8]

Roosevelt's Reaction and Action

Even before he received the Vinson Bill, President Roosevelt was asked at his March 23rd press conference

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[8]Washington Post, February 25, 1934, p. 7; February 26, 1934, p. 2; February 27, 1934, p. 4; March 19, 1934, p. 9; March 25, 1934, p. 6; Atlanta Constitution, March 23, 1934, p. 7.

whether he had signed it. Replying that it should not be down until tomorrow, he seemed almost casual about it as he informed the reporters,

> If I do sign it and if I have time and do not get taken up too much with automobiles and things like that, I shall file a memorandum with it for your information. Perhaps you had better not break the story at all and make this off the record. It will be a memorandum which will point out the distinction between an appropriation and an authorization. It is time that the public was informed of the difference.[9]

It was the President's contention that the general public should know that essentially the bill was really nothing more than a resolution depending on the action of future Congresses for implementation. "So many appeals from pacifists organizations" had forced the President to explain the difference. In his eagerness to quiet fears at home and abroad, Roosevelt gave "sweeping implied pledges of continued American moderation" in the building of naval armament. The Christian Science Monitor stated that the President sought to reassure the large segments of national opinion aroused and alarmed by the big navy proposals which had gone "so swimmingly through both houses of Congress."[10]

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[9]Samuel Rosenman, Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. III: The One Hundred and Eighth Conference, March 23, 1934 (New York: Random House, 1938), pp. 164-5.

[10]Christian Science Monitor, March 26, 1934, p. 1. James MacGregor Burns, in his Roosevelt biography, The Lion and the Fox (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), p. 253, declared that Roosevelt did not want to publicize defense unduly. When Marvin McIntryre, Presidential Secretary, told him early in 1934, that patriotic

Instead of signing the Vinson-Trammell Bill immediately, Mr. Roosevelt sent it to the budget bureau. The Monitor believed that this reluctance emphatically called the nation's attention to the fact that the Vinson Bill itself provided no funds for the construction it authorized. Whether a big or a little program would be considered and made a reality would depend upon Mr. Roosevelt's asking and Congress' appropriating. The general impression in the Capitol at this time was that the money would not be requested.[11]

The President continued the quest for peace during the week in which he passed his final judgment on the Vinson Bill. It was his personal hope that the 1935 naval conference would extend all of the existing limitation. He proclaimed the policy of his administration to be a continued search for a program of arms limitation. Though the Vinson measure never provided money for any additional warships, it would express to the President the overwhelming sentiment of the current Congress that America should build up to the Washington and London treaty limitations.[12]

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organizations were asking him to proclaim "National Defense Week," Roosevelt answered tersely, "Don't do it." This was another indication that he wanted the build-up of armed strength to be "slow and quiet."

[11]Christian Science Monitor, March 26, 1934, pp. 1, 6; Washington Post, March 28, 1934, p. 3.

[12]Ibid., p. 1; New York Times, March 28, 1934, p. 1. This is just as Vinson had stated before Congress 30 January, 1934, Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1597.

According to a news item in The Christian Science Monitor, the "self-limiting implication" was given in the hope that the 1935 naval conference would be held and that the proceedings would extend those reductions which were already in effect. By all existing limitations, Roosevelt plainly meant the then-present 10-10-7 ratio with Japan and this apparently was the quid pro quo for keeping the Vinson fleet just a paper navy. Under this approach, the Vinson bill would be little more than blackmail. In many ways, the President had termed this act of Congress a gesture made in response to rumbling war clouds in the Far East. Roosevelt's statement informed big Navy opponents that he was not committed to the actual building of ships. The cartoon in the Monitor expressed the dilemma: a female personification representing the Vinson Act walking past the shop portraying the source of warships, captioned "About All She Can Do Is Window Shop." Indeed, about all the Navy could do was window shop if the President and Congress did not follow through with appropriations.[13]

Even so, on March 28, 1934, the President signed the Vinson Bill, providing for a treaty-strength navy.[14] Among those present were Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson, Assistant Secretary Henry L. Roosevelt, Representative

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[13]Christian Science Monitor, March 26, 1934, p. 1; March 30, 1934, p. 2; Washington Post, March 28, 1934, pp. 1, 3.

[14]U.S., Statutes, XLVIII, Part 1, pp. 503-04.

Carl Vinson, and Representative Fred A. Britten. Each of these men had had a part in the success of the Vinson-Trammell Act.[15] It was significant that Britten was present and that no Senators were present. Britten was the ranking Republican on the House Naval Affairs Committee as well as its chairman in Hoover's time. His presence recognized the key work of Vinson's committee. The omission of the Democratic Senate chairman as well as Britten's counterpart there, emphasized their minor role. This was clearly a Vinson measure. As time went on, this bill and the two subsequent ones carried, in common usage, only the appellation, "The First Vinson Act," "The Second Vinson Act," or "The Third Vinson Act" respectively.

Kenneth Clark, in an undated newspaper clipping in Mr. Vinson's possession (describing the Vinson-Trammell signing), credited co-author Vinson with the following observations: "This act is not a mere piece of paper. It means real fighting ships. We will provide the money this session to start work on part of the vessels authorized." The ranking minority member and former chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, Representative Britten declared:

> When the President signed the bill I said this is one of the greatest moves for world peace in ten years. The President looked at me and replied: "You are right, that's the reason I am signing it."

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[15] Washington Post, March 28, 1934, p. 3; Atlanta Constitution, March 28, 1934, p. 1.

There was certainly a substantial chance that the Vinson authorization would be implemented by the President and the Chairman.[16]

Prior to the passage of the act, President Roosevelt had concerned himself almost exclusively with domestic problems. Only a few warships had been built. The rise of Adolf Hitler and the continued onslaught of the Japanese upon China made warship building more essential and more possible of attainment. Passage of the act offered to the President a promise of the naval power vital to a stronger emphasis upon foreign affairs.[17]

Japanese Reaction

If Japan wished to become the chief stabilizing force in the Far East, it had to consider the implications of the Vinson Act. If the provisions of this authorization were held in abeyance, Japan had little to worry about; however, should the "Vinson ships" be drawn in steel rather than on paper, the Japanese would have an entirely

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[16]Undated clipping by Kenneth Clark; early appropriations had been Vinson's goal from the beginning. Cong. Rec., LXXVIII, 1631. Davis, A Navy Second to None, p. 361, noted that naval supporters knew from previous experience that having won congressional approval, appropriations would follow.

[17]For an evaluation of this act and the Navy League, see Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States, pp. 165-66. That author declared that "This Vinson-Trammell Act made further [Navy League] propaganda superfluous."

different situation to face. In his book, How Japan Plans to Win, Kinoaki Matsuo scored the Vinson Bill of 1934 as being the first step taken by the United States in naval expansion. While admitting that the passage of this bill should be very important to the United States Navy, Matsuo declared that it increased substantially the menace to Japan in the Western Pacific.[18] The Vinson program notified the Japanese that the ponderous giant was slowly awakening. Vinson's efforts could help to prevent another Manchuria. In the meantime, should a naval race ensue, it would be difficult for the Japanese to keep up with the potential in shipbuilding which was available to the United States. A continuing act, such as the Vinson measure, would allow the United States to replace a battleship or two every year for the next ten years, while the Japanese would be hard-pressed to provide even its two-thirds of that number.[19]

The Vinson Act would permit the United States to build up its naval air force, already the best in the world,

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[18]For an extensive discussion of world reaction to the Vinson-Trammell Act, see The Literary Digest, March 17, 1934, p. 8.

[19]Hence the Japanese began to push for the reduction or abolition of carriers, the restriction of long range cruisers, and a limitation on the plane-carrying facilities aboard cruisers. This would promote regional navies. As the New York Times (March 29, 1934, p. 18) stated, "They, the Japanese, aim at a state of things wherein the United States fleet will not be strong enough to carry a war into Asia." See also William D. Puleston, The Armed Forces of the Pacific (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), pp. 37-8.

so that its offensive power would point directly at the Japanese homeland. Replacing its three aircraft carriers with, perhaps, seven or eight others which could carry four times as many planes as could be carried effectively by the Saratoga, Lexington, and Langley would be highly unsatisfactory to the Japanese. Whereas Japan had an advantage during 1934 and 1935, the superiority in under-age ships which it could bring to bear on the fighting in the waters of the western Pacific would surely disappear under the Vinson building schedule.

The Japanese were forced to make a decision by the Vinson Act of 1934--either to go to the peace table and negotiate for further limitations, or to face the prospects of having to deal with an ever increasing American Navy. The net effect of the law, the writer of a New York Times article observed, "was to notify other countries that the present Congress wants the full navy to which this country is entitled under the existing agreements, unless some other agreement limits us further."[20] In other words, this act notified those nations which would be meeting in the 1935 naval conference, that the United States did not expect to appear, as she had in 1930, inferior in actual naval ratio and therefore, she would not need to accept compromises unsatisfactory to her naval interests.

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[20]New York Times, March 28, 1934, p. 1. An editorial in The Nation, CXXXVIII (March 2, 1934), 315, had warned that the Japanese would choose to build thus continuing the arms race.

If the Japanese accepted Roosevelt's reminder that Vinson's 1934 Act was only an authorization rather than a lead-in to the necessary appropriations, they could have believed that it was little more than a teasing threat by the United States to build up to treaty standards. They could have taken comfort in his statement that appropriations must await action by future Congresses. The evidence suggests that they did not. Thaddeus Tuleja, in his account of the period between the wars, noted that the Japanese press reacted quickly to the Vinson-Trammell Act. Tuleja observed that

> . . . whatever belief Japanese leaders may have shared that Roosevelt was speaking with tongue in cheek was all the more strengthened . . . when he announced that he proposed to ask Congress for authority to use an indeterminate amount of Public Works funds for naval building in the next fiscal year.[21]

The Japanese should have realized that if the United States followed its usual pattern, it would implement the authorizations. Although certainly not axiomatic for the future, Congressional authorization had always been concurrent with, or followed by, appropriations to build. In the history of the modern American Navy (since 1880), all keels authorized, except for a dynamite cruiser agreed to in March of 1889, had been laid down. While seven battleships and four cruisers already started were cancelled as

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[21]Thaddeus V. Tuleja, Statesmen and Admirals (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 109.

a result of the Washington Conference, all of the destroyers and submarines which had been authorized by Congress were commissioned.[22] Japan could expect Congressional appropriations to be provided to fulfill the authorizations.

Implementation

President Roosevelt certainly had "tongue in cheek" when he had discussed the Vinson-Trammell program. He, Vinson, and the Navy now sought the immediate consideration of legislation to provide twenty million dollars to build twelve destroyers and six submarines. From then on, new construction would alternate among the basic categories, battleships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, so that at no time in the future would large numbers of the same type of ship become obsolete and require replacement at the same time.[23] Now only ships authorized by the Vinson-Trammell Act were laid down; hence, the great strides made were based entirely upon the provisions of that measure.[24]

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[22]Navy History Division, Navy Department, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I and II (Navy Department), Vol. I, 1959, pp. 189-349; Vol. II, 1963, pp. 462-74.

[23]Atlanta Constitution, March 28, 1934, p. 1. This is exactly the program that Admiral Stanley had promoted earlier. See Washington Evening Star, January 23, 1934, p. A5.

[24]Even so opposition to this tremendous building program continued. See, "Why More Battleships," The New Republic, July 4, 1934, p. 194.

TABLE 6.--Early appropriations under Vinson-Trammell authorizations.

Date	Capital Ships	Cruisers	Destroyers	Submarines
June 24, 1935	1 Carrier	--	15	6
June 3, 1936	2 Battleships	--	12	6
April 27, 1937	--	--	8	4
April 26, 1938	2 Battleships	2	8	6
June 25, 1938	2 Battleships	--	--	--
May 25, 1939	2 Battleships	2	8	6

Congress continued to provide enough funds to begin those ships necessary to an adequate schedule. Some critics complained that few ships per year were built under the Vinson program; however, the physical facilities were not available to lay more ships. Later, Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy after this period, expressed surprise that as many warships were built as soon under the 1933 NRA and the Vinson-Trammell programs as were. To Knox, the American shipbuilding industry had atrophied with naval design and construction becoming "a veritable lost art." He declared that "it was to take nearly four years to regain the organizations, skilled workmen, and building ways

necessary to carry out actual construction on a large scale."[25]

Most of the time, there was more money available than could be suitably spent for shipbuilding. The program had been designed by Chairman Vinson to bring the Navy gradually up to treaty standards and did not involve a crash program. While the ships could have been built much more quickly if additional yard space were provided, the Navy wanted a slower pace of construction so that its constructors might take advantage of the experience gained from the building of the first ships to provide better designs and workmanship on subsequent vessels. Therefore, a perfectly suitable plan involved attaining full treaty strength during 1942.[26]

Believing that the Civil Works Administration would allocate twenty-five million dollars to begin construction under this act, Carl Vinson tried to expedite his program as detailed by the first naval replacement act bearing his name. This amount would be used for fifteen or twenty destroyers and submarines and some planes. Furthermore,

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[25]Frank Knox, The United States Navy in National Defense (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1941), pp. 6-7. See also William D. Puleston, The Influence of Seapower in World War II (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 23.

[26]Secretary of Navy Swanson wrote that he was very satisfied with the schedule being implemented by the Vinson-Trammell Act, United States Naval Institute Proceedings, October, 1936, pp. 1380-81.

President Roosevelt was making plans to ask Congress to authorize the use of public works funds for the construction of warships under the Vinson Bill. The New York Times declared that the President's use of the Vinson authorizations was viewed by some as the American answer to Japan's grand scheme to become the power in the Far East.[27]

Whether he planned to use this fleet to slow Japan down in the Orient or not, Roosevelt had a very high regard for the new Vinson legislation. In his first "Fireside Chat" of 1934, "Are You Better Off Than You Were Last Year?," he reviewed the accomplishments of the current session of the Seventy-third Congress and noted that "its task was essentially that of completing and fortifying the work it had begun in March, 1933." The session, as analyzed by the President, "was distinguished by the extent and variety of legislation enacted and by the intelligence and good-will of debate upon these measures." Among the major enactments, and here mentioning only a few of the major achievements, he included the strengthening of American naval forces "to conform with the intentions and permission of existing treaty rights." The President, singling out this act as one among the few most important, had

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[27]New York Times, April 23, 1934, p. 3; April 26, 1934, p. 1; Secretary of Navy Swanson to President Roosevelt, [1934-post Vinson-Trammel Act] detailed the Naval Construction Program for 1934, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, PSF Navy.

emphasized its imperativeness to the concept of an adequate defense.[28] Vinson, agreeing with the President, declared the recently completed session "the most constructive and important in the history of the nation."[29]

Although the first Vinson Act provided only authorization, it reversed a fifteen-year policy of naval retrenchment. Congress and the President had agreed that the Navy should be expanded to treaty size on a planned schedule of construction. It was, a Harvard University study concluded later, the first important act "to strengthen the Navy between the World Wars."[30] Because Congressmen would more easily pass an authorization than an appropriation, Vinson's strategy was sound. Similarly, an appropriation could be passed more easily if it implemented a prior authorization than if it must stand on its own. When this proved true, Vinson's action was further vindicated. Furthermore, the authorization could plan for the whole rebuilding program while an appropriation could plan only for the ships that could be built in the available yards and paid for with available revenues in the

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[28]Samuel Rosenman, Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol. III: The First Fireside Chat of 1934, June 28, 1934, p. 312.

[29]Union-Recorder, June 28, 1934, p. 1.

[30]Use and Disposition of Ships and Shipyards at the End of World War II, Report of the Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University (Cambridge: Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 175.

next two or three years. Such long range planning permitted the construction of battleships and cruisers, for example, whose complementary destroyers could be expected to be launched in time to go to sea together. Finally, the Vinson Act created priorities to shield construction schedules from the whims of each succeeding Congress.

These achievements prompted Admiral Ernest J. King to write a few months later that the "most important event" of the previous year had been the Vinson-Trammell Act. It had, he noted, authorized surface ships to build the Navy to, and maintain it at, treaty strength. Further, it had authorized naval aircraft "in numbers commensurate with a treaty navy."[31] The latter point was a particularly sensitive one. Enthusiasm for air power had grown precipitately since the construction programs of the World War. Fifteen years of little construction had left naval aviation frozen in a relatively subsidiary role. With no true carriers in 1922 and very few planes, it had expanded only to three effective carriers and a thousand planes in 1934. Vinson's bill authorized at least six or seven new carriers, depending upon the size, and two thousand planes. This legislation would double the number of carriers and planes available to the defense of America. Little wonder that Admiral Jonas Ingram wrote that the Vinson Act was

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[31]Ernest J. King, speech, January 31, 1935, William Dudley Knox Papers, Box 294, MDLC, p. 3.

the most important event of the year "looking toward the continued operating efficiency and future expansion of naval aviation."[32]

Carl Vinson maintained pressure to guarantee that the United States would not default on the Congressional goal of building up to treaty standards. Upon learning that Japan had invited France and Italy to join her in denouncing the Washington Treaty, he wrote to President Roosevelt, "I sincerely and honestly hope it won't be necessary to scrap the treaty." However, he noted that there was little hope for any other course of action because the United States could not grant Japan naval equality at any price. Should the Tokyo Government persist in "wrecking the treaty," he would insist that Congress appropriate the money necessary to build the ships to continue the treaty ratio.[33] In the meantime, the President noted that he had been getting increasing information that Japan could not stand the cost of a Navy race.[34]

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[32]Jonas Ingram, "15 Years of Naval Development," Scientific American (November, 1935), 234.

[33]Baltimore Sun, November 28, 1934, p. 1. Eventually the Japanese government ended all previous naval treaties anyway. This was done in advance of the 1936 closing date.

[34]Roosevelt to Norman Davis, Chairman, American Delegation, London Naval Conference, November 9, 1934. FDRL, PSF: London Naval Conference in Edgar B. Nixon, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs (Hyde Park, New York: Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, 1969), Vol. II, p. 263, hereafter cited as Edgar B. Nixon, F.D.R. and Foreign Affairs.

As Japan had once been willing to limit herself to three warships to each five which might be built by either the United States or Great Britain, Vinson would not now agree that the Japanese needed more than she had then "officially and formally," contracted for. "In unvarnished words," noted the Baltimore Sun's commentary, "the Congressional leader on naval legislation [Vinson] warned today that if existing treaties are scrapped he will insist, in any ensuing naval race, upon American construction of 'five ships for each three laid down by Japan.'"[35] Thus he would demand that, even without the treaties, the United States Navy maintain its relative position vis à vis Japan. Under the circumstances, only a building program would continue the ratios. An adequate navy, Carl Vinson warned in March of 1935, should consist of 191 fighting ships, 15 battleships, 6 carriers, 18 heavy cruisers, 17 light cruisers, 97 destroyers, and 38 submarines.[36]

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[35] November 28, 1934, p. 1.

[36] Cong. Rec., LXXIX, 4550. For an excellent analysis of their respective governments' positions, see the successive articles in Current History by Hector Bywater of Britain, October, 1934, p. 15; Herbert Corey of the United States, December, 1934, p. 264. This program was that sought by the President as well, see the statement given to the press by Press Secretary Steve Early from the President's train in East St. Louis on September 27, 1935, FDRL, 18-Misc., Naval Building folder.

In addition to this actual fighting fleet, Vinson maintained that an adequate "train" would be necessary to make the combined warships into an effective force. This "train" would include minecraft, supply ships, hospital ships, oilers, transports, ocean tugs, repair ships and tenders, and patrol vessels. Such a large auxiliary force would not be needed if the Navy were to be based upon the continental United States and hence used only for defense. With sufficient support ships, an American fleet could have a profound effect upon the foreign policy of both the United States and Japan as these aggregate vessels could push battle action across the Pacific. Not only had Vinson advocated treaty standards, but he was moving on to the next goal which was to provide the supply ships which would support this fleet in offensive action. The preparation of such a fleet would notify the Japanese that the United States aimed to gain supremacy in the Pacific.[37]

Carl Vinson did not, in the mid-thirties, just write legislation which involved the construction of new ships. To prevent pre-Vinson ships from being down-graded, he introduced a bill in early 1936 which would provide an extensive ship modernization program. This action would supplement the Vinson-Trammell Act as implemented and

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[37] New York Times, January 14, 1937, p. 9. See Cong. Rec., LXXXI, 6995-96 for an extensive Vinson explanation of the main naval auxiliaries. After Congressional approval and Presidential signature, an auxiliary program was implemented. New York Times, July 28, 1937, p. 2; July 31, 1937, p. 13.

would aid in providing a treaty-strength Navy by 1942. Chairman Vinson guided through the House of Representatives legislation essential to carrying out both the modernization and the new warship programs.

In the meantime, he awaited the call of the President before pushing through the legislation which would permit the laying down of two additional battleships.[38] No authorization would be asked or given unless other nations began building additional capital ships. The President wished to hold back until other nations began building battleships. Carl Vinson agreed with this approach.[39] When foreign powers refused to renew naval disarmament treaties which expired on December 31, 1936, Mr. Roosevelt ordered the construction of two new battleships. The President implemented Vinson legislation in order to keep pace with the building done by other nations. In addition, Congress, using the Vinson-Trammell schedule, in 1937, passed the annual naval appropriations

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[38]Approving replacement of destroyers and submarines, Mr. Roosevelt wished to delay a battleship replacement program. Though he wanted work continued on battleship plans, he warned that there should be "no publicity of any kind." President Roosevelt to Claude Swanson, July 2, 1935, PSF: Navy; Edgar B. Nixon, FDR and Foreign Affairs, Vol. II, p. 546. See The New Republic of January 5, 1938, p. 253; January 12, 1938, p. 265; January 26, 1938, pp. 328-29; and The Nation of March 13, 1936, p. 598 for questioning of the decision to build more battleships.

[39]New York Times, April 29, 1936, p. 7. Earlier, Vinson had supported battleship modernization and the battleship holiday to save money. See Cong. Rec., LXXIV, 6183-84.

bill making money available during 1939 for two battleships, two light cruisers, eight destroyers, and six submarines.[40] Because this policy of orderly building and replacement continued steadily, the American naval program to provide a fleet "second to none" was now based entirely on the provisions of the Vinson-Trammell Act.

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[40] New Republic, January 8, 1937, p. 1; January 9, 1937, pp. 1, 3; January 15, 1937, p. 2; February 18, 1937, p. 1; July 11, 1937, p. 12; The President explained his position in a Press Conference held on January 8, 1937, Edgar B. Nixon, F.D.R. and Foreign Affairs, Vol. III, p. 573.

CHAPTER V

BUILDING BEYOND TREATY LIMITS

The Background

Early in 1938, Representative Hamilton Fish, a New York Republican, attacked the 1939 Naval Appropriation Bill which would provide two battleships, two light cruisers, eight destroyers, six submarines, an oiler, a fleet tug, a minesweeper, and a sub tender. Inasmuch as the Washington Treaty of 1922 and the London Treaty of 1930 had expired, Fish believed that it was time to meet at the conference table to formulate another agreement on naval disarmament. He was willing to concede the Japanese at least another point in the ratio system thereby making the comparison 5-5-4. While believing that Japan would be content with such an expanded ratio, he was convinced that even if the United States only had a navy equal to Japan's, that nation could never come 10,000 miles across the sea to attack.[1]

Charging that he had yet to hear anyone detail America's foreign policy, he called upon Vinson to explain American naval policy and to relate it to current

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[1]Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 782.

international issues. Vinson replied that Mr. Fish was "somewhat confused" because basic American naval policy was to utilize any possible disarmament overtures. However, in the past, other countries signatory to the treaties had promptly built-up their navies placing the United States at a great disadvantage. Thus it had become necessary to change the nation's policies to improve its relative power position in the world. His statement brought no answer from Mr. Fish and despite his opposition, the appropriations bill passed on an unrecorded 283 to 15 division of the House.[2]

Both Great Britain and Japan, as they were certainly privileged to do, had been building beyond the limits of the defunct treaties. In contrast, the United States continued to abide by the former legal limitations and was falling behind in naval strength. President Roosevelt contemplated making an appeal to Congress for legislation which would authorize additional construction 20 per cent above the treaty limitations. Such an increase would simply maintain the 5-5-3 ratio which was considered adequate to prevent an attack upon the United States by another signatory power such as Japan or Britain.[3]

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[2]Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 784. For a very staunch defense of Hamilton Fish and his position, see the discussion (signed T.R.B.) in The New Republic, March 2, 1938, p. 99.

[3]Roosevelt Press Conferences, #419, December 28, 1937, p. 3 (43), FDRL; Washington Post, December 29,

A conference was held at the White House to determine the Administration's plans for increases in the nation's sea and air defenses. At this time, the heads of the House Naval Affairs Committee and the House Appropriations Committee were to make definite recommendations to the President on the Navy's needs as well as the means of financing such a program. The participants, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Edison, Chief of Naval Operations Leahy, Chairman Vinson, Chairman Taylor of the House Appropriations Committee, and Chairman Umstead of the Naval Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, decided to promote an enlargement of the Navy sufficient to cope with unsettled world conditions. Alarmed by events in both Europe and Asia, Chief of Naval Operations William D. Leahy recommended an authorization which would permit building in excess of the tonnage established by the Vinson-Trammell Act of 1934.[4]

The New York Times reported that President Roosevelt would send a message to Congress on national defense which would precipitate the most far-reaching changes since the signing of the Washington Naval Treaty of 1922. Providing

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1937, pp. 1, 4. This same issue shows pictures of the Panay sinking. Vinson particularly emphasized the increase necessary to maintain the 5-5-3 ratio, see Evening Star (Washington), January 28, 1938, p. 1.

[4]New York Times, January 5, 1938, p. 11; January 6, 1938, p. 11; January 14, 1938, p. 12; Washington Post, January 26, 1938, pp. 1, 7.

"an index to the administration's future foreign policy, particularly in the Far East," the message would be followed by Chairman Carl Vinson's introduction of a bill to authorize a 20 per cent increase in the American Navy, by the seeking of $25 million for the Army, and by "a thorough debate on [the] country's foreign policy and the relation of national defense measures to it."[5]

Although the Vinson measure would be an authorization only, it was expected that the President would recommend that construction begin soon on two more battleships. These would be in addition to the North Carolina and the Washington, and the two already provided for in the regular 1939 appropriation bill which had been passed the previous week.[6]

An increase of between fifty and one hundred million dollars would be necessary to implement such a naval expansion program. This authorization would call for about 250,000-tons, or roughly an addition of three more battleships, five or six cruisers, two more carriers, twenty to twenty-six more destroyers, and possibly ten to fifteen submarines along with the forty-two auxiliaries which were

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[5]New York Times, January 25, 1938, p. 1; see Washington Post, January 29, 1938, p. 1, for the President's message and Vinson action.

[6]New York Times, January 23, 1938, p. 1; President Roosevelt continued to support the building of battleships. See "Relative Value of Planes and Ships," Time, March 7, 1938, p. 13.

to be specified in the act. In the meantime, the Vinson-Trammell authorizations would continue to be laid down as replacements. Hence, both programs would be long range expansion schedules. Inasmuch as the available auxiliaries were considered so old, slow and inadequate that they might seriously reduce the fleet's mobility, the provision for the forty-two tenders and supply ships would greatly strengthen the United States Navy.[7]

In order to further strengthen the Navy, President Roosevelt, in 1938, called upon Congress to authorize the projected increase in the nation's defense program. His recommendations meant that the United States would tend to keep pace with British construction, a possibility which Chairman Vinson, in approving the President's message, declared "absolutely imperative" to meet the goal of a navy second to none. If the Vinson 20 per cent increase measure were enacted and its provisions carried through to consummation, the United States would have 278 underage efficient ships, the largest American seaforce on record. The new legislation could be considered "an amendment through enlargement of the Vinson-Trammell Act." Although there were seven battleships, thirty-two destroyers, and eight submarines yet to be laid down under the first Vinson Act, this projected new law would extend that Act

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[7] Ibid., p. 29.

allowing Congress to make further appropriations as warranted.[8]

Vinson's projected American naval program helped to shake the confidence of the Japanese press as reported in the New York Times that Japan could continue its strict secrecy about its battleship plans without provoking an unwanted naval race. The Japanese newspaper Nichi Nichi declared that the new Vinson legislation might mean, inasmuch as it did not state tonnage specifications for the battleships contemplated, that the United States planned to exceed the 35,000-ton limits which the Anglo-American treaty bound it to maintain. If this were true, Nichi Nichi warned, Japan "must take counter-measures." Another Japanese paper, The Asahi, maintained that the Vinson legislation would elevate the American fleet above treaty strength and this would obligate Japan to reciprocate. It disputed President Roosevelt's contention that this new program was being sought only in self-defense. It declared that there was no reason for American naval expansion now because no country was challenging or

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[8]New York Times, January 29, 1938, pp. 1, 4, 5; Time, February 7, 1938, p. 9; letter from Claude Swanson (Secretary of the Navy) to Carl Vinson, February 21, 1938; U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 1899 to accompany H.R. 9218, March, 1938. According to a Gallup Poll, the President had the overwhelming support of the American voters in his program for an enlarged Navy, "Bigger Navy? 1935 72%, Today 74%; Bigger Army? 1935 70%, Today 69%; Bigger Air Force? 1935 84%, Today 80%." Atlanta Constitution, January 12, 1938, p. 1; Washington Post, January 12, 1938, p. 2.

preparing to challenge the United States placing its nationals in such danger as would necessitate the spending of $800 million for defense.[9]

Vinson reaction to Japanese building was just as explosive. In early February 1938, the United States, Britain, and France called upon Japan to provide suitable data for their perusal on its new warships by a deadline of February 20th. Carl Vinson declared that "it was right" that these countries should make such an inquiry of the Japanese. Noting that the pending Naval Expansion Bill would set no tonnage limit on any battleship, he told Congress that he would be guided by the Administration after it had received Japan's reply. Understandably, he emphasized that if Japan was going to build battleships over 35,000 tons, "we would be compelled to do the same." Thus, there was a very distinct and direct relationship between the demands made on Japan and the Vinson hearings on naval expansion.[10]

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[9] New York Times, January 30, 1938, p. 33. The Nation agreed with the latter contention that this program was intended to be available for offensive action against Japan, February 5, 1938, p. 141. To The New Republic, as explained in an editorial of February 16, 1938, the 20% program would, in reality, be a 50 to 60% increase and the new ratio, vis à vis Japan, would be 2-1, p. 32.

[10] Ibid., February 6, 1938, p. 1. See The New Republic, LXXXIV (February 16, 1938), 29 and The Nation, February 12, 1938, p. 169 for an opposing view of this question.

The Second Vinson Act

Although the 1939 appropriation bill which Vinson defended from Fish came under the 1934 Vinson-Trammell Act, further authorizations were needed because Japan and Britain had built beyond the ratios which the United States still maintained under the defunct treaties. The Naval Affairs Committee, on March 3, 1938, approved with twenty affirmative and three negative votes a billion dollar naval construction authorization. While the President had recommended an expenditure of over $1,083 million, the Committee increased the amount thirty-eight million more. This constituted a 20 per cent extension of the American treaty fleet.[11]

The minority report filed by Ralph Brewster of Maine, W. Sterling Cole of New York, and Ralph Church of Illinois declared that "the circumstances indicate that the bill originated in the White House for the purpose of putting into the hands of the President the power to implement his foreign policies."[12] This bill providing 105,000 tons for battleships, 69,000 tons for cruisers, 14,000 tons for submarines, and 38,000 tons for destroyers would only enable the United States to keep even with the ratio schemes set up in the Washington and London Treaties

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[11] New York Times, March 4, 1938, p. 10.

[12] Ibid., March 8, 1938, pp. 1, 10. For debate on the minority report, see the Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 3513-19.

and would not provide the power to activate any new diplomatic program engineering by President Roosevelt.

In the House, Vinson defended the enlarged authorization by emphasizing that a strong Navy should prevent war, or should that fail, wage war effectively in order to bring hostilities to a close as soon as possible. For him, the term "strong Navy" could be determined only by a comparison with selected sea powers.

TABLE 7.--Ratios given by Admiral Leahy in April 1938.

	Great Britain	United States	Japan
Battleships	5	3.8	2.8
Carriers	5	2.7	4.5
Heavy Cruisers	5	6	4
Light Cruisers	5	2.3	2.3
Destroyers	5	3	4.1
Submarines	5	3.2	3.9

Source: Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 3525; New York Times, April 5, 1938, pp. 1, 7.

These ratios reflected underage, building, appropriated for, or projected ships. While the United States was not even close to its anticipated strength in five of the six categories, the Japanese exceeded the "3" of the 5-5-3 ratio in four of the six categories. Although the treaties had expired, Vinson believed that America must maintain

the ratios to keep the ideal balance. Thus, Japanese construction was forcing the United States to develop authorizing legislation again.

While apprehensive that some would permit their love of peace to impair the preservation of peace, he was aware of the contribution which could be made to world peace by successful limitation of armaments. Nothing would contribute more to world peace than an armament limitation allowing a nation to defend itself while at the same time preventing such arming as would permit a successful attack upon another. He, himself, declared that he was confident that when "the opportune and the psychological moment has arrived," the President would attempt to obtain a suitable limitation of arms. That a conference should be called just to say that a meeting had been held did not make good sense to Mr. Vinson. Furthermore, he emphasized that the existing world conditions doomed any such action and therefore Congress should not impinge upon Presidential discretion by requiring that he call a conference.[13]

It would take an enemy, he warned, only a short time to send submarines and swift aircraft carriers to lay waste America's industrial centers and principal coast-line cities. Thus, the United States must meet the enemy at sea, defeating him before ne neared the coast,

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[13]Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 3322-23.

in order to provide the required and expected protection. When the ratios worked out at Washington and London were in effect, no nation dared to attack another treaty power. Now, however, both Great Britain and Japan were building beyond the original treaty limits. In his words, "Had the Washington and London treaties remained in effect it would have been unnecessary for us to come before the Congress with this building program" as "the existing authorization would have been sufficient."[14]

Answering earlier arguments, he emphasized that the proposed ships would make the Navy "barely adequate" to defend America's mainland and its insular possessions. "We are not and do not propose by this increase to build a navy for the purpose of attacking foreign shores. This is strictly a defensive program." He asked no "navy for aggression" because the United States did not "covet one foot of soil of any other nation." Countering the idea that this program was a "militaristic campaign" or an "aggressive movement," Congressman Vinson labeled it an "insurance policy for peace for the American people." Even though it would involve the expenditure of more than a billion dollars, it would still be "cheap insurance." Nothing would "contribute more to guarantee to the people security and peace than a defense as provided for in this bill."[15]

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[14] Ibid., 3323.

[15] Ibid., 3323-24.

In a statement which an isolationist might make, Representative Thomas O'Malley, Democrat of Wisconsin, declared that millions of Americans would be proud to lay down their lives in the defense of their country's shores. Not doubting that this was true, Carl Vinson maintained that his bill would provide a Navy which would defend the United States at sea before a single shell or bomb could fall upon its territory, or before a single foreign soldier could land upon its shores.[16]

This program was not to be "a blueprint proposition or a paper authorization." According to Mr. Vinson, this schedule would be the first step toward the construction of a Navy capable of defending the United States against any possible attack. Inasmuch as the President had stated that he would ask for a deficiency appropriation to lay down two additional battleships and two additional cruisers during the calendar year 1938, part of the provisions of this authorization would be put in actual ships almost immediately and would support Vinson's contention.[17]

When questioned by Mr. Maverick, Democrat from Texas, as to the meaning of the term, "paper proposition," Vinson declared that in contrast to such a program his plan would permit the President to ask for sufficient appropriations to build warships. He warned that should the United States be unprepared because of Congressional inaction, the

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[16] Ibid., 3324.

[17] Ibid.

responsibility would fall upon that body. Because ships cannot be built in a day, he regarded the present as the only time to consider the size of tomorrow's United States Navy.[18]

However, on the other hand, replying to the accusations made against him that he was a militarist, Carl Vinson maintained that "God knows" that he would rather ask Congress to provide $1.2 billion for internal improvements than to call upon the Members of the House to authorize that same amount to build warships. To Vinson, circumstances over which the Government had no control made it imperative that Congress pass this building program.[19]

To insure progress in these efforts to get the 20 per cent increase in naval construction, Vinson not only dominated his own committee but strongly influenced the naval subcommittee of the House appropriations committee. Whenever the subcommittee chairman would reduce Chairman Vinson's estimates, the Georgian would go behind his back to reverse him. After this had happened several times, the subcommittee chairman called an executive session and

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[18] Ibid., 3333-34.

[19] Ibid., 3325. However, some did not agree with Vinson's program. The National Council for the Prevention of War, for example, sent both money and Jeanette Rankin into Representative Vinson's district for the purpose of defeating him, Time, February 21, 1938, p. 18 and New York Times, February 11, 1938, p. 14.

made his committee members "take an oath not to see, hear, or talk to Vinson" while the bill was in committee.[20]

Thus through overwhelming Democratic support, and in spite of midwestern Republican opposition, the Second Vinson Bill passed in the House of Representatives with 294 yeas, 100 nays, and 35 not voting and in the Senate with 56 yeas and 28 nays on, respectively, March 21 and May 3, 1938. A breakdown of the vote in the House of Representatives showed a very definite sectional division on this bill. Three sections, the South (95%), the Rocky Mountain states (90%), and the Pacific Coast (91%) were overwhelmingly favorable to the 20 per cent extension of the United States fleet. The Southwest (83%) and the Northeast (78%) were still strongly favorable. However, the greatest opposition to the proposed increase came from the Midwest. Eight of the nine states voting overwhelmingly against the legislation were from the Midwest. It was true also that these were the only areas with substantial Republican strength at this time. The majority of the members of this party voted no--Midwest four yes and thirty-one no and the Northeast--twenty-one yes and twenty-four no. The twelve members of the two minority parties, Progressives from Wisconsin and Farm-Laborites from Minnesota, from the Midwest voted "no" while the only other Progressive, a Representative from San Francisco,

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[20]"Air Marshall Vinson," Newsweek, March 28, 1949, p. 19; Gladstone Williams, Atlanta Constitution, 1938 (undated clipping in Carl Vinson's possession).

supported the 20 per cent increase. Democratic Representatives from every section combined to pass the bill while both parties in the Midwest and the Republicans from the Northeast provided the opposition.[21]

While opposition in the Senate along party lines was less than in the House of Representatives, sectional opposition was equally impressive. Although the Rocky Mountain states of Idaho, Montana, and Colorado provided four Democratic no votes and an overall showing of 58 per cent, the greatest resistance again came from the Midwest where only 37 per cent of the Senators supported Vinson. Five of the seven states whose Senators both voted against the increase were from this inland section. At least three-fourths of the Senators from each of the remaining four sections were pro-increase.[22]

In spite of this Midwestern opposition, this second Vinson authorization soon became law. After the conference committee reached full agreement on May 9th, the House and Senate approved the resulting compromise authorizing the construction of 46 warships--3 battleships, 2 carriers, 9 cruisers, 23 destroyers, 9 submarines, and 950 planes. On the 17th of May, President Roosevelt signed the Vinson-Walsh Bill which provided for a 20 per cent increase in naval construction. This expansion would enable the United

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[21] Cong. Rec., LXXXIII, 3767-68.

[22] Ibid.

TABLE 8.--Pertinent authorizations.

	1933 NRA June 1933	1st Vinson March 1934	2nd Vinson May 1938
Battleships	0	15	3
Carriers	2	6	2
Cruisers	4	37	9
Destroyers	16	121	23
Submarines	4	41[a]	9

[a]Continual replacement program.

States to keep the 5-5-3 pace with the other major powers in the basic warship types.

Foreign Voices

In January of 1939, Vinson introduced legislation to improve existing facilities or erect new bases at nine Pacific, one Atlantic, and two Gulf locations. Because of Guam's proximity to Japanese holdings, Congressional opposition focused its campaign on that island. They feared that fortification of Guam might offend the Japanese. Voices from Japan indicated strong opposition causing the loss of crucial Southern support and a rare defeat for Chairman Vinson.[23] Guam was never fortified.

[23]Ibid., LXXXIV, 1710-22, 1744-82, 1832-44. Guam was still a "sore spot" for some a year later. See Atlanta Constitution, January 10, 1940, p. 1; Cong. Rec., LXXXV, 1423-24, 1428-31.

While his ill-fated Guam harbor improvement bill was pending in the spring of 1939, Vinson declared, in a post-hearing session with newspaper men, that the United States would continue to maintain its present ratio of naval superiority regardless of any building program which the Japanese might launch. Thus, if the rumor were true that Japan planned to build a battle fleet equal to any in the world, he would notify Japan that the United States would build to more than match the Japanese endeavors.

Vinson's problems in 1939 involved the Germans as well as the Japanese. The main headline of the New York Times for February 22, 1939 reported: "Vinson Says Our Interests Link Us to Britain, France." While he believed it essential that America be ever vigilant in her defenses, he also declared it to America's advantage to permit its manufacturers to furnish planes to England and France, the other two great democracies of the world. Thus, in the opening debate on the pending Naval Air and Submarine Bill, he had notified the world of the position which he thought the United States should adopt. This approach was considerably ahead of that which the Roosevelt administration could take at this particular time and certainly far beyond that which the American people were willing to engage in as of early 1939.[24]

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[24] New York Times, February 22, 1939, p. 1; clipping in Carl Vinson's possession, Daily Mirror (London), February 22, 1939.

His stand against the dictators brought a vehement reaction from Germany. A newspaper clipping in his possession dated February 23, 1939 and datelined Berlin noted that German newspapers criticised this Vinson speech on the grounds that it simply served a political purpose--"concealing the misery [at home] which the Roosevelt regime has been unable to mollify." Both the Nazi Party newspaper, the Volkischer Beobachter and the Lokalanzeiger specified that Vinson and "other irresponsible war mongers" demanded a return to "old-fashioned principles" so that America could accumulate the world's gold in its vaults at Fort Knox. Carl Vinson merited formidable criticism from the German press.[25]

A Two-Ocean Navy

Following the outbreak of war in September 1939, Vinson escalated his naval plans for, though the "phoney war" was being "waged" during the winter of 1939-40, he and other members of Congress with similar views were not building a navy department on Germany's plans alone. Hostilities might end in Europe, but Japan's designs must be at least tempered. Vinson, as supported, made known his intention to press for the earliest possible completion of those plans navy strategists deemed necessary to protect the nation. This action was taken at the time when the

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[25]Clippings in Carl Vinson's possession, February 23, 1939.

Navy's policy-making officials were leaving the initiative for building ships in the hands of Congress and therefore this construction program would depend largely on such appropriations as Congress might authorize.

But Congress was of two minds. Vinson's leadership was challenged by Chairman David I. Walsh of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee who declared that no new authorizations were necessary until the remainder of the 1938 program had been built. He warned that the Vinson bill would only create a "paper navy" at a time when Congress should concentrate on appropriations to complete the ships already authorized.[26]

Countering the "paper fleet accusation" made by Walsh, Vinson advanced the possibility of an allied defeat which would necessitate the building of all of his proposed 1940 authorizations. Inasmuch as all of the battleships, carriers, and submarines authorized by the Second Vinson Act passed in 1938 had been provided for, Mr. Vinson very pointedly observed that he was "at a loss to understand how any one conversant with naval matters [such as Mr. Walsh] can confuse the situation." He regarded further authorizations as essential. This difficulty was the source of a disagreement between the two chairmen which paralyzed the authorization schedule contemplated by

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[26]Washington Post, January 11, 1940, p. 1; New York Times, January 11, 1940, p. 12.

Vinson. Neither chairman would honor the naval appropriations bills proposed by the other and, consequently, no bills could move through Congress to implement naval construction.[27]

Bowing to Senator Walsh's opposition, Vinson cut his six-year building request to one of three years. He then conceded that the Navy had all the authorizations which it could build within the present facilities. "It's cornfield lawyer sense," he agreed, to pare the Navy's request. "The Navy wants to see the whole program on the books at this time, but I think it is wise not to pile up too much construction ahead of the time that it can actually be carried out."[28]

Both the Navy and the Army had proceeded with two- and three-year programs which would be paid for by appropriations made after deliveries. Mr. Vinson condoned this expedient practice and worked within Congress to block New York Republican Representative Taber's contemplated requirement that no building be commenced until the money was actually appropriated. He would have moved to waylay such Taber action by a pertinent clause in the current naval expansion bill or through a change in the House rules.

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[27] Ibid., January 14, 1940, p. 34; Atlanta Constitution, January 14, 1940, p. 2.

[28] Washington Post, January 19, 1940, p. 1; Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 2734-35.

If necessary, he would have incorporated such an amendment in the pending $800 million fleet expansion bill to permit the continuation of this practice. The "promisory note" method allowed contracts to be let immediately upon their authorization.[29]

The Georgia Swamp Fox quite slyly maneuvered naval authorization through the House of Representatives. Realizing that a five-year program calling for a 25 per cent expansion goal would not pass, he declared that the most sensible approach was to cut the program to a 10 per cent increase in combatant ships and to withhold the other portion of the program until next year and the year after. Actually, this was only a minor concession for Mr. Vinson betrayed his thinking, "If world conditions are like they are today, the committee can go along and authorize the other 15 per cent next year or the year following." The Chairman and the Navy had almost all that they wanted; Mr. Vinson admitted that the 10 per cent increase would provide for the laying down during fiscal 1941 and 1942 of all the vessels which the navy yards and private shipbuilding industry could handle. No more could be laid down: hence the Vinson strategy would compromise on the surface when in reality it was not conceding a thing.[30]

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[29]Washington Post, January 25, 1940, p. 2.

[30]Ibid., January 30, 1940, p. 5; February 1, 1940, p. 1; New York Times, February 1, 1940, p. 9; Atlanta Constitution, February 1, 1940, pp. 1, 9. This program

Having realized the possible coalition of the German, Italian, and Japanese navies against a United States fleet which no longer could count on an active French or British sea force to intercede, the Chairman and his committee emphasized the need for $655 million for the Navy to upgrade the American fleet. He announced his support for such an appropriation by declaring that any cut made in this amount would require that Congress make a deficiency allowance. Hence, the money would be available either way; it would be up to Congress to determine the most suitable arrangement.[31]

Representative Hamilton Fish, Republican of New York, attempted in March, 1940 to promote an amendment which would eliminate three projected carriers. Claiming that the Navy Department had informed him that both Japan and the United States had built or were building eight carriers each, Fish declared that the United States did not need to construct any more carriers. As Vinson had information that Japan had built or was building thirteen carriers while the United States had built or was building only eight, he believed that these three ships must be

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met the approval of the President. See Ibid., February 7, 1940, p. 8.

[31] Washington Post, February 15, 1940, pp. 1, 9. For a contrary view which doubted the impending formation of an anti-American coalition, see "Big Navy Nightmare," in The New Republic of January 22, 1940, pp. 102-4.

laid down. Defending this type "as the most vitally needed of all," the NAC Chairman admonished Fish, "You didn't go to the right place" in the Navy Department for your information. Vinson arguments prevailed and this naval expansion bill passed by a resounding 302-37 vote.[32]

Regional opposition followed the 1938 pattern. Although fewer votes were cast against the June eleven per cent authorization, thirty of the thirty-seven no votes came from the Midwest. Three negative votes each were cast by the Southwest and the Northeast regions while an Oregon Representative provided the remaining opposing vote. Sixteen Representatives repeated their 1938 negative voting as the Midwest continued to provide the strongest opposition to any naval expansion. It is impossible to compare Senate votes as that body used a voice vote to pass the 11 per cent increase on June 3, 1940.[33]

This 11 per cent increase could provide two battleships, one carrier, five cruisers, sixteen destroyers, and six submarines. Table 9 shows contemplated relationships between this increase and previous authorizations. Such action would just keep the United States on the 5-5-3 standard which had been considered by the treaty makers of 1922 and 1930 as sufficient to protect the United States,

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[32]Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 2750; Washington Post, March 13, 1940, pp. 5, 6.

[33]Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 2750.

TABLE 9.--Pertinent authorizations through June 1940.

	1933 NRA June 1933	1st Vinson March 1934	2nd Vinson May 1938	3rd Vinson June 1940	Total
Battleships	0	15	3	3	21
Carriers	2	6	2	1	9
Cruisers	4	37	9	5	51
Destroyers	16	121	23	16	160
Submarines	4	41	9	6	56

Note: The figures will not add up correctly because the 1933 NRA authorizations would eventually fit into the authorizations of the 1st Vinson Act.

Britain, and Japan while at the same time being insufficient for aggressive purposes against the other treaty powers. For want of a better criterion, Naval officers continued to consider this the yardstick of seaworthiness.

Vinson's 1940 program, if carried through to its fullest, would eventuate in a two-ocean navy consisting of two large fleets, one each for the Atlantic and the Pacific. In contrast, Secretary of the Navy Charles Edison rejected the two-ocean concept in favor of Mahan's philosophy of keeping the fleet concentrated. Though warned that even if it were sound to do so, it would take over ten years to duplicate the existing fleet, Carl Vinson persisted in his two-ocean projection. The knowledge that Japan might be building a fleet of superdreadnoughts emphasized the need for such an enlargement. American naval authorities declared that there had never been a time in history when a nation had been able to so effectively "cloak its construction activities from the outside as have the Japanese since 1936." Inasmuch as only Japanese naval officers, government officials, and working personnel were allowed in the restricted areas and inasmuch as the workmen lived in the restricted areas and could rarely leave, security was rigidly enforced and foreign nations had only limited information on the current Japanese warship building activities.[34]

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[34] Washington Post, March 31, 1940, p. 8; April 14, 1940, p. 2.

Concurrent headlines in the Washington Post of May 19, 1940 notified America that the Germans had taken Antwerp and that Vinson had announced his plans to draft legislation to speed naval construction. Three days later, Vinson and Walsh placed before Congress a huge naval aviation expansion program which would increase the number of planes from 3,000 to 10,000 while providing 16,000 pilots rather than the 2,602 in the existing billets. This expansion was approved by the House Naval Affairs Committee on May 22, 1940.[35]

Whatever Vinson's faith in navy experts on navy matters, he remained a part of the New Deal. He was, for example, distressed by the Navy's attempts to eliminate the Walsh-Healy Labor Standards Act from the above aviation expansion bill. This 1936 act required that federal contractors pay at least the prevailing wage of their locality for an eight-hour day and a forty-hour week. Mr. Vinson emphasized that the new defense program should not "weaken the social gains made in the last few years." Congress agreed with his decision to continue implementation of social legislation through the Walsh-Healy Act.[36]

As the Germans defeated France in June 1940, two Vinson authorized battleships, the Washington and the

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[35] Ibid., May 22, 1940, p. 4.

[36] Ibid.; Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 7024-25. For debate on this issue, see Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 7021-33, 7040-41.

North Carolina, were launched, the first in the United States in nineteen years. In addition to these two new battleships, Mr. Vinson opposed any alteration in plans already made to build 45,000-ton battleships. Advocates of such alterations wanted to build "smaller, faster, new-type ships designed especially . . . for swift action in the Western Hemisphere." Aware of the attempt by the Japanese to prevent other nations from getting information on its building and cognizant of the limitations of the alternative given by the opponents of the 45,000-tonners, he and the Navy Department concentrated their attention on determining how quickly warships could be built to provide a substantial two-ocean Navy.[37]

Admiral Harold Stark appeared before the House Naval Affairs Committee in June 1940 to urge the 70 per cent increase in the fleet to provide the United States with a two-ocean Navy to enhance its position in world affairs. As usual the chairman asked the friendliest questions: "In view of world conditions, you regard this expansion as necessary?" Thus prompted, the Admiral replied, "I do, sir, emphatically." Then the chairman moved on without asking for evidence or collaboration because although he knew the answer before witness Stark gave it, he wanted this view emphasized. With Vinson as committee chairman the

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[37]New York Times, June 2, 1940, p. 1; Washington Post, June 14, 1940, p. 1; June 17, 1940, p. 1.

Navy could function somewhat as its own legislative agency.[38]

Secondary headlines in the Washington Post, June 19, 1940 stated that French ships and planes were said to be fleeing to North Africa while a group in the House of Representatives was seeking four billion to provide a two-ocean navy for the United States. This proposal was the 70 per cent increase sought by the Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee and the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Harold Stark. Just twenty-four hours previously, Chairmen Vinson and Walsh had proposed an eighty-four ship program which would cost $1.2 billion and now Mr. Vinson had put a four billion dollar naval authorization into the hopper. This new action came as an almost complete surprise because the eighty-four ships were believed to constitute the maximum ship construction desired that year by the Roosevelt administration.[39]

Two other factors focus this endeavor as a Vinson action. First, Mr. Vinson had discussed just such an introduction with President Roosevelt and had been advised that this was not the opportune time to call for such an enormous spending of money for naval building. Chairman Vinson acted and the President heard of this move only

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[38]Atlanta Journal, June 18, 1940, p. 1.

[39]Washington Post, June 18, 1940, p. 2; June 19, 1940, p. 1.

after the bill had been introduced. FDR telephoned him to ask why he had taken such action when the President had just discouraged such a move. Vinson answered that there was no better time. Assuredly this was true, for Congress passed the Vinson measure without any difficulty. This measure bore the sponsorship of Senator David I. Walsh as well as that of Representative Vinson. However, so the story is told, Vinson had had another person slip the 70 per cent increase bill bearing the name of Senator Walsh into the Senate hopper. Walsh made the record clear when he declared that the measure was strictly a Vinson measure, and, therefore, he could not claim credit for its far-reaching effects.[40]

Although President Roosevelt once again emphasized that this measure was only an authorization for construction which could certainly be annulled at any time, author Vinson made it clear that he, himself, was in agreement with Admiral Stark's testimony before an executive session of the committee that the proposed two-ocean fleet was necessary to maintain hemispheric defense.[41]

Chairman Vinson did not stop with words, but pushed legislation to provide, as quickly as possible, for the

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[40]Interview with Carl Vinson, November 19, 1967; Louis R. Stockstill, "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," 1961, reprinted in Cong. Rec., CVII, 2488.

[41]New York Times, June 19, 1940, pp. 1, 10; June 23, 1940, p. 1.

ships which would make up this two-ocean navy. Contracts were let and money provided to build warships which FDR had not believed Congress and the American people ready to provide. Incisive action had provided for the ships which Vinson considered necessary for an enhancement of American power.[42]

In addition, at this most opportune time when support for the Navy was at a high point, Vinson attached an amendment to his bill for the two-ocean fleet stating that "no vessel, ship or boat now in the U.S. Navy or being built therefore shall be disposed of by sale, charter, or otherwise, or scrapped without the consent of Congress." He believed that this amendment would give the members of Congress a voice in any disarmament negotiations which might take place when things got back to normal. Once again the specter of the Washington Disarmament Conference came to mind as he declared that he did not want the United States to set an example by scrapping ships as it had in 1922.[43]

The 70 per cent increase bill passed through Congress quickly. It took the House only two hours of debate before passage on June 22nd and the Senate one hour of

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[42] Atlanta Constitution, June 23, 1940, pp. 1, 6. For the debate on this bill, see the Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 9064-78.

[43] Washington Post, June 19, 1940, p. 12; Atlanta Journal, June 23, 1940, p. 3.

debate on July 11th before a vote "without a single audible no." This bill which would create a two-ocean navy had only need of the President's signature. World conditions would acclerate appropriation.[44]

On July 1, 1940, the Navy let contracts for forty-five ships--one auxiliary, eleven cruisers, twenty destroyers, and thirteen submarines to cost $550 million. This was its largest single contract-letting operation for warships in history. Part of this construction was let under the Vinson 11 per cent expansion bill.[45]

TABLE 10.--1940 authorizations.

	June 14, 1940 11% Increase		July 19, 1940 70% Increase (Two-Ocean Navy)	
	Authorized	Built	Authorized	Built
Battleships	2	0	13	0[b]
Carriers	1	3[a]	6	6
Cruisers	5	5	32	17[c]
Destroyers	16	16	101	101
Submarines	6	6	39	39

[a]Need for carriers greater--thus two units taken from battleships.

[b]Seven began--all canceled.

[c]Nine additional finished as light carriers.

[44]Atlanta Constitution, July 11, 1940, p. 1.

[45]New York Times, July 2, 1940, pp. 1, 10; Atlanta Constitution, July 2, 1940, pp. 1, 11.

Even above this Mr. Vinson planned to ask for $175 million as soon as the 70 per cent Two-Ocean Navy bill became law.

Shortly after the President had signed the Two-Ocean Navy bill, every shipyard capable of building warships had reached its peak and within a few weeks, this load was expected to be doubled. This would make necessary an expansion of the ways used to build warships. An evaluation in the New York Times noted that "the greatest naval expansion in our history has started, and it is already benefiting by the costly lessons learned in the unprecedented expansion of the past seven years." These "costly lessons" which often required radical changes in specific ships were over and the Vinson Building Schedule was providing a new fleet.[46]

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[46] New York Times, July 21, 1940, pp. 11, 13. Appropriations were provided under a succession of laws. Frank Knox wrote later (when Secretary of the Navy) that orders totaling over $5 billion were placed within two hours after the President had signed the appropriations for both the 11 per cent increase and 70 per cent increase. Frank Knox, The United States Navy in National Defense (Washington, 1941), p. 7.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAR YEARS

Although France had fallen in June of 1940, Britain held out. It was a slim thread which maintained Britain during the second half of 1940; but that slim thread did the work of a mighty rope. Now that Britain had just barely escaped (though it still faced a bleak future), many Americans began to reflect on their own predicament. The Nazi effort was not just a German movement to simply take land which rightfully belonged to them because Germans lived in the coveted land or to enlarge their holdings to provide necessary living space; it was seen by many as a threat to American well being and even American independence.

While Hamilton Fish, Republican Congressman from New York, had formerly castigated Carl Vinson's position on the necessity of providing for an adequate national defense, he praised Vinson in February 1941 for being "largely responsible for our having the biggest navy in the world today." Fish emphatically underscored his change of position in a speech in the House of Representatives: "I would say to the distinguished gentleman [Vinson] who is

the father and sponsor of our great Navy--and I cannot give him too much credit, he deserves it, and I hope the American people realize that he more than any one man is responsible for giving us this Navy--that is our first line of defense." This initial contact with an enemy would no longer be countered by the British Navy, concluded Fish, but by "the Navy built by the gentleman from Georgia." His comments were followed by applause from the members of the House. The Fish reaction was certainly most startling inasmuch as it came from a former opponent of Vinson's long range program for building up America's naval strength.[1]

Figures for January 1941 had borne out the New Yorker's praises for his colleague, Mr. Vinson. The Navy had begun construction on 17 battleships, 12 aircraft carriers, 54 cruisers, 80 submarines, and 205 destroyers--368 ships veritably constituting a New American fleet. Furthermore, the United States would complete 31 ships--2 battleships, 1 carrier, 10 submarines, and 18 destroyers in 1941 and had scheduled 84 ships--1 battleship, 8 cruisers, 25 submarines, and 50 destroyers for completion in 1942. At this rate, it would not be long before America would have a two-ocean Navy and one fleet could be spared from operations elsewhere to deal very quickly with a

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[1]Cong. Rec., LXXXVII, 513, 1389.

Japanese fleet which could never keep up with the output from American shipyards.

TABLE 11.--Warship construction 1941 and 1942.

	BB	CV	CA-CL	DD	SS	Total
Under construction January 1, 1941	17	12	54	205	80	368
Completed 1st half of 1941	2			8	8	
Completed 2nd half of 1941		1		10	2	31
Scheduled for 1942 completion	1		8	50	25	84
Totals	3	1	8	68	35	115

Source: Cong. Rec., LXXXVII, 6130 ff.

In the meantime, the Vinson program had outgrown American production facilities. During the month of November 1941, a warship a day was launched, including the powerful battleship Indiana and the light cruiser Cleveland class prototype. Whenever a way became empty, a keel was laid; however, there were not enough ways to begin to keep up the pace.[2]

After December 7, 1941, nothing was the same. After the initial shock, as expected, various Congressmen saw the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in divergent ways.

[2]New York Times, December 3, 1941, p. 1.

Representative John Dingell, Democrat of Michigan, announced that he would demand that court martial proceedings be instituted against the five ranking army and naval officers whom he considered negligent in preparing our armed forces in Hawaii for the impending attack. Carl Vinson denounced this threat as "a cheap effort to get newspaper publicity." He was joined by other members in opposing their colleague from Michigan. He considered December 10th, three days after the debacle at Pearl Harbor, "no time," as he said, "to rock the boat."[3]

Response to War

It was more important to turn his attention to new legislation which would provide a 30 per cent increase in the Navy's combat strength. Declaring that hearings would open the following Monday, December 13th, Chairman Vinson prophesied that "we will put it right through." This program would contrast with previous Vinson authorizations because the bill would not specify the types of ships which the Navy would be obligated to build. Having said that the Navy knew the kinds of ships which it must build

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[3] Cong. Rec., LXXXVII, 9565-66; New York Times, December 10, 1941, p. 7; Washington Post, December 10, 1941, p. 4. For further Vinson views on Pearl Harbor, see Washington Post, December 16, 1941, p. 2 and New York Times, January 27, 1942, p. 4.

to win the war, author Vinson was willing to leave these decisions to that department.[4]

Vinson's bill would authorize 900,000 tons of additional fighting ships, half of which would be finished by the end of 1943. When he commented on the timing and the motivation behind this current legislation, he emphasized that the House had received and had been developing this bill for some months and thus Pearl Harbor had not "commanded" it.[5] It was still a pre-war naval authorization project. This Vinson program passed easily as America was now in war. Such action gave additional insurance that most of the ships used during the Second World War should be Vinson ships as authorized, or as sought to be authorized, before the United States entered the war.

Chairman Vinson continued this steadily enlarging American defense program in 1942 through legislation to build additional ships. Describing this new authorization as "absolutely necessary," he declared that it would "help round out a program which was only now beginning to indicate the tremendous possibilities of the American shipbuilding industry." His interest here was in an $845 million appropriations bill.[6]

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[4]Washington Post, December 13, 1941, p. 2.

[5]Cong. Rec., LXXXVII, 9852.

[6]New York Times, January 8, 1942, p. 17.

Following through on his contention that carriers and submarines would be the warships of the future, Vinson commented on his latest measure for building ships after it had been signed by the President. Although this law did not specifically mention undersea craft, Vinson assured Congress that it would double American submarine strength. The President had been given such clearance to build the types and tonnages of combat vessels as he might deem necessary for the successful prosecution of the war.[7]

To build up our carrier strength, Vinson, in an interview, indicated on June 1st that the Navy would soon ask for a multimillion dollar program to build eleven carriers. In an interview he suggested that the United States would construct an "ultimate fleet of carriers," which would carry planes in overwhelming numbers to spearhead attacks on all sea fronts. He declared that the Navy would build carriers and would augment them with guard destroyers and long range submarines to cut into enemy supply lines. Although he was not ready to sound the death knell of the battleship, he gave first priority to the building of many more carriers.[8]

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[7]Cong. Rec., LXXXVIII, 3513; New York Times, April 15, 1942, p. 1; April 16, 1942; May 14, 1942, p. 5.

[8]New York Times, June 1, 1942, p. 7; June 3, 1942, p. 11; June 4, 1942, p. 1.

Even before the Battle of Midway in June of 1942, Vinson warned that the carriers now in commission were "only the beginnings for an all-out job." While noting that the already authorized building program was ahead of schedule, he declared the need for additional carriers to be "strikingly obvious." Vinson believed that both the Atlantic and the Pacific theaters of action, and eventually even action in the Indian Ocean, would require aircraft carriers to spearhead any attack which the United States might make.[9]

On June 2nd, Rear Admiral A. H. Van Keuren, chief of the Bureau of Ships testified before the House Naval Affairs Committee in an executive session. He indicated that future plans should stress carriers, cruisers, destroyers and other types which could protect convoys. The most striking omission was the lack of any plans for the building of battleships. The committee authorized the construction of an additional 500,000 tons of auxiliary vessels at an anticipated cost of about $1.1 billion.

Declaring that he too was fully satisfied with this enlarged naval shipbuilding program, Chairman Vinson reported that ninety-nine warships and a large number of converted aircraft carriers would be commissioned by the end of the calendar year. Having noted that the present

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[9] Ibid., June 1, 1942, p. 7. In contrast, an aviation expert, Major Alexander P. de Seversky wrote an article for the June 19, 1942 Washington Post entitled "War Proves Aircraft Carrier is Outmoded," p. 2.

naval building program was not just on schedule, but ahead of schedule, he said that he hoped that the rate of production for naval vessels would continue to increase during 1943. Mass production methods would almost insure such an increase.[10]

In order to augment the short supply of American carriers, Vinson indicated to the House, everything possible was being done to convert as many merchant ships as possible into auxiliary aircraft carriers. Although he did not disclose the precise number, such converted ships would shortly be ready for service. He hoped that a considerably enlarged program could be implemented the following year. The Navy was "fully conscious" of the major, or even decisive, role which the aircraft carriers and their planes had begun to play in the conflict in the Pacific.[11]

Maintaining that the Navy had not lost interest or confidence in the battleship's "long-range value," Vinson declared that "the Navy has considered the battleship as the backbone of its fleet, and the fleet has been built in accordance with that idea." But his own views were changing: "the backbone of the Navy today is the aircraft carrier." With destroyers, cruisers and submarines grouped around, the carrier had become "the spearhead" of

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[10]New York Times, June 3, 1942, p. 11; Washington Post, June 4, 1942, p. 1.

[11]Atlanta Constitution, June 19, 1942, p. 1.

the task force. Consequently, five superdreadnoughts of 60,000 tons were left in the blueprint stage and priority would be placed on aircraft carriers. Even some of the cruiser hulls would be completed as light carriers.[12]

While the battle of Midway raged in the Pacific in June 1942, Carl Vinson presented the most extensive bill for naval building ever to be considered by Congress. This $8.3 billion contemplated expenditure would double the striking power of the United States Navy. If carried through to its completion, the program would add five hundred fighting ships and eight hundred patrol, mine-laying and tending craft to the fleet. His new bill would also authorize 500,000 tons of aircraft carriers, 500,000 tons of cruisers, and 900,000 tons of destroyers and other escort vessels.[13]

This June 1942 legislation was different from the 1934, 1938, and 1940 Vinson programs. First, although some auxiliaries had been authorized in these prior schedules, it would provide substantial numbers of non-basic fighting ships. The greatest proportion of these would be patrol and escort vessels which would be used to combat the German U-boat menace. Second, "the bare bones" of

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[12]Atlanta Constitution, June 17, 1942, p. 1; New York Times, June 19, 1942, p. 5. See also Gladstone Williams, "Washington Parade," Atlanta Constitution, June 17, 1942, p. 8; June 20, 1942, p. 4.

[13]Gladstone Williams, "Washington Parade," Atlanta Constitution, June 10, 1942, p. 4.

tonnage was designated rather than the exact number of ships because of security reasons and because of the uncertainty of the particular type or even size of carrier, cruiser, destroyer, or escort vessel to be built. Last, there was a marked ambiguity even this early whether, considering the enormous shipbuilding programs already underway and the anticipated acceleration of the American war effort, considerable numbers of these ships would be completed.

This new program, though, was essential to the continuous American war effort. It would emphasize the new role being given to the aircraft carrier, the backbone of the modern fleet, and would provide a Navy which by the end of 1946 would surpass the ships and striking power of "any combination of foes." Inasmuch as only a relatively small amount--94 tons--of the 3.7 million tons of warships authorized for the two-ocean Navy in recent years remained yet to be put on the ways, authorization of a naval expansion schedule meant, particularly under war conditions, appropriations.

At that time, one million tons had already been put in service since 1935 and 2.6 million tons of fighting ships and auxiliary vessels were being built. The Navy had assured the House that there would be room in ship yards for additional vessels. Moreover, many of the smaller craft could be built in yards available on the Great Lakes, the Mississippi, and various gulfs throughout the United States. Hopefully, construction facilities

would be readily available for the largest single naval expansion program ever undertaken by any single nation in the history of the world.[14]

In contrast to the First, Second, and Third Vinson Bills of 1934, 1938, and 1940, this new legislation of 1942 was passed after less than one hour's debate and then sent on to the Senate. Although the previous Vinson legislation had passed in the House with little difficulty, this enormous and costly program passed unanimously: 316-0. Times were certainly different for Vinson naval expansion programs.

Profits Investigations

Despite the fame of the Truman Committee, created by the Senate in 1941 to investigate the national defense program, its functions were largely confined to Army contracts. The Vinson Committee retained the duty of making any serious review of Navy contracts. That apparent discrimination between the two services reflected a belief in Congress that the specialized Naval Affairs Committee, under Vinson, could investigate excess profits on naval contracts more effectively.[15]

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[14] Cong. Rec., LXXXVIII, 5374.

[15] For a discussion of Naval Affair Committee investigations, see Albion, The N.A.C., p. 1228.

Where one should assume that a committee which seemed to be a spokesman of the Navy would be lax in its search for profiteering and fraud, Vinson proved to be quite as alert a watchdog as Senator Harry S. Truman. His committee forced many companies, including Kaiser Shipbuilding and the Ford Motor Company to turn back monies they had received which were considered by the government to be excess profits. According to Mr. Vinson, "We forced the return of more excess profits than the Truman Committee." He added, "The record down in Washington will prove it."[16]

Newsweek of February 2, 1942 noted that Carl Vinson--"a long, loud, and onetime lonely advocate of a big Navy" and a "politically adroit Georgia Democrat" had a different problem to meet. He no longer had a "selling job on his hands," but must now determine whether the Navy was getting its money's worth on the various transactions with builders and manufacturers. Even as early as June of 1942, Vinson could announce the saving of $675 by renegotiating contracts.[17]

The committee investigated many firms operating as war contract brokers to determine whether excess profits

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[16]Interview with Carl Vinson, Milledgeville, Georgia, November 19, 1967. See Donald Riddle, The Truman Committee (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers, 1964), for comparisons and contrasts on the two committees.

[17]Atlanta Constitution, June 14, 1942, p. 4A.

were being made. It compared the 1939 commissions with those of 1942 for the following representative concerns in this category:

Shirley, Alcott & Nichols	67,072	1,104,844
W. Lester Baker and wife	27,957	261,947
Luther M. Bolton	2,175	123,604
S. Douglas Gibson	6,809	138,796
Washington Engineering Co.	60,644	253,193
Stone & Stone (did not exist prior to 1941)		125,371

Although agents of this type had performed services of value to the government, the committee reported that commissions and fees granted "appeared to be almost uniformly disproportionate to the value of their services, measured by any reasonable standard." These fees were, the report emphasized, paid ultimately by the government and thus the government needed better protection.[18]

It was also the prerogative of this group to renegotiate contracts when appropriate. In one sector alone, that of machine tool distributors, 4,216 cases were assigned to be investigated by this committee. As of October 1, 1944, the committee had disposed of over half these cases determining that 1,414 should be canceled and not be subject to renegotiation, 257 should be cleared as not having charged excessive fees, and 563 should be

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[18]U.S., Congress, House, Report 2056 (1944), p. 139.

declared excess profits cases under which over $31 million would be returned to the government when full adjustment was completed. Other investigations were made of ordnance manufacturers such as the York Safe and Lock Company, York, Pennsylvania and Texasteel, Port Arthur, Texas and of aircraft companies such as Brewster Aeronautical Corporation, Curtiss-Wright Aviation Corporation, Edward G. Budd Manufacturing Corporation of Philadelphia and Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation where rather difficult situations had to be ironed out before these companies could participate to their fullest in the war effort or be removed from productive expectancy.[19]

In addition, members of the committee made pertinent inspections of many navy shipyards and private shipbuilders constructing warships. Among those investigated were the following:

Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston
Hingham Plants of Bethlehem Steel
Walsh-Kaiser Shipyard Company, Providence, R. I.
Bath Iron Works, Bath, Maine
Electric Boat Company, New London, Connecticut
Brown Shipbuilding Company, Houston, Texas
Mare Island Navy Yard, California
Los Angeles Shipbuilding and Drydock Company

In each case, investigators found fundamentally satisfactory conditions.[2]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 141, 156-87.

[20] Ibid., pp. 187-95.

After due investigation, the Vinson Naval Affairs Committee renegotiated contracts for 103 warships (3 battleships, 2 carriers, 11 light cruisers, 67 destroyers, and 20 submarines) and cut profits from $124 million, or 17 per cent down to $76 million or 10 per cent profit.[21] Thus the concerns involved returned excess profits of $48 million. Chairman Vinson's 400-page report showed the average profit made by naval contractors to be 7.99 per cent.[22] The profits on the various types of naval construction would have been much higher if the Vinson Committee had not applied pressure to prevent wasteful spending.[23]

Vinson Ships

No destroyers had been built by the United States between 1922 and 1933. Hence, the ships of this type which were still in commission when Vinson became Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, were World War One ships. Of these 154 four-stack destroyers which served in the Second World War, only 31 retained their destroyer

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[21] Ibid., pp. 196-97.

[22] "The Congress, The Profiteering," Time, XXXIX, January 26, 1942, p. 14; Newsweek, February 2, 1942, pp. 38-9.

[23] However, for a critical view of the Vinson report as well as Congressional reports in general, see Raymond Moley, "The Beam in the Eye of Congress," Newsweek, February 2, 1942, p. 64.

designation in the Navy throughout their service in the war (pre-Coral Sea) before being downgraded by conversion to fast transports, mine craft, or plane tenders. Of the remainder, 50 were transferred to Britain in the destroyer-bases deal, 31 became fast troop transports, 22 were downgraded to miscellaneous auxiliaries, 15 were converted to minesweepers and 1 to a minelayer, and 4 became seaplane tenders.[24]

Some very creditable action by some of these old destroyers harrassed the Japanese invasion of the Netherlands East Indies. However, after the ABDA (Australian, British, Dutch, American) disaster of Java, four stackers were used primarily for escort, convoy, patrol, training, and duties called for by their changed status. Here they performed well and were most essential to the winning of the war. However, they rarely acted in regular destroyer capacities such as firing torpedoes or guns against enemy warships or escorting friendly cruisers, carriers, or battleships.[25]

The Ward that sank a Japanese submarine outside the harbor an hour before the attack on Pearl Harbor was a

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[24]Navy History Division, Navy Department, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (Washington: Navy Department, 1959), Vol. I, pp. 282-96, hereafter cited as Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships; Morison, Vol. XV, Supplement and General Index, pp. 38-40.

[25]Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I, II, and III, many citations under List of Ships detailing the history of individual destroyers; Morison, Vol. I-XV, passim.

typical four-stacker. Built in seventeen and one-half days to set a record in the construction frenzy of 1918, it had a top speed of about 30 knots and was not able to keep up with the carriers, the cruisers, or even the new destroyers. In addition, its guns could not be elevated to serve as antiaircraft weapons making them antiques compared to the dual purpose 5-inch 38's of the modern destroyers. Thus, it was no wonder that the functions of attacking the enemy fleet or defenses and escorting or helping to defend the American cruisers, carriers, and battleships were taken over by the 16 1916/1933-34 destroyers, the 16 NRA 1933 authorizations, and the 415 destroyers built under Vinson authorizations.[26]

The situation was much the same for submarines. Six S-boats made the long run from Panama to Brisbane, Australia in March 1942. Two of these nearly twenty-year-old ships, the S-43 and the S-47 had been overhauled that year at the Philadelphia Naval Yard. However, as Theodore Roscoe wrote in United States Submarine Operations in World War II, "no one expected an overhaul to modernize elderly submarines constructed with single hulls riveted fuel tanks which tended to leak and leave oil slicks." Besides, "modern submarines could not be made of old-timers whose bow and stern planes were noisy--boats with

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[26]Walter Karig, Battle Report (New York: Rinehart, 1946), Vol. I, p. 7; Morison, Vol. I-XV, passim.

only two motors to get them out from under sharp-eared DD's."[27] Joining the submarines which were able to retreat from the Philippines, this entire class of subs was among the few United States defenders of Australia in these early critical days after the debacle in the Java Sea. However, temperature, humidity, and mechanical difficulties along with inborn limitations (they were defensive craft incapable of extensive operations deep in enemy-held territory) compromised the effectiveness of the S-boats.[28]

As other newer submarines (Vinson authorizations) began to relieve them, some S-boats were transferred to the quieter Alaskan theater. "Hindered by antiquated gear, two engine speed, and poor habitability, the S-boats scored no sinkings that summer. However, they conducted daring patrols, kept the enemy under periscope observation, chased Japanese fishermen away from the Aleutian runs and put a strain on the enemy's supply lines." In contrast, the relieving new fleet boats shortly after their arrival began to sink enemy ships.[29]

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[27]Theodore Roscoe, United States Submarine Operations in World War II (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1949), p. 115.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid., p. 138.

Although the old S-44, her hull leaking oil and her engines tired, sank the returning Japanese cruiser Kako to extract the first revenge for Savo Island, only one other major Japanese warship, the destroyer Natsushio, was sunk by a S-boat. The pre-1933 Nautilus sank one destroyer while the four 1933 NRA ships sank no major Japanese warships. On the other hand, fleet subs from Vinson programs sank one battleship, four carriers, three escort carriers, ten cruisers, thirty-five destroyers, and twenty-three submarines and were given combination sinking credit for one carrier, one cruiser and one destroyer.[30]

By late autumn of 1942, nearly all of the old S-boats had left the fighting areas to serve at submarine training or anti-submarine warfare schools. The Pacific was left for the fleet submarines authorized by Vinson legislation. No S-boats scored among the top twenty-five individual submarines in either the number of Japanese ships sunk or in total tonnage sunk. These records were taken by twenty-nine ships (most ships in the top twenty-five ranked high in both categories), all of which were Vinson authorizations. Most (seventeen of twenty-nine) were authorized and had their keels laid before Pearl Harbor. Only one of the twenty-nine, the Spadefish, could be considered post-United States entrance into the Second World War. One cannot disregard the magnificent

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[30] Ibid., pp. 153, 527-65.

job done by the S-boats, but the Vinson authorizations took a greater toll of Japanese ships.[31]

In the ships authorized in the 1920's from the five basic categories, only the pre-1933 heavy cruisers and the carrier Ranger provided substantial support for the fleet throughout the war. In contrast to the ten Omaha class light cruisers which usually were on less strenuous Alaska, Panama, or South Atlantic duty, the sixteen heavy cruisers authorized during the 1920's were used heavily in fleet action. These sixteen, depleted by the loss of seven during the war, had to suffice because only four heavy cruisers were commissioned in 1943 and only one in 1944. The eight commissioned in 1945 were too late for extensive operations.[32]

The general cruiser program for the years after FDR took office involved seven separate authorizations: those of 1933, 1934, 1938, June 1940, July 1940, 1941, and 1942. The NRA 1933 authorization and the 1st Vinson Act each called for four cruisers and these eight were used during the war, all of the twelve Second Vinson authorizations

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[31] Ibid., pp. 160, 525; Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I, II, III, passim.

[32] Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I, pp. 210-19; Morison, Vol. I-XV, passim. Even earlier, February 9, 1938, T.R.B., writing in The New Republic noted that foreign observers had always looked on the Omaha class ships "as hideous mistakes, obsolescent before they were launched." See p. 17 that issue.

saw action, the two Vinson Acts of 1940 authorized twenty-three cruisers of which fourteen were in the war, four were commissioned early enough to have been used in the war if necessary, and five were too late for war, and the Vinson 1941 program authorized two cruisers, one of which participated in the war and one was too late for war.[33]

The last cruiser program involving the Second World War (that of 1942) authorized thirty-six cruisers. Only four of these were available in time for action while fifteen were not completed in time, and seventeen were canceled. As it turned out then, only four of the forty-three cruisers built after 1933 and used during the Second World War were actually post-Pearl Harbor ships. Furthermore, of these four 1942 cruisers, only the Wilkes Barre was done in time for Okinawa, while the Atlanta was not available until May, and the Dayton and Chicago did not arrive off Japan until July, 1945.[34]

The time factor for the building of battleships was even more startling than that for cruisers. The First Vinson Act (1934) authorized seven battleships, the Second Vinson Act (1938) three, and the Third Vinson Act (1940) seven. The first ten vessels were completed and became an essential part of task forces during the war. Vinson

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[33] Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I, pp. 210-18.

[34] Ibid., pp. 218-20.

had been right when he had advocated replacing battleships to fulfill the quota set by the earlier conferences. Further delay would have reduced the possibility of the battleships built in the pre-Pearl Harbor period being available for action. The last seven were canceled--five of them as early as July 21, 1943, one on August 12, 1945, and the last, the Kentucky, lingered longer until canceled in February 1947. He had also been right in encouraging a shift from battleships to carriers.[35]

None of the fifteen battleships from the Washington Conference limitations schedule ever saw the type of fleet action for which the battleships had been designed. The Japanese sank two old battleships and damaged six others at Pearl Harbor. The other seven were either kept in the Atlantic for convoy duty or formed Battleship Division 1 under Admiral W. S. Pye. This division patrolled between California and Hawaii and, as the war went on, these battleships were reinforced by the resurrected veterans of Pearl Harbor in the essential shore bombardments of the pending invasion locations. In the meantime, the ten battleships built under Vinson authorizations joined the fleet to participate in action against the enemy and in

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[35] Ibid., pp. 198-99; Annual Report, Secretary of the Navy, 1933, p. 1; Masanori Ito and Roger Pineau, The End of the Japanese Navy (New York: Norton, 1962), p. 16. For a vivid description of America's poor preparations for war, see Thomas A. Bailey, The Man in the Street (New York, 1948), pp. 49-87.

protecting the carriers of the task forces formed throughout the war.[36]

In general, the American carrier building schedule followed that of the other major types. The Lexington and Saratoga were 1916 battle cruiser authorizations which were converted to carriers while on the ways and the Ranger, the first United States carrier built from keel up as such, was a 1929 authorization. The following carrier authorizations were made after 1932 and during the pre-Pearl Harbor period: 1933--two, 1st Vinson (1934)--two, 2nd Vinson (1938)--one, and 3rd Vinson (1940)--ten. All of these carriers participated in strikes against Japanese targets. Of the eight aircraft carriers from the 1941 and 1942 authorizations completed by 1945, only three, the Bennington, the Bon Homme Richard, and the Shangri-La arrived in the war zone in time even for Okinawa and the bombings of the Japanese home islands in the first half of 1945. Four of the other five completed during 1945 were used during battle for the first time in the Korean War. Of the fifteen first-round Vinson authorizations all but one fought in the Pacific during the Second World War.[37]

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[36]Morison, Vol. I-XV, passim.

[37]Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, Vol. I, pp. 118, 140; Vol. II, pp. 468-73; Karig, Battle Report, Vol. VI, pp. 461, 470. Some carriers whose keels were laid in 1944 and 1945 were 1934 Vinson authorizations.

Not only were Vinson ships more available as just detailed, but they increasingly participated in the Pacific sea battles. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, America had present in the Pacific at least nine battleships, three carriers, twenty-two cruisers, fifty-seven destroyers, and thirty-five submarines. Of these fifty-two (nine battleships, two carriers, thirteen cruisers, nineteen destroyers, and three submarines) were pre-1933 ships, eleven destroyers were 1916 authorizations which were completed in 1932, 1933, or 1934, seventeen (one carrier, one cruiser, eleven destroyers, and four submarines) were from Roosevelt's 1933 NRA authorization and forty-six (two cruisers, sixteen destroyers, and twenty-eight submarines) were Vinson ships. Although the Vinson warships were almost as numerous as the pre-1933 ships and were almost three times as numerous as the 1933 NRA authorizations, the real strength of the United States fleet was still in ships for which neither Vinson nor Roosevelt could have claimed to be the primary instigators. This situation still held true when, after Allied fortunes had reached their nadir during the first quarter of 1942, American ships won a strategic victory during the Battle of the Coral Sea while losing a tactical decision. As only six destroyers were Vinson authorizations while both carriers, the six heavy cruisers, and seven of the destroyers were pre-Vinson ships, the greatest power was still that provided from pre-Vinson ships.

TABLE 12.--Vinson ships available.

	Total		Battleships		Carriers		Cruisers		Destroyers		Submarines	
	Total	Vinson	Total	Vinson	Total	Vinson	Total	Vinson	Total	Vinson	Total	Vinson
Pacific Strength 12/7/41	126	46	9	--	3	--	22	2	57	16	35	28
Coral Sea	21	6	--	--	2	--	6	--	13	6	--	--
Midway	49	25	--	--	3	1	8	1	19	11	19	12
Guadalcanal Engagements	72	43	3	3	4	2	17	5	48	33	--	--
Gilberts	96	71	12	5	11	9	14	6	59	58	--	--
Marshalls	129	100	15	8	12	10	18	8	84	68	--	--
Philippine Sea	134	125	7	7	14	13	20	16	65	61	28	28
Leyte Gulf	239	205	12	6	17	16	21	12	161	143	29	28

However, in the American victory at Midway, the United States used twenty-five Vinson vessels--one carrier, one cruiser, eleven destroyers, and twelve submarines and twenty-four pre-Vinson legislation ships--two carriers, seven cruisers, eight destroyers, and seven submarines. Less than six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, just over half of the warships in one of the most decisive fleet engagements of the war (some say the most decisive) were Vinson authorizations. As greater numbers of these new Vinson authorized ships became available, they would help in turning the tide of naval warfare in the Pacific.[38]

After Guadalcanal was invaded in August of 1942, the naval battles of Savo Island, Eastern Solomons, Cape Esperance, Santa Cruz, and the November clashes off Guadalcanal helped determine the outcome of the struggle for this strategic island. Of the mass of ships used in these battles, all three battleships, two of the four carriers, five of seventeen cruisers, and thirty-three of the forty-eight destroyers were Vinson ships. This pattern continued in the spring and summer of 1943 as the United States Navy moved up the Solomons ladder through four battles--Kula Gulf, Lolombangara, Vella Gulf and Vella Lavella--in which over 90 per cent of the participating ships were Vinson authorizations.

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[38]Carl Vinson's reaction to the American victory at Midway showed his optimism--it was "just what we expected as soon as we came in contact with the Japanese." Washington Post, June 7, 1942, p. 2.

When the American fleet focused its guns and bombs on the Gilberts in November and December of 1943, twenty-four pre-1933 warships, one NRA 1933 ship--the Enterprise--and seventy-one Vinson authorizations provided the naval power for this first move through the Central Pacific. This heavy balance in favor of the Vinson warships continued when the Americans invaded the Marshalls in early 1944--27 pre-1933, 2 NRA and 100 Vinson authorizations. In the invasion of the Marianas, the ratio became even more weighted in favor of Vinson construction.

In the fighting after Midway, the United States Navy defeated the Japanese most devastatingly in the Battles of the Philippine Sea and Leyte Gulf. In the former, the greatest carrier battle of the war, the American Fifth Fleet committed 7 Vinson battleships, 13 Vinson carriers and the NRA Enterprise, 16 Vinson cruisers and 4 pre-1933 cruisers, 61 Vinson destroyers, 1 NRA 1933, and 3 pre-1933 authorized destroyers and 28 Vinson authorized submarines. Admiral Raymond Spruance's fleet contained an overall total of 134 ships, of which 125 (93%) were Vinson ships with only 7 pre-1933 and only 2 1933 NRA authorizations.

Never after the October 1944 Battle of Leyte Gulf, the second major Japanese defeat in four months, did a balanced, dangerous Japanese naval fleet sally forth to do battle against the American surface forces. Again the Vinson authorizations followed the previous pattern--

If the relatively few opponents to Vinson's authorization bills of the 1930's had had their way until December 7, 1941, or even worse until June 1940, a crash construction program of untried ship designs could not have provided a fleet sufficient to drive Japanese forces from the Pacific by 1945. Small wonder that the Georgia country lawyer was considered by many a hero.

Of course, there was another side of the argument little mentioned until now. Without the Vinson Navy Roosevelt and Hull might have decided not to resist Japan's policies in Southeast Asia. Vinson ships may have been a key factor in Roosevelt's foreign policy on the eve of war.

Basically though, the head start which the Vinson plans had begun to provide in 1935 bore the fruit of victory in the summer and fall of 1944. Although aided by some ships from pre-1933 and 1933 NRA authorizations, the bulk of the fleet action at this time was taken by Vinson authorizations as originated in the First Vinson Act of 1934 and as modified by the Vinson legislation of 1938 and 1940.

CHAPTER VII

RESISTANCE TO RETRENCHMENT

Just a week after American troops invaded Luzon in January of 1945, Chairman Carl Vinson introduced H.R. 626 to provide $99 million "for places to put up this Navy instead of destroying it."[1] This gigantic Navy had been a long time being built and Vinson did not want to see the United States emasculate itself by reducing this very potent force for promoting our defense and implementing our foreign policy. Only Iwo Jima and Okinawa lay athwart the invasion of the Japanese home islands themselves. Consideration could be given to the eventual disposition of the fleet which had been so effective a force against the Japanese in the past two and a half years. In this impending post-war era, as in most such periods, it would be difficult to maintain a strong fleet as the tendency had been for the United States to end a war and then to take its chances. The aftermath of the Second World War was to be no exception to the rule and Carl Vinson was the man most responsible for attempting to maintain such naval

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[1] Cong. Rec., XCI, 302.

strength as might be needed by the United States to play what he considered its proper role in the post-war world.[2]

Four months later, on May 10th, Vinson took further steps to bolt the door. Through his bill, H.R. 3180, which would impose "restrictions on the disposition of naval vessels and facilities necessary to the maintenance of the combatant strength and efficiency of the Navy," he hoped to prevent another 1922 Washington Conference. He had long believed that parley had almost proved to be America's undoing. The Japanese Navy would certainly have had a different foe to deal with, he thought, if the United States had not been so altruistic in the 1920's.[3]

He planned to keep in Congressional hands the power to declare as surplus property any naval ships over 1,000 tons. Not only would this prevent the disposition of battleships, as in the 1922 treaty, but it would require Congressional assent to scrap cruisers, destroyers, and

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[2]See Vincent Davis, Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), for the detailed background to planning a postwar United States Navy. Vinson had defended the Navy in the most important hearings to date, the Woodrum Committee sessions of 1944. Davis, Ibid., pp. 58, 60 thought that the Navy had won a tactical victory. He noted that "the Woodrum Committee of the House of Representatives was not the best possible arena in which to hold this match [between pro-unification and anti-unification forces] if for no other reason than because Carl Vinson would be on hand," p. 61.

[3]Cong. Rec., XCI, 4464-65, 4776, 10152; Davis, Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, p. 211.

submarines and even drydocks and destroyers escorts.[4] Congressional assent could mean Carl Vinson's consent: for he all but dominated naval matters in Congress.

In any course of action to insure Vinson fleet standards, early groundwork was essential. Such advanced planning and maneuvering would give the strong fleet advocate the best opportunity for success. The United States and its allies were approaching victory in a war, one phase of which required large fleets and carrier based aircraft to put the American marine and soldier in position to eliminate Japanese forces at widely spaced strongholds in the Pacific. This effort eventually undercut the Japanese and put them in a predicament which was ameliorated only by surrender; for the Japanese this was certainly a negative improvement of their national posture.

Now the momentum for keeping available the greatest fleet in the history of the world was present and naval advocate Vinson had his most advantageous break; there remained only the actual capitalization on this recent naval participation in the Pacific victory. If the crest of a wave could be ridden in to a sizable fleet, Vinson might be able to prevent the erosion of his years of achievement. Congressional action might freeze the size of this enormous fleet and, consequently, prohibit another

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[4] Cong. Rec., XCI, 5344-70.

Washington Conference. The man who had the power to prevent any such reduction was Carl Vinson.

The current situation dictated that the fleet would be pared down. The Japanese, German, and Italian fleets were no longer a menace to American security. The Russians had no fleet worthy of our apprehension and the British navy was no longer the most powerful in the world. Britain's economic situation demanded that its fleet be reduced. In a former day, the most important purpose for maintaining a fleet was to fight an enemy fleet. Now no fleet existed which could command the retention of the immense array of ships which the Vinson program had provided.

He believed that the United States Navy should not abdicate its powerful position, but must retain almost its full strength in order to fulfill its obligations. In addition to the time-honored goals of dealing with an enemy fleet, protecting supply lines, and carrying armed forces to areas of enemy control, this war had added the task of covering invasions with carrier-based planes and a new foreign policy had accentuated an attitude to stand in the way of any future aggressor bent on absorbing a neighbor. In Vinson's eyes every part of the Navy's strength was indispensable.

Following Japan's formal surrender in September 1945, Vinson and Senator Walsh introduced in their

respective houses a proposal which was aimed at maintaining the United States Navy at just a very slight reduction in strength. This greatest fleet in the history of the world included 1,308 available, building, or authorized ships. Through the chairmen of the Naval Affairs Committees, the Navy was placing "its peacetime hopes and plans at the mercy of Congress." They proposed a reduction of only 229 ships. With a fighting fleet of 1,079 ships, "big and little, and the necessary personnel and bases to back them up," the United States Navy would have a fighting force "superior to any that could be ranged against us in the foreseeable future."[5]

This fleet would still be a very formidable force. Compared to the Navy we maintained at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack--16 battleships, 7 carriers, 37 cruisers, 172 destroyers, and 113 submarines--the residual force which Vinson sought consisted of 18 superdreadnaughts (modern battleships), 116 aircraft carriers, 82 cruisers, 367 destroyers, 296 destroyer escorts, and 200 submarines. Vinson planned that one-third of that force would be at sea or ready for such contingency on short notice, one-third would be partially manned and held in reserve, and

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[5]Cong. Rec., XCI, 5541; Atlanta Constitution, eptember 15, 1945, p. 1; New York Times, September 10, 945, p. 1; September 17, 1945, p. 11; Washington Post, eptember 17, 1945, p. 5. See Davis, Postwar Defense olicy and the U.S. Navy, p. 202, for an excellent art on the seven plans for retaining ships in the vy.

the remaining third would be decommissioned but available should need arise.[6]

In announcing hearings that would begin in October 1945, he notified all concerned that his committee would not confine its consideration to just the actual number of ships which should form the fleet, or to just the determination of the ships which would be built in the future. It would go into the fundamental question of formulating a study of "the entire structure of the naval establishment" required in the future. The House Naval Affairs Committee faced two basic problems--first, to determine "whether the best sea defense of the future will lie in the number of big battlewagons or fast cruisers a nation has, or in the number of planes it can put into the air" and second, to ascertain the effect of "new weapons of war employing the principles used in the robot and atomic bombs." American strength must be considered, in part, in the light of all new dimensions of power.[7]

Although Vinson spoke of such an evaluation of the American defense emphasis, he knew what its military-naval posture should be. As he emphasized on September 10th, the need for adequate defense involved, in spite of our possession of the atomic bomb, a big Navy and a big Army.

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[6] Cong. Rec., XCI, 10151-59; Washington Post, September 17, 1945, p. 5.

[7] Ibid.

The United States could not afford to let a modern technology relatively untested displace the fundamental defense needs for a Navy and an Army.[8] He had introduced House Concurrent Resolution 80 to announce the sense of Congress on the size and composition of the post-war Navy. Although the House supported Vinson's attempt to prevent wholesale scrapping, the Senate never acted and it remained only a House announcement.[9]

He was successful in preventing the scuttling or scrapping of any completed warships. Aside from the few vessels used in testing the effects of the atomic bomb in 1946, the most powerful fleet in the history of the world was kept available, either in active status or mothballed for quick utilization. Vinson hoped that the United States, using these ships as supplemented by the continuous authorizations which he, the last President Roosevelt, and the Navy Department had fought for, would never find itself unprepared for a sea war. When he retired from the House eighteen years later, substantial numbers of mothballed ships built during the Second World War were still on hand. In the meantime, over 380 of these mothballed vessels had been recommissioned and placed on active duty during the Korean emergency. It has been estimated that the

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[8] New York Times, September 10, 1945, p. 3.

[9] U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 1107, p. 3; avis, Postwar Defense and the U.S. Navy, pp. 157, 182; ng. Rec., 9511, 10145-65, 10187-206.

replacement of these vessels at current prices would have cost $5 billion. This can be contrasted most vividly with the $120 million cost of activating the mothballed ships. The actual cost was slightly over 2 per cent of the estimated replacement cost. Vinson reasoning had been correct.

"Crossroads"

Shortly after the dropping of the atomic bombs, American military and naval officials began to consider the significance of the "ultimate weapon." Out of these considerations came the project known as "Crossroads." The American Navy decided to anchor ships of various types in Bikini Atoll and to explode atomic bombs under a variety of conditions. Accordingly, in January of 1946, the Navy announced the names of the atomic test "victims" which would form the "guinea pig" fleet.

Although he declared on behalf of an adequate Navy, Vinson had proposed that the Navy use atomic bombs against obsolete naval vessels to test this new weapon's power against ships and thus enable the Navy to modify, if necessary, the ships which it wished to keep in service and to use this newly acquired information when building new ships. Whether it should prove that the Navy could withstand an atomic bombing or must modify its ships in order to remain effective, Vinson still maintained that

the Navy's mission remained the same--to control the seas.[10]

However, Carl Vinson, ever mindful of Congressional prerogatives, reminded American naval officials that "under a law passed in 1882 no ship of the line could be sunk, converted to training or otherwise placed out of commission until Congress had given permission" for such action. In order to insure that no questions could impair such Congressional control, he introduced a bill which would require that the Navy obtain Congressional consent before it could use United States warships for any atomic bomb tests.[11] The aircraft carriers Independence and Saratoga, the battleships Arkansas, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and New York, the cruisers Pensacola and Salt Lake City and the contemplated destroyers and submarines could not be used without the consent of Congress under such circumstances.

Chairman Vinson was concerned whether ships which had been built to win the Second World War and, hence, would or rather should be available for our defense after the war would be sacrificed in such a test. If the ships were constructed by Congressional action, they should be

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[10] Cong. Rec., XCI, 10152; New York Times, October 30, 945, p. 4.

[11] Ibid., January 24, 1946, pp. 1, 7; January 29, 56, p. 4.

released from use by consequent Congressional action. These ships had been built to fit in with goals which Congress found necessary and this branch of the government should be charged with the responsibility of determining whether that need was still present before such ships should become unavailable. Thus, he introduced, on January 28th, House Joint Resolution 307 to authorize the use of naval vessels in atomic testing. The House approved this resolution on March 12 by a recorded vote of 313-25.[12]

Later, Admiral Chester Nimitz testified before the House Naval Affairs Committee on the weakness of the American fleet. Hero of the Pacific operations during the Second World War, he warned that the United States Navy would need at least six months preparation before it would be ready for an emergency. Six months after the end of the war in the Pacific, the mightiest fleet in the history of the world would experience difficulty in meeting a crisis. Carl Vinson interjected that he feared that the wholesale scrapping of ships by an atomic experimental holocaust would intensify the weakening of American naval power. However, the inroads into fleet strength did not come as a result of the "Crossroads experiment"--they came as a result of the demobilization of men following the end

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[12] Cong. Rec., XCII, 490, 2117-27, 2172-73.

of hostilities and as a result of insufficient appropriations.[13]

Vinson and Unification

With the growing importance of both Army and Navy aviation, it was clear that there must be three branches in the armed services, each competing for funds and influence in the retrenchment following the war. To many, the only alternative appeared to be the perennial solution of unification. When they began a campaign to that end, Vinson summoned his committee to begin writing post-war Navy legislation. "There won't be any merger," he announced. "There is no chance of taking up the Army and the Navy merger now. I hope it's off forever. The two services should remain separate and distinct."[14]

Quickly he enlisted others in the cause. The New York Times of September 28, 1945 reported that Chairman Andrew May of the House Military Affairs Committee had decided not to support unification. He had changed his mind when Vinson persuaded him that such a merger would abruptly relieve May of his chairmanship because Vinson

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[13] Ibid., 5541-45, 5552; New York Times, March 20, 1946, p. 3.

[14] Ibid., September 28, 1945, p. 2. Secretary of Defense Forrestal had advised Vinson that the question of a single Department of Defense should not be taken lightly. See Walter Millis, ed., The Forrestal Diaries (New York: Viking Press, 1951), James Forrestal to Carl Vinson, 30 August 1944, 9.

had seniority and would take over the chairmanship of the combined committee.[15]

After a White House meeting, in which Vinson said he hoped the President would not undertake to introduce a bill for unification because "it would not pass either this winter, next winter, or the winter after," Vinson and May, on behalf of their respective committees, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to create an independent air force absorbing the Army Air Force, but not the naval air arm. This was the Vinson-May answer to unification. By enhancing the airman's position without the need for merger, an independent air force would protect its newly acquired autonomous status and would be less likely to undermine the other services. More important, it left Vinson's Navy unscathed.[16]

Carl Vinson had opposed unification on a number of occasions in the past and he had not changed his mind over the intervening years. He had realized that there were

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[15] New York Times, September 28, 1945, p. 2; "The 'Admiral,'" Newsweek, June 3, 1946, p. 30. According to Newsweek, Vinson seldom spoke against unification, he simply maneuvered forces against it. Even without May's help, Vinson would have opposed any unification passed by the Senate, see "Navy's Defenders," United States News and World Report, April 26, 1946, pp. 67-9.

[16] Millis, ed., The Forrestal Diaries, p. 115; New York Times, December 11, 1945, p. 6; Demetrios Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 125, hereafter cited as Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification.

savings which could be made from a common purchasing pool; however, he believed that the disadvantages outweighed the gains which might come from unification. Basically he took the position that each service had its function to perform and it would not be able to carry out its obligations under unification. If unification came, Chairman Vinson would still be Chairman Vinson and he would find his power amplified through this unification rather than diminished. However, he did not want the three services unified.[17]

President Harry S. Truman notified the Navy and the Army that they should either go along with unification or prepare for drastic alternatives. In other words, Navy and Army officers were to cease criticizing unification and to accept the President's decision. Mr. Vinson was concerned that this warning would serve to gag service officers and prevent Congressional committees from receiving full information from them. He warned that Congressional committees must call high naval and military officers before them for questioning and that these officials had an obligation to Congress to provide such information as the committee might seek.[18]

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[17]Vinson doubted that one committee alone could handle the affairs of three, or for that matter, even two services, United States News and World Report, October 18, 1946, p. 27.

[18]New York Times, April 12, 1946, pp. 1, 13; Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification, pp. 129-30.

Carl Vinson's position on unification was most thoroughly explained in a joint letter which he and Walsh, Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, formulated opposing the creation of a single Department of Common Defense headed by a single Secretary, the removal of the function of initiating and supporting their departmental budget from the Secretaries of War and Navy, the designation of a single military official in supreme command of the armed forces, the divestment from the Marine Corps of the function of maintaining a Fleet Marine Force, and the transfer of naval aviation to either the Army Air Corps or to a separate Air Corps. They stated furthermore that any compromise made contrary to the views of those Congressmen having studied the nature of sea-air power in the nation's defense structure as expressed in this letter would not be in the interest of the United States. Vinson and Walsh firmly believed that Congress would not approve any bill which did not reflect these cautions. In the light of this letter, both chairmen indicated that they would hold hearings on the Administration's pending unification bill. However, it seemed likely that these hearings would not be conducted simultaneously, but would be held end to end lengthening the process and making less likely the prospects of full unification.[19]

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[19] New York Times, May 20, 1946, p. 1; United States News and World Report, April 26, 1946, pp. 67-9; Millis,

Though he had prepared to fight unification, Carl Vinson would be for the most part bypassed in the legislative process providing unification. While the unification bill in the Senate was assigned to the merged Armed Services Committee, the House bill was formulated in the Committee of Expenditures in the Executive Department. The latter committee, as reconstituted, was more amenable to unification than the merged House Armed Services Committee was expected to be. Hearings held by a hostile committee solidified by a strong hostile chairman such as Vinson are often doomed. Although Walter Andrews, Republican of New York, a strong unifier, had replaced Vinson in January 1947 as Chairman, the latter was still powerful and the majority of the committee were lukewarm, at most, to unification.[20]

When Senator Chan Gurney's unification bill which had also been accepted in lieu of Representative Clare Hoffman's H.R. 4214 had passed each house in a slightly different form, a conference committee, as expected, was appointed. Although none of the seven Representatives on

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ed., The Forrestal Diaries, p. 114; Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification, p. 136.

[20] Ibid., p. 209. See the extensive Table 1 in Ibid., . 187, for committee "Bases for Service Identification." erhaps it is indicative of Vinson's inaction that it was epresentative James VanZandt of Pennsylvania who inserted n the Congressional Record, "Thirty-Eight Reasons Why erger of Our Armed Services Is Unnecessary," Cong. Rec., CIII, A1300.

this committee had been members of either the former Naval or the Military Affairs Committees, all seven Senators had been members of such committees in their chamber. Furthermore, interestingly, none of the seven Representatives would serve, after unification, on the newly formed House Armed Services Committee. In contrast, all seven Senators became members of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Vinson, thus, had little or no influence in these negotiations.[21]

Though Carl Vinson did not answer roll call No. 131, held on July 25, 1947 just immediately prior to the unrecorded favorable vote on the unification bill, he had had some effect on the terms of the legislation. Despite his earlier pronounced aversions to unification which did not prevent consummation, Vinson-Forrestal pressure forced a compromise that gave only limited power to a Secretary of Defense heading a weak National Military Establishment which did not really contain the powers of the Navy, the Army, or the newly created separate Air Force. In many ways, Vinson and the Navy lost nothing in the modification of the American defense system.[22]

Through compromise, the National Security Act which unified the American Armed Forces became effective on

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[21] Ibid., 9109, 9396, 9410-11, 9473, 9912, 10191, 10196-97.

[22] Ibid., p. 10197.

September 18, 1947 and five days later, James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, was named the first Secretary of Defense. Forrestal had to work within the limits which he had encouraged Congress to set. The unification provided did not transfer Navy aviation to the newly created Air Force and it did not dissolve the Marine Corps.

However, even prior to unification the House and Senate formed Armed Services Committees. The members of these new committees were drawn, almost equally Republican and Democratic, from the seniority ranks of the former Naval and Military committees. As the Republicans had won the 1946 Congressional elections, they added some new members to complete their majority on the committees. This change of alignment caused Carl Vinson to revert to ranking minority member for the first time in sixteen years.[23]

Even so Vinson maintained his interest in the Navy while forming a new interest in the other services. He had opposed the unification of the armed forces holding that "war is three-dimensional and the four services exist for the simple reason that there are four separate and distinct missions which are assigned to them." Thus, whether as ranking member of the new committee or as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, he was able to

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[23]He still remained, as ranking minority, an ex-officio member of all subcommittees. See Report No. 1, Organization of the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives (January 28, 1947), 3.

work with unification, with certain exceptions, to promote the defense of the United States.[24]

Vinson Backs Air Power

In his new role as House guardian of the Air Force, Vinson in 1948 pushed through an authorization to enlarge the Air Force from forty-eight to seventy groups. While generally a post-war era would be a time for contraction and economy, the Cold War with a Russia possessing a modern air force caused him to conclude that a parsimonious Congress would be gambling with national existence. The House approved this increase by a 343-3 vote and the Senate concurred by a vote of 74-2.[25] His attitude on defense had not changed over the years and, although he had less power as the ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, he was still very influential when the committee or Congress was dealing with future defense considerations.

The surprise Truman victory in 1948 brought Mr. Vinson back into the chairmanship of the House Armed Services Committee. Here, he would again wield a chairman's power and would be able to promote a defense posture in keeping with the American foreign policy being promulgated

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[24]CNO Vinson Summary, p. 3; Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification, p. 145.

[25]"Services: Disunited They Stand," Newsweek, September 20, 1948, p. 27. Although tabled, this bill indicated continued Vinson power, "Air Marshall Vinson," Newsweek, March 28, 1949, p. 18.

at that time. It was expected that he would call on Congress to create and maintain the world's greatest military and naval force in order to guarantee peace.[26]

When Secretary of Defense James Forrestal indicated his desire to retire, Vinson's hometown newspaper, the Union-Recorder, promoted him for this position. Later, the New York Times, discussing the Truman Administration's quest for a new Secretary of Defense, noted that it was not too much of an overstatement on Vinson's part when he had declared, "Shucks, I'd rather run the Pentagon from up here." Just preparatory to his assuming the chairmanship, he once again outlined his position that it was the prerogative of Congress to maintain and support an adequate defense establishment.[27]

Although President Truman wanted only forty-eight air groups, Chairman Vinson reopened his campaign for

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[26]When Navy Chief Louis Denfield tried to return a Vinson-battleship Georgia portrait which had been removed from the committee room when Vinson stepped down in 1947, the returned chairman protested, "Leave it where it is," and had pictures of Air Secretary Symington and Air Force Chief Vandenberg put up, Ibid.

[27]See the Union-Recorder of November 18, 1948, p. 2 and November 25, 1948, p. 1 for further details on such a movement. For the background on the Congressional prerogative question, see Paul Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers: Appropriations, Strategy and Politics," in Harold Stein, ed., American Civil-Military Decisions (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1963), pp. 457-71. Hereafter cited as Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers."

seventy air groups. When the House of Representatives gave tentative approval to the Vinson bill, the President's supporters remained silent in accordance with a previous understanding between Vinson and his friend, Speaker of the House Sam Rayburn. To Vinson, nothing would insure peace more than for the world to realize that the United States had "a seventy group Air Force, a Navy equal to any emergency assignment on the seas and a modern, equipped and well-rounded Army."[28]

Despite President Truman's and Secretary Forrestal's interest in a less ambitious program, Chairman Vinson was opposed on his second try for a seventy group goal by only one dissenting vote--that of what the Macon Telegraph called "the notorious left-winger, Representative Marcantonio." It thought that its congressman had "every reason to be proud of any bill which is opposed by Marcantonio."[29]

Noting that this action gave Mr. Vinson only an authorization and thus an appropriation would be necessary in order to build this seventy group program, this same source warned that delay or Senate inaction would constitute "an open invitation to disaster." However, House

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[28] New York Times, March 17, 1949, p. 1.

[29] Clipping in Mr. Vinson's possession from the Macon Telegraph, March 19, 1949. This was not the first time that Marcantonio cast the only dissenting vote against Vinson service legislation, see Cong. Rec., LXXXVI, 7045, 7064.

concurrence would enhance the Air Force's possibilities of gaining more money. "Swamp Fox" Vinson had already "found" money which could be used for building the additional twenty-two wings. He suggested that no additional money would be needed as he wished to transfer 800 million dollars to this purpose from the fund which had been budgeted for Universal Military Training. Although it was feared that naval aviation would be the "direct victim" of the Air Force expansion efforts, only UMT would die.[30]

Contending that Americans should place their trust in their military leaders rather than in the Administration's budget officials, Vinson requested almost $1.6 billion more than the approximately $14.7 that Mr. Truman had asked. His request for an additional $800 million for the Air Force, an additional $545 million for Navy carriers and aircraft, and $245 million more for the Army was indicative of his continued emphasis on air power.[31]

However, Vinson's zeal for a larger air force diminished somewhat during the hearings brought on by the 1949 service rivalries. He believed that the Air Force was trying to build itself up by leaking information

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[30] Cong. Rec., XCV, 2936; Washington Post, March 23, 1949, p. 1; Newsweek, April 26, 1949, pp. 21-2; Millis, ed., The Forrestal Diaries, pp. 414f; Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers," p. 490.

[31] Cong. Rec., XCV, 3540-44; New York Times, March 31, 1949, p. 4. See the Macon Telegraph, April 2, 1949 for an illustration of an adverse criticism of President Truman comparing his background to Congressman Vinson.

to the "proper" recipients in order to convince Congress of its need for more money. Because defense appropriations involved a static fund, any branch of the service which wanted more than its originally allotted share must take from another. To prevent such action from endangering the American defense system, he threatened a "full-scale" investigation by Congress should public bickering and sub rosa disclosures of certain secret information continue.[32]

Since its recent success in the Second World War, the Navy had sensed a mission for itself which could come into conflict with the Air Force. Having developed aviation so highly within its own air force during the war, the Navy believed it could justify its continued interest in long range bombers. This weapon should not duplicate the B-29 or its modification--the B-36 used in 1948 and 1949. It would not, in reality, duplicate the Air Force program if large, long range naval bombers could be launched from aircraft carriers. Vinson supported such a move to provide large fighting ships.[33]

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[32] Washington Post (page proof--pressmen's strike), April 6, 1949, p. 3; New York Times, April 6, 1949, p. 5.

[33] From 1948 to 1960, aviators constituted between 35 and 40 per cent of the Navy's officers, "Navy: Now and Tomorrow," Newsweek, June 7, 1948, p. 22; Davis, Postwar Defense Policies and the U.S. Navy--1943-1946, pp. 120-29.

Johnson's Defense Economy

Secretary of Defense Forrestal had resigned in March of 1949 and Louis A. Johnson had taken over. Johnson had been Assistant Secretary of War in the late thirties, had been President Truman's most successful fund raiser in the seemingly impossible victory of 1948, and now he had been appointed to the crucial post, especially crucial for the impending naval program, of Secretary of Defense. Johnson had been an air force partisan for many years. Being appointed at a time when Mr. Truman had declared cut-backs in the defense budget necessary, the new Secretary was surely to be in conflict with any faction of the defense establishment which did not believe it had received an equal share in the resulting reduced available funds.

Johnson's goal was to cut some of the fat off the military and naval establishment. Assuredly, as Mr. Vinson was willing to admit, there was fat; but while Secretary Johnson insisted this fat was deep and the services must cut expenses drastically, Mr. Vinson declared that Johnson had cut sinew and muscle--not just fat.[34]

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had given approval to a flush deck carrier, a vessel from which large bombers could take off to bomb the enemy. This ship was viewed by the Air Force as symbolic of the Navy's attempt to compete

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[34] New York Times, March 25, 1950, p. 1; Beverly Smith, "He Makes the Generals Listen," Saturday Evening Post, March 10, 1951, pp. 134, 136.

in long range strategic bombing, a function over which the Air Force believed itself to hold a monopoly. On the other hand, this ship was viewed by the Navy as symbolic of its future existence. This carrier would not have an exposed superstructure; hence, larger planes could carry an atomic bomb off its deck.

According to the schedule planned by Congress with Chairman Vinson leading and the Navy Department supporting, the keel of the supercarrier United States was laid on April 18, 1949.[35] Five days after this action, Defense Secretary Louis Johnson canceled the construction of this mammoth ship. Reaction came swiftly in the resignation of Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews. In contrast to his previous position, Vinson now supported Johnson's decision:

> Mr. Speaker, last Saturday the Honorable Louis Johnson, Secretary of Defense, made a courageous and a momentous decision. He ordered the termination of the construction of the 65,000-ton so-called super-carrier.
>
> In years past I helped build a two-ocean Navy. I am proud to think that was correct, for we need a two-ocean Navy to fight any war that comes.
>
> Now we know that if war should ever come again it will be a struggle with a land power.
>
> It is simply a matter of the proper allocation of war missions between the Navy and Air Force.

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[35] For illustrations of Vinson's leadership, see U.S., Congress, House, Report No. 273, Subcommittee Hearings on H.R. 6049, May 14, 17, 1948, pp. 6860, 6887-6905. Vinson was willing to have construction halted on thirteen authorized ships in exchange for the construction of this carrier.

> It is the business of the Air Force to use long-range bombers in time of war. And yet, this carrier was to accommodate such long-range bombers.
>
> We cannot afford the luxury of two strategic air forces. We cannot afford an experimental vessel that, even without its aircraft, would cost as much as 60 B-36 long-range bombers.
>
> We should reserve strategic air warfare to the Air Force.
>
> And we should reserve to the Navy its historic role of controlling the seas. I do not now--and I never will--advocate depreciation of our Navy.
>
> Secretary Johnson is to be commended both for the nature of his decision and for moving promptly to resolve this important matter.[36]

Although he had emphasized, on April 14, 1949, that attack carriers were "the backbone of the Navy," Mr. Vinson supported Secretary Johnson's action in canceling the supercarrier saying, "I think Mr. Johnson did the right thing. I think he took the right course." Whereas he would fight fiercely for naval aviation, he would initiate no move at this time to save the flush-deck carrier which was capable of carrying atomic bombs. His action was another indication of the greater emphasis which he was placing on Air Force programs to the disadvantage of Navy plans.[37]

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[36] Cong. Rec., XCV, 5053. According to Johnson, Vinson had already agreed, before cancellation, to just such action, see Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers," p. 494.

[37] Washington Post, April 14, 1949, p. 1; April 24, 1949, p. 3. In an interview with this author, on November 17, 1967, Carl Vinson explained his action, "Sometimes you don't go in a straight line to reach your objective." The writer of an editorial in The Nation, May 7, 1949, p. 513 agreed with Johnson's action, but doubted the wisdom of his methods. Vinson later agreed that Johnson's methods had been too roughshod in cancelling this carrier, United States News and World Report, June 17, 1949, p. 34.

When Representative William Bates, a Republican from Massachusetts, proposed a committee investigation of the cancellation, Chairman Vinson overruled him while promising a full inquiry as the Armed Services Committee considered any legislation which might increase Secretary of Defense Johnson's powers. It was very clear at this time that Vinson would give very close scrutiny to any request for additional authority.[38]

Walter Millis, in his study, Arms and the State, summarized the situation most succinctly: "Johnson had insufficiently appreciated the Navy's already embittered state of mind, the symbolic as well as practical importance of the carrier to the future development of the Navy, and the delicacy of the balance of forces over which he was presiding." Under these circumstances the Navy moved from its previous defensive position into an attack upon the Air Force's B-36. Cedric R. Worth, a former newspaperman and reserve naval officer who was now a civilian assistant in the office of the Under Secretary of the Navy, questioned the efficiency of the B-36 to perform the strategic mission which the Air Force had assigned it and alleged that the procurement of the B-36 contracts by Consolidated-Vultee had been advanced by improper influence. Worth circulated his evaluation and when in May he gave it to

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[38] Cong. Rec., XCV, 7121, 7473, 9299; Washington Post, April 28, 1949, p. 2.

Republican Representative James Van Zandt of Pennsylvania, a strong naval supporter, the latter called for a full scale investigation of the B-36 and B-36 contracts.[39]

Thus, as the events began to unfold, the question became crucial to Carl Vinson as to whether he would have any substantial effect on the impending hearing. Should Van Zandt push through his resolution for the special committee, Chairman Vinson would lose control of the proceedings. He therefore secured the investigation for his own House Armed Services Committee in which Van Zandt was only one of the members. While he could not suppress the inquiry, Vinson could control it more easily.[40]

In answer to the Van Zandt criticism, the Armed Services Committee, in early August, began its series of hearings on the B-36. Testimony showed that this plane was not the final solution to the quest for an intercontinental strategic bomber but was only a stop-gap measure. Furthermore, Vinson summed up the evidence to the second charge of questionable contract negotiations on the B-36. He could find no evidence that "collusion,

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[39]Walter Millis, Arms and the State (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), p. 241; United States News and World Report, June 17, 1949, p. 37. See Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers," pp. 496-98, for the implications of a Van Zandt investigation.

[40]He had said previously, "This is not going to be a whitewash." "Let the chips fall where they will." Time, June 13, 1949, p. 19.

fraud, corruption, influence or favoritism played any part whatever in the procurement of the B-36 bomber."[41]

However, the investigations did not settle the basic questions relative to the conflict between the Air Force and the Navy. Vinson had hoped that he might be able to defer further hearings until tensions eased. He did not reckon with Captain John G. Crommelin, a World War II naval aviator serving on the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint Staff, who announced to reporters his part in drafting the Worth papers and lamented what he believed to be the Pentagon's emasculation of the Navy's offensive potentiality. Such Pentagon action would, in Crommelin's opinion, mean the end of his naval career and he hoped that his statement would bring on another Congressional investigation. Vinson could delay the inquiry no longer.[42]

Vinson's full-scale investigation began in September and was expanded to a study of unification and strategy. His purpose was to get to the bottom of the difficulty as he expressed his support for and criticism of certain

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[41]Millis, Arms and the State, p. 244; New York Times, September 10, 1949, p. 8. A Time writer noted that "even the discomfited Van Zandt" had to agree with the Vinson conclusions, Time, September 5, 1949, p. 14.

[42]Hanson W. Baldwin, "Politics and Strategy," New York Times, October 11, 1949, p. 28; James McConaughy, Jr., "Congress and the Pentagon," Fortune, April 1958, pp. 156-57, 160. For a contrary view of Vinson's part in this controversy as well as his relation to Captain Crommelin, see Harold L. Ickes, "Navy Hits Below the Belt," New Republic, November 7, 1949, p. 17.

phases of both the Navy and the Air Force positions. Although the B-36 and the supercarrier continued to be part of the inquiry, the committee also dealt with the basic questions of whether the Air Force was neglecting tactical air power to concentrate on strategic bombing, whether that strategic bombing was effective, and whether the other service branches should be allowed to pass on the validity of building specific weapons for the third service.[43]

On October 7th, Vinson presented his colleagues with "a working paper for hypothetical but fundamental changes in the Unification Act which would meet many of the Navy's present objectives." It would request that the Department of Defense reconsider Secretary Johnson's April decision to cancel the supercarrier United States, prohibit the Secretary of Defense from cutting back individual service budgets without the approval of Congress, and stimulate an investigation by the Weapons Evaluation Board on the usefulness of the B-36 in any future war. Carried through, this plan would prevent further inroads into the Navy's position.[44]

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[43]For details of this series of hearings, see Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers," pp. 514-37 or Millis, Arms and the State, pp. 247-50.

[44]New York Times, October 4, 1949, p. 1; October 7, 1949, p. 1; October 8, 1949, pp. 1, 2; October 9, 1949, p. 1.

Eventually, the Vinson committee published a fifty-six page report which set the stage for much of America's present defense policies. Maintaining that "prudent administration of unification, sensitive to the many imponderables of spirit and emotion and service loyalties," could greatly ease service tensions over the years, it cautioned against hasty decisions and brusque dismissals of honestly held service views which would aggravate tensions. Only cross education of the services could bring about the one-armed-force concept. Thus the armed services should concentrate its efforts on cross education which Vinson considered the key to the perplexing problems of interservice relations. In the years since he rejected unification in 1932, Carl Vinson had shifted his position considerably on the feasibility of a coordinated service defense system. Completely rejecting unification then, he now saw how the individual services could keep their own functions and budgets in a modified scheme of unification.[45]

However, on another phase of the unification controversy, Chairman Vinson had not shifted one iota. He

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[45]Louis Stockstill, "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," 1961, reprinted in Cong. Rec., CVII, 2483, claimed that this document, "more than any other," "set the stage for the present defense organization." See Hanson W. Baldwin, "The Battle's Roar Ends," New York Times, October 22, 1949, p. 5, on Vinson's self conversion to unification. For a summary of this report, see Hammond, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers," pp. 549-51.

still upheld the tenet that Congress would never tolerate being shunted to the sidelines or barred from the fulfillment of its constitutional role of providing for the common defense. Although civilian control of the Armed Forces must be "an integral part of the democratic process and tradition," it, according to the Vinson report, should not dissuade members of the Armed Forces from freely giving testimony before Congressional committees, nor relegate Congress to a bystander role in issues pertaining to the national defense. To Vinson, defense meant defense as ordained by the Congress of the United States. Congress funded a specific defense program which, Vinson believed, Secretary Johnson should execute as that body had planned.[46]

Hence, Carl Vinson objected on March 25, 1950 that expenditures for the armed forces had been cut too drastically. He stated that Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson had "in his zeal for economy not only trimmed the fat but he had cut the sinews and muscles of the armed forces." Although Johnson had maintained that he had only cut fat off the various services, he had, Vinson declared, from the time that he assumed the office of Secretary of Defense placed economy above any sort of adequate defense.[47]

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[46]Hanson W. Baldwin, "Politics and Strategy," New York Times, October 11, 1949, p. 28; "Johnson May Rue Promise," October 12, 1949, p. 35; October 13, 1949, p. 1.

[47]Vinson claimed later that while Johnson had saved $600 million, he had made a 1 1/2 billion dollar cut in the very essentials of the armed services. Washington Post, May 1, 1950, p. 9.

Among the more important items which Mr. Vinson believed essential to America's defense and which a more liberal 1951 budget would make allowances for was the seventy group air force. While seventy groups were symbolic of Air Force power, just as the supercarrier in 1949 had been symbolic of the Navy's power, Vinson believed that this strength was essential to America's defense posture. Moreover, he was very concerned over the plans calling for a cut back from forty-eight to forty-two first line groups by 1956, six years later. Korea would shortly prove the country's need for a greater number of groups than even Vinson sought.

Although both the President and the Secretary of Defense had called for a reduction in the nation's armed forces, the blame for the deteriorating condition of the services, particularly the Army, was placed upon the Secretary. When Korea showed America's lack of military power, Congressman Vinson and others kept up their criticism until Mr. Johnson resigned.[48] Vinson could not force a Secretary of Defense to resign as a President could, but he could help put that official into such an untenable position that it became advisable for him to resign. He had been one of the substantial figures operating to prevent Johnson's use of unification and the office of Secretary of Defense from taking the power out of the

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[48] Ibid.

American defense establishment, and especially, cutting the Navy back to insignificance.[49]

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[49]Beverly Smith, "He Makes the Generals Listen," Saturday Evening Post, March 10, 1951, p. 136.

CHAPTER VIII

DEFENSE AGAINST COMMUNISM

Carl Vinson underscored his fears brought on by cutting the United States defense budget when in April 1950 he warned the House of a Russian activated Pearl Harbor. President Truman and Secretary Johnson had, he insisted, invited this Pearl Harbor by their lack of concern for preparedness. Specifically, Mr. Truman had placed a ceiling of $15 billion on the defense budget which Vinson believed severely limited American preparedness while Mr. Johnson seemed intent on continued reductions in expenditures.[1]

When a Russian attack upon a United States plane took place over the Baltic, Chairman Vinson was asked whether his current naval construction bill was being formulated to back strong action against the Russians. Inasmuch as the United States was rebuilding its Navy for a modern era, he declared that this program would emphasize modernization and experimentation rather than to be an answer to a specific confrontation. However, he did

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[1]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson, John Fisher, Times-Herald, April 4, 1950.

admit, when questioned if he meant the threat of submarine warfare was involved, that the Russian threat was a large part of the motivation. Furthermore, he proposed a new bill which would authorize the construction or conversion of up to 50,000 tons in a "sweeping modernization move" which would cost upwards of $500 million.[2]

His fears were confirmed when, presumably with Russian encouragement, North Korean forces poured across the 38th Parallel into South Korea. President Truman called key Congressional personnel, including Vinson, the Joint Chiefs, and others to the White House on June 27, 1950 for a briefing on the action which he had taken to meet the North Korean invasion. All agreed that his response was correct. It was immediately clear that the armed services must be expanded rapidly to meet this obligation. For that expansion, the support of Carl Vinson was essential. Later, he would recall that he had "listened with heavy heart," but he accepted the conclusion.[3]

On the House floor, Republicans and Democrats blamed each other for the nation's unpreparedness; however, Vinson ended the argument and received a standing ovation

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[2]Patriot-Ledger (Quincy, Massachusetts), April 19, 1950, p. 1.

[3]Vinson speech, original in his possession, given November 11, 1961; Harry S. Truman, Memoirs, Vol. II: Years of Trial and Hope (Garden City, New York, 1955), p. 338.

when he admonished all: "Our great need right now is to get the ox out of the ditch--not to spend a lot of time and effort trying to find out who pushed him in." If anyone could say this without fear of censure, it would be the preparedness advocate, Carl Vinson. He could easily have said, "I told you so." However, his immediate concern was with the present situation.[4]

Although Carl Vinson was deeply anxious about the threat in Korea, he was more concerned with Russia which he saw as the basic enemy. In an exclusive interview with Miss Eleanor Nance, Washington correspondent for the Macon Telegraph a month after the Korean War began, he noted that the United States might find it necessary to destroy "the body of the octopus [Russia]" rather than being "pulled hither and yon over the world at the whimsy of a group of diabolical men seated safely in the heart of Russia." In Vinson's words, "even though only its tentacles have been in motion in the world," we know the source of difficulty to be Soviet Russia. Any rearmament to fight in Korea could be, for Vinson, an answer to the more important danger from the Soviet Union.[5]

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[4]Beverly Smith, "He Makes the Generals Listen," Saturday Evening Post, March 10, 1951, p. 136.

[5]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson from the Macon Telegraph of July 27, 1950. The corollary to this was Vinson's contention that preparedness should not be measured by dollars but by the potential strength of the enemy. See Cong. Rec., 10985-86; Beverly Smith, "He Makes the Generals Listen," Saturday Evening Post, March

Mr. Vinson wrote a series of five articles for the New York Journal-American in the summer of 1951 emphasizing the basic tenets of his philosophy of preparedness. Inasmuch as the Russians possessed the most powerful army in the world, he declared that the United States must maintain the most powerful long-range air force to strike at the source of enemy strength should open warfare break out. Although he still believed that this strategic Air Force was the principal deterrent to war and thus the principal defense weapon for not only the Western Hemisphere but of the free world, he also was sure that the United States needed much more powerful Air Force, Navy, and Marine tactical air arms as well as the world's finest and greatest Navy. Korea had shown Vinson and many other Americans that air power alone could not solve the American defense dilemma.[6]

After the Republican Congressional victory of 1952, Carl Vinson reverted to ranking minority member of the committee, as in 1947. Now he warned that any Congressional cuts which might be made in the administration's 1953 military budget would only be an invitation to disaster. In his new position he was less powerful than as

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[6]August 1-5, 1951, as inserted in the Cong. Rec., A5001-05 by Representative Frank Boykin of Alabama.

chairman; however, he could still exert tremendous influence.[7]

The Democrats regained control of Congress after the next election and Carl Vinson continued his opposition to proposed cuts in the defense budget. When Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson was called to testify before the House Armed Services Committee, Chairman Vinson expressed his concern over the cuts which had been previously announced. Furthermore, he declared that he would insist that the national security have priority over economizing. The ultimate goal should not be economy at the expense of security.[8]

Believing that defense cuts had gone too deeply, he emphasized his thesis that the United States should maintain a program which would give "the highest possible level of national defense consistent with national solvency." If his committee could provide such a defense

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[7]For illustrations of Vinson's activity, see U.S., Congress, House, Hearings Before Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval and Military Establishments 1953, pp. 3-7, 9-13, 15-6, 219-223, 247-58. Perhaps indicative of Vinson's presence was a sequence of February 25, 1953 from the above source, p. 200. The former chairman had suggested that certain testimony be made a part of the record, "Mr. Chairman, I think it is not too long." The Chairman--"It is not too long." Then Vinson took up again, "It will be a complete record." See also, "National Defense," Newsweek, July 4, 1955, p. 19.

[8]New York Times, December 22, 1954, p. 12; January 9, 1955, p. 22; January 26, 1955, p. 28.

posture, it would have carried through on its duties. Carl Vinson informed reporters that to obtain proper security "we must commit the country and the Congress" to the spending of about $34 billion a year for an indefinite period of time. To Vinson, the sum was necessary to insure effective American military posture.[9]

Although at times they did not agree on the question of defense spending, President Eisenhower wrote to Chairman Vinson in February acknowledging his awareness of the legislator's position on preparedness: "I must say that I am not in the least surprised to find you again, as so consistently in the past, taking a strong position in the cause of sound national defense." Once more a President realized that Carl Vinson would back adequate defense and would even confront a President of the United States with the necessity of "providing adequately for the common defense."[10]

Vinson was particularly insistent on appropriations for technical more than tonnage improvements. In an exclusive interview for Log's Look, he insisted that the Navy's need for modern ships and weapons was greater than

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[9]New York Times, January 26, 1955, p. 28; January 28, 1955, p. 7; February 6, 1955, p. 2; Atlanta Journal, February 1, 1955 (clipping in Carl Vinson's possession).

[10]Letter from Dwight Eisenhower to Carl Vinson, February 9, 1955.

it had ever been primarily because of the scientific advances which had been made. It was imperative, he thought, that it keep abreast of those developments especially in the area of missile and atomic research. Otherwise, he warned, the United States would "become a second-rate military power with no hope of survival."[11]

At a luncheon meeting of the Macon Kiwanis Club he explained to his fellow Georgians his views of the present world situation and its effect upon the United States: "In this critical area the Russian smile is a terrible weapon. Soviet platitudes have given ammunition to people in Congress and in the executive branch who see in vast defense expenditures a lush field for saving." He declared that he was far more interested in an adequate national defense than in a balanced federal budget or a tax cut and far more interested in maintaining enough jet aircraft, modern naval vessels, and a well-trained, well-equipped Army and Marine Corps than he was in the political shenanigans of a presidential election year.[12]

Threat to Repeat the Early 1930's

Carl Vinson expressed his dissatisfaction with the strong desire to balance the federal budget which he

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[11]"In Congress: Mister Navy," Log's Look, April 1, 1955 (in Carl Vinson's possession).

[12]Vinson speech, Macon, Georgia, 1955.

believed had "severely pruned the military dollar." Whereas the valor and sacrifice of friends abroad had given the United States about two years of preparation time after the German invasion of Poland, Vinson warned that this lead time would not be available again. Furthermore, because the United States had demobilized after the Second World War the greatest fighting machine ever created, he contended that America would need to rebuild this formidable force to meet the new challenges.[13]

Noting that everyone supported the peace efforts being made, he expressed the American desire for renewed hope that diplomatic talks, the conference at Geneva, and the release of American prisoners might be an indication of an impending change of heart in Moscow. Seemingly begging the question, "What has Russia or her Communist satellites surrendered that diminished the Communist capability to wage war?", he noted that it was obvious that they had given up nothing. His general evaluation elicited from him the warning that "the international picture is not all rosy."[14]

Chairman Vinson introduced, in January of 1951, a bill which would provide for an atomic carrier. This super carrier of 60,000 tons would basically reverse the April 1949 decision of the then Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson. Though it would perform the same function as a

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[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

mobile bombardment base, the Navy had modified its designation somewhat to "a highly mobile atomic bombardment base."[15]

Vinson and his associates believed that this carrier would not duplicate nor collide with the Air Force's strategic bombing because it would provide tactical bombing in support of either naval or military operations. Furthermore, it would allow experimentation on the feasibility of atomic propulsion. Sometime before the United States Navy could change to nuclear power, practical applications of this new method of driving ships would have to be made; Vinson believed that the Navy should begin with the large warship.[16]

But one experimental vessel was only the beginning. Vinson saw the Navy in need of a full array of warships. On January 9, 1951, his House Armed Services Committee reported out a bill authorizing the construction of 173 new naval vessels and the conversion of 291 others. After hearing the supporting testimony of the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest Sherman, the committee voted 25-0 in favor of the bill which would include a 60,000-ton carrier. Chairman Vinson intended to take this bill to

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[15]Cong. Rec., LXLVII, 30.

[16]Noted in a preparatory article, William S. White, New York Times, November 1, 1950, p. 25.

the floor of the House at the earliest occasion allowed by the rules committee.[17]

The crucial portion of this bill was its intention to provide for a large carrier, a request that could easily embarrass Vinson. Representative Clarence Brown, Republican of Ohio, compared its cost of $235 million with the $189 million that would have built the supercarrier United States whose cancellation Vinson had agreed to in 1949. Mr. Brown thought that the administration had made "a $66 million dollar mistake." Carl Vinson answered, "I agree with the gentleman." While he had opposed the 1949 building as unnecessary, he now believed this new carrier to be a necessity in the American defense program. The Korean War had changed his view; he would no longer depend upon strategic airpower alone.[18]

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[17] Cong. Rec., LXLVII, 110; New York Times, January 10, 1951, p. 16. It was at this time that the rumor was revived that consideration had been given in 1949 to naming the United States the Forrestal. It was thought that Secretary of Defense Johnson had ruled the change of name inappropriate. It is interesting also that when the Armed Services Committee met to consider House Joint Resolution 67, 82d Cong., 1st Sess., several members were most insistent that wording of the resolution indicate the new carrier to be named "Forrestal" be designated as that which replaces the carrier canceled April 23, 1949. U.S., Congress, House, Hearings Before Committee on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval and Military Establishments 1951, p. 496. United States News and World Report's article "Biggest Carrier! Vinson's Baby" credited him with making sure that it would be the "Forrestal," December 17, 1954, p. 16.

[18] Cong. Rec., LXLVII, 180-81.

Vinson, who had as late as 1949 insisted that America need only concentrate on preparations for a land war, now resumed his stance of the 1930's that Congress must continue to authorize warship construction. Thus, he introduced, in January 1952, a bill which would authorize the building of 237,500 tons of modern naval vessels, including a second large carrier, a second atomic submarine, a 16,000-ton escort carrier designed to combat the Russians growing underseas fleet, four destroyers, thirty mine sweepers, 450 land craft, and additional auxiliary vessels, and the conversion of 90,000 tons to up-date fighting capacity. This shipbuilding program would be the very "minimum new construction [needed] to place the Navy in a position to utilize modern equipment in warfare at sea."[19]

After Eisenhower majorities brought the Republicans into power in 1953 demoting him to ranking minority member, Vinson did not enter into the debates on the 1955 appropriations. However, though out of power, he continued to support defense appropriations indicating his feeling that defense was not a political matter.

Two years later and once again the chairman, he asked the House for $1.4 billion dollars to provide a nuclear missile launching cruiser, six atomic submarines, a nuclear power plant for a supercarrier, and the building or conversion of other ships for launching guided missiles.

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[19] New York Times, January 22, 1952, p. 25;

And the House voted it despite Vinson's assurance that the bill was not necessary before the Appropriations Committee could move to make funds available for construction and conversion. About one and one-third million tons of ships authorizations were now available from Vinson legislation passed by Congress over the past twenty years. The fundamental purpose of the Armed Services Committee for presenting this bill to the House of Representatives had been that the members of Congress should have the opportunity, on so important an issue and so costly a project, to discuss the individual ships to be built and the particular conversions to be made.[20]

Furthermore, Chairman Vinson realized that this legislation represented the transition of the United States Navy from conventional power to nuclear power and from conventional weapons to guided missiles. After recapitulating the 1956 strength of the fleet, he reminded his colleagues that Congress rather than the Defense Department had the responsibility of choosing the ships which shall be provided for America's defense. Hence, it should make known its preferences so that the executive branch could take the appropriated money to provide those ships which Congress should specify within the general framework of

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[20]Cong. Rec., CI, 4900; New York Times, January 29, 1955, p. 4. For an extensive treatment of the use of carriers during World War II, Korea, and in the future, see Vinson's remarks before the House on April 21, 1955, Cong. Rec., CI, 4901-02.

tonnage authorizations already on the books. With the control of warship building in the hands of Congress, Carl Vinson would give very considered thought to providing the most modern weapons for the Navy with the major emphasis on high-performance jet aircraft and the carriers designed to carry them, guided missiles, and nuclear propulsion.[21]

Declaring that it was imperative that the United States avoid mass obsolescence in existing carriers in the early 1960's, he strongly urged the building of the sixth Forrestal class aircraft carrier. In the same speech, he warned Congress of the future prospects of simultaneous retirement of those warships built during the Second World War. Ships in this bill such as the eight destroyers, the escort vessels, and the ammunition ship would tend in their various capacities to cushion that sudden reduction.[22]

Opposition had little success against the new Vinson plans. Hence, in answer to the questions posed by a Democratic Representative from Mississippi, Vinson spoke of the American Navy of the future which this legislation would begin. The proposal marked a transition to the construction of ships designed for guided missiles and nuclear propulsion. Being aware that the building of nuclear submarines was also expanding, he prophesied that the time was not far off when every ship in the United States Navy

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 4902.

would be nuclear powered. Carl Vinson might have been around a long time, but he was a strong advocate of new ideas which would insure American security. Although a Republican Representative from Indiana opposed the bill by declaring that just as the battleship became outmoded, the carrier soon would be useless as well, Vinson's arguments prevailed and the three hours of debate were really not necessary. His comment that the carrier project had the unanimous support of the Defense Department was enough for the House. The vote, 360 to 3, was that typically given Vinson legislation and indicated the support granted to the "old pro" in defense bills.[23]

Speaking to the Sandersville, Georgia Rotary Club in March of 1956, Representative Vinson reminded his audience that peace was "a costly thing" and the maintenance of peace would continue to be expensive. Although he noted that there was no danger of war at this time, he refused to discount the potential dangerousness of the situation in the Middle East. Warning of complacency, he advocated the provision of a force "large enough to strike back if attacked . . . but small enough so it can be maintained without bleeding our economy." He emphasized his recurrent theme that he did not expect that we

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[23]C. F. Trussell, New York Times, February 2, 1956, p. 11. This bill, H.R. 7993, was passed, with amendment, by a voice vote in the Senate. These amendments which severely limited the Vinson program were approved by the House, however.

could live in peace if we reduced our armed forces substantially.[24]

In giving the dedication speech for a new $110,000 National Guard Armory at Milledgeville named in his honor, Carl Vinson declared that there should be no reduction in American armed forces until the Soviet Union had presented positive evidence that she was really interested in peace. He believed that the Russians had become aware of the change in American policy which had resulted from our learning a lesson from the indiscretion of our unpreparedness before World War I and World War II.[25] This indiscretion was, in part, responsible for the timing of action by the Germans prior to our entrance into the First World War and by the Germans and the Japanese in the period before Pearl Harbor. Vinson wished to avoid the same sort of situation in the post Second World War era.

He maintained that the United States should expect to pay $35 billion annually as an insurance premium to provide security. This sum was a far cry from the low defense budgets in the period between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Korean War. As always, he believed that the United States should be prepared for any eventuality; however, as with most such protection,

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[24]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson, George Landry, Macon Telegraph, March 30, 1956.

[25]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson, Macon News, July 4, 1956.

Vinson would have preferred not to have to use this national insurance policy.[26]

In July, 1956 President Nasser of Egypt had nationalized the Suez Canal incurring the wrath of both Great Britain and France. Before any settlement could be reached, the Israeli struck at Egyptian positions following which British and French forces landed in Egypt to protect the canal. Both the United States and Russia, in contrast to their usual reaction patterns, exerted pressure upon the invaders to withdraw. After receiving a call from President Eisenhower, Chairman Vinson left Milledgeville at the height of the emergency to attend high level non-partisan meetings on the American course of action needed to cope with the Middle East crisis. The Presidential request was one of two received by Chairman Vinson during the Congressional recess and election break and certainly was indicative of the powerful position held by Carl Vinson.[27]

Vinson and Congressional Prerogative

By 1958, Carl Vinson had been in Congress for over one-fourth of America's history. He had served as a Congressman during the terms of seven Presidents from

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Union-Recorder, November 8, 1956, p. 1; December 13, 1956, p. 1.

Wilson through Eisenhower and he would serve with two other chief executives before retiring five years later. In this time, the increase in United States expenditures had gone up very startlingly--an increase from $761 million to $75 billion. Of this seventy-five billion dollars, about 60 per cent was now going to the defense establishment. When Carl Vinson came to Washington, "airplanes were merely dangerous toys." Although he had been in Congress thirteen years when Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic, he could certainly find a most vivid contrast between the plane of Lindbergh's time and the plane of 1958. He delighted in citing the fact that the engine which Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis used would not generate enough power to even start the engines of a modern jet bomber.[28]

Although Carl Vinson represented a district which was almost exclusively rural, he was one of the most powerful determinants of the future strength and composition of the armed forces buttressing America's foreign policy. Therefore, he was largely responsible for the allotment over half of the government expenditures. Over the years, he had built up such power that he had a very strong control over the House Armed Services Committee and over the monies available to the entire military establishment.

If Chairman Vinson declared, as he did in the discussion of the scrapping of the Kentucky and the Hawaii in

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[28]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson, Macon News, September 28, 1958.

1958, that the development of advanced guided missiles, nuclear power and more sophisticated anti-submarine warfare equipment necessitated new ship designs eliminating the need for battleships and battle cruisers, most Congressmen respected his judgment. All legislation relating to the armed forces must have the Vinson stamp of approval or its sponsors would have a rather difficult time getting it through Congress. Being predisposed to providing abundantly but efficiently for the various armed forces, he would attempt to expedite favorable legislation. Furthermore, the services were fairly aware of the format of the legislation to which the Chairman would agree and that which they would just waste their time in trying to get enacted.[29]

That Vinson was moving increasingly toward the new weapons did not mean that he was willing to discard the old, apart from the battleship. In accepting nomination to his 23rd consecutive two-year full term, he warned that "we cannot put all our eggs in one basket only to discover that that might be the wrong kind of basket." America must, he continued, have a multi-purpose defense, retaining the old which may be useful and building the new as they develop. In this desire for a mixture of weapons, he found justification even for the decentralization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff system. Their

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[29]Whether Naval officer or Congressman, the awareness that Chairman Vinson rarely lost a Congressional vote on sponsored defense legislation meant careful consideration of his position by others.

disagreements insured that not all of America's defense would be put into a single weapon.[30]

Carl Vinson pledged himself to a struggle for freedom as a young Congressman and now, almost fifty years later, he still stood for that same principle. Speaking before the Navy League's 1960 Seapower Symposium, he appealed for Polaris submarines and criticized the withholding of funds which would provide the Navy with a second nuclear carrier. "Expenditures involved in maintaining an adequate military preparedness," he emphasized, "are vastly less than the cost of total war; and incomparably less than the cost of defeat."[31] At a private dinner for friends of Representative Carl Vinson and Senator Richard B. Russell, honored guest Vinson reiterated his time-honored philosophy:

> And I see, in our Army, Navy, Air and Marine forces an irresistible thunderbolt--power so great as to obliterate any nation which would dare to assault this citadel of liberty.
>
> My friends:
>
> As our Minutemen 185 years ago:
>
> --as the frontiersmen of days gone by;
>
> --as the Blue and the Grey a century ago;
>
> --as the boys on the Rhine a half century ago;
>
> --as the upcoming generation today all the world over who met and destroyed aggressors a

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[30]Clippings in the possession of Carl Vinson, Macon News, September 17, 1958; September 24, 1958; Macon Telegraph, September 18, 1958. This is the same approach which he had used earlier in reaction to the Graf Spee episode off South America. He interposed into a hearing the comment that he had learned the lesson from that fight to avoid "all your eggs in one basket." It was better to build three or four ships rather than one enormous one, Atlanta Constitution, January 10, 1940, p. 9.

[31]CNO Vinson Summary, p. 3.

> mere decade and half ago; and,
> --as our youth in Korea only yesterday--we in this nation, true to these brave men, true to our heritage, will stand unafraid, confident and determined, here in mid-Twentieth Century.[32]

Again and again the theme of preparedness showed itself synonymous with the name "Vinson."

Although Carl Vinson supported President Kennedy on most issues other than civil rights, he did not approve of his action, or lack of action, on the B-70 bomber program. More money had been appropriated by Congress than the President wished to spend. Following the wishes of the House Armed Services Committee, the Chairman proposed an amendment to the 1963 authorization bill for aircraft, missiles, and naval vessels, H.R. 9751, directing that the Secretary of the Air Force use $491 million for the B-70 program. Letters from both President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara offered a new study of this plane "in the light of recommendations and representations" made by the House Armed Services Committee. On the other hand, the President opposed the change of the word "authorize" to "direct" because the latter would impinge "upon the full powers and discretions" which Kennedy thought essential to the execution of his presidential duties.[33]

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[32]November 11, 1961, speech in the possession of Carl Vinson.

[33]Cong. Rec., CVIII, 4691-97, 4714-15, 4720; Time, March 30, 1962, p. 15. For Secretary McNamara's position

Stressing Constitutional powers given Congress "to raise and support" military forces, Vinson illuminated his position that the time had come to determine whether Congress had only the negative function of withholding authority or funds to prevent action, or if it also had the positive authority to require that specific action be taken. He added that he did not like to have Congress considered "a kindly old uncle who complains, but who, finally, as everyone expects, gives in and raises his hand in blessing, and then rocks in his chair for another year, glancing down the avenue once in a while wondering whether he's done the right thing."[34] Representative after Representative supported him in his advocacy of the B-70 and Congressional leadership. When the word "authorized" remained, Congress passed the 1963 authorization for aircraft, missiles, and ships, including the extra funds for the B-70. The House vote of 404-0 was followed by a Senate vote of 85-0 indicating overwhelming support for a plane which President Kennedy did not want.[35]

President Kennedy and Chairman Vinson met to confer on the B-70 bomber question. After the "walk through the

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on the RS-70, see "McNamara Views RS-70 as Doubtful Asset," Aviation Week and Space Technology, March 26, 1962, p. 17.

[34]New York Times, March 8, 1962, pp. 1, 10; "Uncle Carl Gets Made," Time, March 16, 1962, pp. 16-7.

[35]Cong. Rec., CVIII, 4723-24.

rose garden," the two adversaries compromised. Vinson would not insist upon further development of the B-70 and the President would not drop the plane until additional research and investigation had been conducted. In an interview with the author, Mr. Vinson admitted, "I had to compromise with Kennedy." Thereafter, according to Vinson, "Through the rose garden" denoted compromise.[36]

Fleet Projection

Carl Vinson spoke before the Georgia Sixth District Democratic Convention on September 19, 1962 emphasizing the current difficulty which President Kennedy and the nation faced in preventing Cuba from becoming a Soviet base for military aggression. Knowing that the Russians had begun their massive missile military build-up in Cuba, he assessed the complete situation declaring:

> I am confident of one thing--that so long as we maintain our military strength we are on the road to eventually assure the peace of the world.

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[36]Interview with Carl Vinson, Milledgeville, Georgia, November 19, 1967; New York Times, March 26, 1962, p. 12; Cong. Rec., CVIII, 14838. See "'Swamp Fox' Letter," Newsweek, April 2, 1962, p. 23 or "The Admiral Strikes His Colors," Time, March 30, 1962, pp. 15-6 for details of the Kennedy-Vinson meeting in which the latter conceded that the President had the final say on how defense funds would be spent. Katherine Johnsen, writing in the March 26, 1962 issue of Aviation Week and Space Technology (pp. 17-8), noted that the settlement could also be considered a Vinson victory--McNamara would have to make another study of the RS-70. A year later, the question still had not been answered--the House Armed Services Committee voted 31-5 "to breathe new life into the RS-70 program" Washington Post, February 26, 1963, p. A17. For the inside story of the Kennedy letter "saving Vinson's face," see Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy (New York, 1965), pp. 347-48.

> I am especially confident that any demonstration of weakness on our part will be met by greater demands from the Soviet Union, or nuclear chaos.
>
> That is the reason we must deal with the Cuban situation firmly. . . . The price of nuclear war would be much higher--involving a loss of 70 to 80 million American lives and nearly half of our industrial capacity.

Once again, he had spelled out the consequences of being unprepared.[37]

Underscoring this sort of unpreparedness, a House Subcommittee headed by Congressman L. Mendel Rivers, Democrat of South Carolina, reported on mass obsolescence. Chairman Vinson had appointed this committee charging it with the responsibility of studying the current composition of the United States Navy and the age and remaining useful life of specific vessels maintained in order to suggest the action necessary to prevent block obsolescence such as experienced by the fleet in early 1930's.[38] This would involve full consideration of the fleet modernization necessary to rehabilitate existing vessels as well as new construction. Now, upon receipt of the committee findings, the following notation had been appended to the report: "I have read the foregoing report and find myself in full

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[37]Clipping in the possession of Carl Vinson, Macon Telegraph, September 20, 1962.

[38]U.S., Congress, House, Armed Services Committee Hearings 1961-62 Report of Special Subcommittee on Composition of the Fleet and Block Obsolescence of Naval Vessels, 7242, hereafter cited as Report Block Obsolescence.

accord with the views and recommendations of the sub-committee.

Approved.

(s) Carl Vinson,
Carl Vinson,
Chairman."[39]

Many of the same difficulties which had plagued our defense preparations thirty years before were prevalent once again.

This report, which had met the approval of Mr. Vinson, warned the American people that, at our current rate of building, the United States Navy would decrease from the 860 ships of 1962 to only 503 ships in 1973. In 1962, 598 ships of the 860 ships in the active fleet were World War II authorizations.[40] These ships were subject to block obsolescence inasmuch as they had been built within a very short period during the Second World War.

Regarding it "a statistical certainty that if this country continues with a shipbuilding program which reflects past history," the committee made the judgment that "our Navy would . . . cease to be an effective military instrument." Carl Vinson agreed with the premise that "our Navy, if we can judge by the past, is on an

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[39] Ibid., 7259; New York Times, September 28, 1962, p. 25.

[40] Report Block Obsolescence, 7241. Vinson, a year and a half later, still maintained this position. See Cong. Rec., CX, 3198.

inexorable march toward its own destruction as an arm of our foreign policy and as an effective agency for national defense."[41]

While admitting that there was an "uncertainty about the future requirements for other weapons systems as to type and quantity," Vinson and the subcommittee were convinced that "there cannot be any doubt, so long as we live in our present geographical environment, that a modern, second-to-none fleet is an absolute and fundamental requirement for our national survival." The warnings could almost be taken verbatim from the Vinson speeches of the 1930's. Now, however, obsolescence was even more devastating because of the immense advances which exaggerated the "depreciation of existing ships, equipment, weapons, and weapons systems due to the development of greater threats and advanced technology."[42]

Where the threat in the 1930's had been Japan, the greater threat of the sixties came from the Soviet Union. In 1962, the Russian submarine fleet consisted of approximately 400 submarines. This would compare with the 80 with which Nazi Germany began the Second World War and almost completely disrupted American supply lines to Europe. Moreover, the Russians had been continually replacing their submarines so that the threat to the United

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[41] Report Block Obsolescence, 7245.

[42] Ibid., 7245, 7249; Cong. Rec., CIX, 4064-66.

States had become even greater over the years. The newer subs which the Russians were building were equipped with more modern detection devices, had greater speed, and had often been provided with ballistic missile launchers. Furthermore, inasmuch as the nuclear powered icebreaker Lenin had proven successful, there was no reason to believe that the Soviets would not be developing atomic powered submarines.[43]

In addition, the committee noted the enormous amount of Soviet oceanographic research which had been going on just off our shores. While being aware that some of this research would have scientific value, the subcommittee warned the United States Congress and the American people that most of the oceanography seemed significant to naval operations in general and most especially to submarine operations. The type of information being gathered would be that applicable to submarine warfare, mine warfare, and anti-submarine warfare purposes.[44]

In the final analysis, there was no question but that Carl Vinson and the subcommittee were concerned about the strength of the United States Navy and the implications which a dissipation of that strength might bring. This subcommittee declared and Mr. Vinson concurred that

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[43] Report Block Obsolescence, 7256-57; Cong. Rec., CII, 1836.

[44] Report Block Obsolescence, 7258.

> . . . if the recommendations of the Department of Defense for fiscal year 1964 and the next several years contemplate a shipbuilding program inadequate to correct the obsolescence discussed herein--and this means something in the order of 70 new ships per year--the full committee should take aggressive action to insure that a program of the proper size be authorized by the Congress and that appropriations are made to accomplish a program of the proper size.[45]

No action was taken on this proposal. Once again Carl Vinson was in the middle of an attempt to get the United States to build an adequate Navy.

Vinson Finale

Through September and October of 1962, relations between the United States and Cuba had become steadily worse. The situation was further complicated by the massive Russian aid which was substantially bolstering Castro's regime in Cuba and, in turn, presenting a danger to the United States and various Latin American countries. By October 21st, a pall of crisis hung over Washington as top administration officials were meeting to discuss a rather difficult situation. There were hints that President Kennedy would address the nation over radio and television shortly and various actions and reactions gave additional suggestions that some very menacing crisis was approaching the flash point.

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[45] Ibid., 7258-59.

Jere N. Moore, in his column, "On the Side," wrote of his experience in the quiet Milledgeville autumn:

> Monday morning when I arrived downtown I found a very grave and concerned Congressman. He had been called by the President to return to Washington and a plane would pick him up at Dobbins Air Force Base. . . . I thought how much this man had given to the security of this nation. This is the 4th war threat to challenge him. . . . He now stands as one of the powerful figures guiding the destiny of our nation in another crisis.[46]

Mr. Moore captured an important segment of a poignant incident. Carl Vinson was on his way to Washington to attend a special advanced briefing on the Cuban crisis. The President's personal jet which he had not used himself as yet had been dispatched to Georgia to pick up Representative Vinson and Senator Richard B. Russell, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and rush them to Washington.[47]

President Kennedy addressed the nation over television and radio in the early evening of October 22 and vividly explained the changed situation in the American defense posture precipitated by the Soviets setting up missile sites in Cuba capable of hitting most of the major cities in the United States. The President had decided to quarantine Cuba and Carl Vinson had been instrumental in promoting the building of many of the ships and planes

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[46]Jere N. Moore, "On the Side," clipping in Carl Vinson's possession, Union-Recorder, October 25, 1962.

[47]Macon Telegraph and News, December 30, 1962, p. 19.

which would be used to enforce the interdiction of additional offensive weapons on their way to Cuba. American strength forced Premier Khrushchev to back down and the offending offensive weapons were soon on their way back to Russia.

During the crisis, bases in Florida and Georgia had been alerted for any eventualities and these installations had suddenly become of the greatest importance to the American defense establishment. After the Cuban crisis had eased up, Chairman Vinson accompanied President Kennedy on his tour of various Georgia and Florida military and naval bases.[48]

However, the Cuban Missile crisis had raised some questions in Vinson's mind. Speaking a few months later, he noted that the United States had at last realized the need for "adequate continuing national defense." As the strongest nation in the world, it could preserve peace for the world. But he cautioned that strength loses much of its vitality if the will to use it is missing. Citing the October Cuban crisis as a case in point, he emphasized that strength coupled with a firm determination to use power if necessary was the best sustainer of liberty. In his opinion, the bloodless victory in Cuba did not permit Americans to "bask in the lassitude of complacency" for

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[48] Ibid.; Atlanta Constitution, November 22, 1963, p. 8.

if freedom were worth striving for, then a people must be willing to make the necessary sacrifices.[49]

In the summer following the Cuban Missile crisis, Carl Vinson broke the record for service in the United States House of Representatives. The seventy-nine-year-old Georgia Democrat listened quietly to a succession of tributes before he answered with a speech of acknowledgment of less than a minute's duration. It was not Mr. Vinson's wish to have a fuss made over him. Though he had always maintained that his work in Congress would stand as his tribute, he did agree to one instance of celebration--a buffet, reception and Marine parade were held in his honor at the Marine barracks in Washington. Secretary of the Navy Fred Korth was the host for the occasion. Later in the day, the veteran law maker paid a visit to the White House when President John F. Kennedy presented him with a metal spike and piece of wood from the Navy frigate Constellation.[50]

Chairman Vinson notified his constituents on his eightieth birthday that he would not run again for Congress and that they had a year in which to get a new Congressman to replace him. A caller inquired, "Are you

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[49]Union-Recorder, April 25, 1963, p. 1.

[50]Cong. Rec., CIX, 12695-96; New York Times, July 17, 1963, p. 8. For Congressional tributes, see Cong. Rec., CIX, 12680-97, 22018-21.

sure? Suppose the President insisted that you had to run." His answer came back quickly--"I'll say thank you to the President but I'll have to respectfully decline to accede to it. I won't say what Sherman said 'If nominated I will not accept, . . .' because I don't want to get Sherman mixed up too much in Georgia." Having added the longest tenure in Congress to his previous record of having been a committee chairman for the longest stint, Mr. Vinson announced: "I'll keep busy. My policy is to wear out, not rust out. I'll be active in local and state affairs."[51]

A New York Times editorial summed up "Carl Vinson's Half Century" in the following way:

> Carl Vinson of Georgia has been one of the greatest legislative powers on Capitol Hill during his half century. . . .
>
> Mr. Vinson probably has forgotten more about the nation's military forces than most men ever knew.
>
> However, age takes its toll of us all; and Mr. Vinson . . . has set an example to other veteran legislators of how to retire gracefully before one has outlived one's usefulness. . . .
>
> Carl Vinson has always championed the cause of the services, but as one of their best friends he has also been one of their severest critics. His paternalistic attitude has at times verged on the proprietary, but his judgments and actions have been on the whole sound and far sighted.[52]

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[51] New York Times, November 19, 1963, p. 19; Atlanta Constitution, November 19, 1963, p. 1. Even his retirement made Georgia politics more interesting. His action coincided with federal pressure to redistrict the state in accordance with the Baker vs. Carr decision. It could make compliance easier or more difficult. Ibid., pp. 1, 4, 7, 8.

[52] New York Times, November 19, 1963, p. 40.

The first, second, and fourth paragraphs of this tribute also summed up the feelings of many colleagues as well.

Even though he had announced his intended retirement to the "farm," Carl Vinson would continue his interest during his last year in Congress in preventing what he considered erosion in the American defense program. Defying Secretary of Defense McNamara, the House of Representatives, led by "Uncle Carl," passed legislation to provide a new bomber for the 1970's. Superseding the B-52 and the B-58, it would continue America's use of manned bombers and would provide a continuation of his view that only a variety of means could provide adequate defense.[53] The House Armed Services Committee had sided with General Curtis LeMay of the Air Force and the House, itself, supported the Vinson program in a roll call of 336-0.[54]

Furthermore, Vinson refused to go along with cuts which Secretary McNamara proposed in shipyards. Contending that while private yards might be able to build ships more cheaply than the Navy ship yards, repairs and conversion could be effected more satisfactorily in the Navy facilities. It was more convenient and more efficient

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[53] Cong. Rec., CX, 3194-97. For debate on this issue, see Ibid., 3200-24.

[54] Ibid., 3223-24; New York Times, February 21, 1964, p. 14.

to house the ship's company at the Navy yards. Moreover, the yards which were phased out would be rather difficult to place back in commission should the necessity arise. Pointing out, "I haven't a Navy yard in my state," the Georgian showed that he did not have to worry about the reaction of his constituents. Someone else had an entirely different situation to worry about and no one could punctuate the implications of the predicament better than Carl Vinson, the veteran of Naval politics: "I warn you that before this calendar year is out, three Navy yards will be closed. Will they be in New York? Or Boston? Or Philadelphia?"[55] However, Chairman Vinson's purpose was to emphasize the nation's need for a vigorous defense. In contrast, he promoted legislation to provide new warships. Even in his waning days, Carl Vinson did not wane.

On the occasion of the signing of a $16.9 billion defense procurement bill (H.R. 9637), President Lyndon Johnson paid a surprise tribute to Congressman Vinson. The President declared that this bill marked "one of the final acts of patriotism from a man whose entire life has been an exercise in patriotism." Continuing, he stated, "It's a great honor for me to sign into law this bill which represents a large strike forward in the strengthening of this nation's defenses--and which symbolizes the

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[55] Ibid., April 23, 1964, p. 15; Cong. Rec., CX, 3198-99.

uncommon devotion of one man, Carl Vinson of Georgia, to his country."[56]

Even after he had retired from Congress, Carl Vinson continued to receive the plaudits of his fellow Americans. Symbolically, and most fittingly, the House Armed Services Committee Hearing Room was dedicated in Mr. Vinson's name on April 2, 1965. No one else had been so overwhelmingly associated with this committee.

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[56]See also letter from Secretary of State Dean Rusk to Carl Vinson, June 24, 1964.

CONCLUSION

The fifty years which comprised Carl Vinson's career in Congress represent an unusual American interlude in armament and world position. When he entered Congress in 1914, the nation was at a nadir in defense and when he left in 1964, American armed might was at an apogee with power felt throughout the world. This was not a progressive movement nor was it a Vinson project solely. For better or for worse, much and many had intervened.

When Vinson was learning the duties of a naval affairs committeeman, he watched President Wilson and Secretary of Navy Daniels build a wartime Navy. Much of this effort was too little and too late; the bulk of the ships completed, including the four battleships and the seven cruisers were not finished until after the Armistice. It is, however, rather difficult to tell how much effect this situation had upon Vinson in the preliminaries to the Second World War; but he did avoid a similar rush in the lateness of the hour.

During the 1920's, the President and Congress severely curtailed naval expansion. Vinson lacked the influence and even, perhaps, the desire to resist such reductions. It had to be enough to modernize battleships and somewhat steadily build cruisers. Even when he reached

a position of influence on the Committee, a depression and Hoover economies made adequate naval expansion unlikely.

His effective term as chairman began in 1933 when Japan's threat in Asia and Roosevelt's twin desires of public works and a strong Navy created a suitable climate in which Vinson could act. He maneuvered Congress into providing the authorizations necessary and, in turn, into following this with the necessary appropriations. While he did the legislative "leg work" for FDR, Congress provided the money taxing the available shipbuilding facilities to the limit. Although Congress, as usual on most issues, contained staunch supporters of the Vinson bills as well as vigorous enemies, the passage and quick implementation of all Vinson authorization legislation, showed that Congress was favorable to a strong national defense effort. Where Representatives and Senators could easily have shut off the authorizations or the appropriations for additional naval ships, they, to the contrary, legislated a most suitable schedule which provided adequately for the American defense needs.

This schedule made a Roosevelt-Vinson Navy. But because he so often preceded the President in his push for more ships and so often advocated construction beyond that requested by the President, perhaps it was more correctly a Vinson-Roosevelt Navy. In many ways, after Roosevelt's death it was a Vinson Navy for he led the

resistance to destruction and promoted the attempt to maintain the coveted status quo in the naval strength.

Thus, the self-interest of the United States demanded a formidable sea-air power to carry out its involvement in the world during the Second World War and into the post-war period. To do this, Carl Vinson advocated the building of a powerful fleet and the retention of a substantial portion of that force at a time when world conditions first precipitated a second world war and then anticipated a third world war. Retention, after the war, would mean little, however, if unification sapped the Navy's strength. Hence, Vinson would fight to prevent a weakening of the Navy that he had built. Though unification came, it, as shaped by James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, and Carl Vinson, did not really hinder the Navy's overall program.

After the 1948 election, Vinson relegated the Navy to second place and became an advocate of strategic air power. In some ways, the change was not startling; for he supported the maintenance of a massive fleet of big bombers --the battleships of the Air Force. These behemoths of the air would veritably replace the battleships of the sea as the frontline of the American defense system. In contrast, Korea modified the thinking of many, including Vinson, to a renewed concept of dependence upon the Navy and the Army as well as the Air Force. He would, as Chairman of the Armed Service Committee until his 1964

retirement, pressure Presidents, Congresses, and his committee to provide forces sufficient to maintain America's leadership in the world.

Until the eve of retirement, he continued the pressure necessary to provide a strong American defense posture. Giving the only real continuity through over forty-eight of committee service, Carl Vinson's entire career revolved around the single word "defense." It was indeed strange that a country lawyer faced ever toward the sea.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

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As voluminous materials are available on the general topic and the period of study, one finds the greatest difficulty being selective. However, there has been no suitable success in systematically collecting the various Vinson materials. These still remain widely scattered. In addition, because much of the period is so close to the time of this study, much information is still held under security check. This essay is thus selective and not definitive.

Manuscript Materials

As the focus of this study has been Carl Vinson's career as a factor in the various defense authorization implementations, the Congressional Record provided the working fabric of Vinson speeches, strategy, and successes. This was augmented by the proceedings of the many Congressional hearings presided over by Chairman Vinson, appropriate sub-committee hearings and reports from such deliberative bodies.

Some pertinent materials are available at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York. The Library of Congress Manuscript Division has three useful

substantial holdings: the Emory Scott Land Papers, the Dudley W. Knox Papers and the Borah Papers. Some important official committee communications are on file in the Congressional Division of the National Archives to complement other written exchanges maintained in the General Division. The Roosevelt Library contains similar intercourse as well as the contents of the numerous Roosevelt press conferences.

In addition to the various materials available at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, other original Roosevelt information is available through Samuel I. Rosenman, editor, The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt (13 volumes, New York, 1938-50) and Edgar B. Nixon, editor, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Foreign Affairs (3 volumes, Cambridge, Mass., 1969). Son Elliot edited some of the President's letters in F. D. R. His Personal Letters, 1928-1945 (New York, 1950). Two books written by the President, himself, must be consulted to gain some of the flavor which he imparted to the period, Franklin D. Roosevelt, On Our Way (New York, 1934) and Franklin D. Roosevelt, Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1941 (New York, 1942).

To partially compensate for the lack of similar Vinson information, two delightful Milledgeville interviews granted by Carl Vinson which revealed considerable of the background to his relationship to warship authorization were used. Although he was eighty-four years old at the time, he was of clear mind and sound health.

Furthermore, his information was substantiated through other sources. Additional interviews with close acquaintances in Milledgeville have added much color to the study of Carl Vinson's character.

Government Publications

Of the almost inexaustible fund of publications coming out of the Government Printing Office, probably the 1920-1921, 1925-1926, 1927-1928, 1928-1929, 1929-1930, 1932-1933, 1933-1934, and 1935 reports usually entitled Hearings Before the Committee on Naval Affairs on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment complemented the Congressional Record most appropriately to show vividly the Congressional process of strengthening the American fleet during this period. Later similar records of the House Armed Services Committee are not as helpful because the ominous specter of Soviet Russia caused numerous deletions and off the record statements which compromised their usefulness. The official consummation of naval legislation can be followed in the U.S. Statutes for the respective Congresses.

The Secretary of Navy's Annual Reports for the years 1921, 1924, 1930, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 and 1946 contain important applicable information as a part of that official's statement of the existing condition of the fleet and the program contemplated for the future. These reports were extensive prior to 1934 when, probably as an economy measure, the Secretary of the Navy

cut the content drastically reducing the volumn of the succeeding volumes.

The Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States provided primary material which sheds more light on the diplomatic exchanges of this era. Of these, the particular two volume selection, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan 1931-1941 (Washington, 1943), was most helpful.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Much of Vinson's career can be traced through the newspapers of the day. The most widely available New York Times [1914-64] with its index must be considered the most important source of this kind. Its coverage followed closely the pre-war naval building controversy and the post-war campaign to maintain the lead gained in that process. To some extent, its index unlocks other newspapers as well. Using a somewhat different approach, the Christian Science Monitor often served as an antidote to the New York Times giving a better balance to parallel discussions. Especially helpful on the Congressional relationship to and effect upon the warship construction question was the Washington Post [1934-64]. In addition, several of its well-known columnist researched a number of most valuable articles pertinent to this study. Several Georgia newspapers were almost indispensable in detailing the native son's chairmanship in Congress. These included the renown

Atlanta Constitution [1932-64], the Atlanta Journal [1934-55], the Macon Telegraph [1939-62], the Macon News [1952-58] and the Union-Recorder of Milledgeville [1930-64]. Within these publications, local columnists produced some rather short but valuable treatments of Vinson. A number of other newspapers were used sporadically but selectively during this study. These were especially valuable when taken from the collections of clippings which are in the possession of Carl Vinson at his farm home just outside Milledgeville, Georgia.

Some effective short treatments of topics germane to this study can be found in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review-Journal of American History, the Pacific Historical Review, and the American Historical Review. Certain periodicals were especially helpful on the varied reactions to the 1934 Vinson-Trammell success, the treaty enlargement goals of 1938 and 1940 and the postwar problems which Vinson faced in 1948-50, 1956-58 and 1962. Of greatest value in the earlier period were The Nation and the New Republic, while Time, United States News and World Report, and Newsweek fill in many gaps in the postwar period. Contrary to expectations, Scientific American of the 1930's proved to be a valuable source of similar technical information for the earlier period. The technical journal, Aviation Week and Space Technology, explained the verbal exchange in the manned bomber controversy.

No serious student of naval history can realistically refuse to consult the numerous pertinent articles in the United States Naval Institute Proceedings. While many showed a most definite pro-Navy bias, much of value has been present in this media. Probably the most important items used in this study were the selections by Robert Albion in the November 1952 issue, "The Naval Affairs Committees 1816-1947" and Charles F. Elliott in the March 1966 issue, "The Genesis of the Modern U.S. Navy." The former provided an elucidation of the behind the scenes activities in both the House and the Senate Naval Affairs Committees while the latter maintained the same general thesis as this study relative to the Vinson-Trammell Act.

Several selected studies of Chairman Vinson provided valuable insight into his methods while concentrating upon the immediate Vinson issue. Vinson legends abound and among the most fertile fields to be considered are Louis R. Stockstill's article "'Uncle Carl' Vinson--Backstage Boss of the Pentagon," in the Army, Navy, Air Force Journal of 1961 which was reprinted in the Congressional Record and adapted for publication in the Readers' Digest, Eliot Janeway's "The Man Who Owns the Navy," Saturday Evening Post, December 15, 1945, Vance Packard's "Carl Vinson, Watchdog of Defense," American Magazine, April 1950, and Beverly Smith's "He Makes the Generals Listen," Saturday Evening Post, March 10, 1951. The latter is especially

good on Vinson's questioning of Secretary of Defense Johnson cutbacks in military spending.

Bibliographies

Several fairly extensive bibliographies were prepared for the immediate post-World War Two era. Evidently the most prolific compiler for this period was Grace Hadley Fuller who wrote for the Library of Congress, Division of Bibliography. Her works included Selected List of Recent References on American National Defense (Washington, 1939), A Selected List of References on the Expansion of the U. S. N., 1933-1939 (Washington, 1939) and A List of Bibliographies on Questions Relating to National Defense (Washington, 1941). However, Werner B. Ellinger and Herbert Rosinski, Sea Power in the Pacific, A Bibliography, 1936-1941 (Princeton, 1942) provided a much more extensive source to the materials written on this period. A most recent compilation by Robert G. Albion, the Harvard naval historian, Maritime and Naval History: An Annoted Bibliogrpahy (Mystic, Conn., 1963) takes in the entire period of American naval history.

Biographical Material

Although no Vinson biography exists at the present, certain biographical material has given at least a glimpse into the setting in which this man operated. Some background to the circumstances faced by the Morrow Committee

of 1925 as well as the Navy's gains from the Billy Mitchell episode are included in the various Mitchell biographies. The most useful to this study was Alfred F. Hurley, Billy Mitchell Crusader for Air Power (New York, 1964).

The Roosevelt period has been quite amply covered by a multitude of biographical studies including Robert Sherwood, Roosevelt and Hopkins (New York, 1948) which portrayed the tensions of the 1930's as they affected naval officers. Most critical of Vinson's part in naval re-armament was Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau in From the Morgenthau Diaries: Years of Crisis, 1928-1938 edited by John Blum (Boston, 1959). Both an early critical Roosevelt biography by Mauritz A. Hallgren, The Gay Reformer Profits before Plenty under Franklin D. Roosevelt (New York, 1935) and a later biographical approach by Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York, 1952) dealt with certain phases of Roosevelt's attention to naval affairs. In his Franklin Roosevelt and the Delano Influence (Pittsburgh, 1946), Daniel W. Delano published a most laudatory account of the maternal lineage which he maintained provided certain predilections for the sea foreordaining FDR's interest in the Navy. Delano believed that such a circumstance predicted that Roosevelt would build a formidable Navy in spite of a penurious Congress.

Among the Roosevelt biographies available which show the context within which Vinson operated are James

MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Lion and the Fox (New York, 1956), Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt (Boston, 1952-), Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt (Boston, 1957-), Dexter Perkins, The New Age of Franklin Roosevelt, 1933-45 (Chicago, 1957) and the critical volume by Edgar E. Robinson, The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945 (Philadelphia, 1955). Among the peripheral biographies usable were E. David Cronon, Josephus Daniels in Mexico (Madison, 1960), Donald S. Carmichael, F. D. R. Columnist (Chicago, 1947) and Charles Michelson, Ghost Talks (New York, 1941).

There are many other biographies available from the Roosevelt era and even, within limits, from the post-Second World War period. These are, for the most part, capably written. Particularly valuable were such naval autobiographies as those of Ernest J. King and Walter Muir Whitehead, Fleet Admiral King A Naval Record (New York, 1962) and William D. Leahy, I Was There (New York, 1950) and Emory Scott Land (the Navy Constructor at the time of the initiation and the implementation of the Vinson-Trammell Act), Winning the War with Ships Land, Sea and Air--Mostly Land (New York, 1958). No Secretary of the Navy or Secretary of Defense from this period has provided an autobiography of use for this study. The most pertinent Secretary of State's record was that left by Cordell Hull, Memoirs (2 volumes, New York, 1948). Another cabinet

member, Secretary of War Henry Stimson in his and McGeorge Bundy's On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1948) noted his own attitude toward the Navy at this time. Though Richard Current treated Stimson rather critically in his Secretary Stimson: A Study in Statecraft (New Brunswick, N. J., 1954), Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston, 1960) presented a more favorable portrayal. For a full treatment of a leading isolationist, one should consult Marian McKenna's scholarly biography of Borah (Ann Arbor, 1961). However, pre-Pearl Harbor years have been considered in a somewhat different vein in Ambassador Joseph C. Grew's, Ten Years in Japan (New York, 1944). Arnold A. Rogow, James Forrestal A Study of Personality, Politics and Policy (New York, 1963) provided somewhat of a continuation of and a contrast to the Stimson era. Some rather interesting exchanges are included in Years of Trial and Hope, Volume II of Harry S. Truman's Memoirs (Garden City, N. Y., 1955).

Monographs and Special Studies

Harold and Margaret Sprout's The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, 1939) is a readily available source which developed the overall background in which Vinson had to operate. However, numerous other works have set the stage more closely for the climate in which Vinson worked to push authorization. Among those consulted

in this study were Robert Divine, The Illusion of Neutrality (Chicago, 1962), Donald Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality 1937-1941 (Ann Arbor, 1955), and Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth Century Reaction (New York, 1957). Especially aware of Japanese reactions to the signed Vinson-Trammell Act was Thaddeus Tuleja, Statesmen and Admirals Quest for a Far Eastern Navy Policy, 1931-1941 (New York, 1963). Raymond O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium: The United States and the London Naval Conference of 1930 (Lawrence, Kansas, 1962) explained this attempt to limit naval armaments through a specific conference.

This preliminary period was studied in detail from a naval emphasis by Donald W. Mitchell, History of the Modern American Navy (New York, 1946), Gerald E. Wheeler, Prelude to Pearl Harbor: The United States Navy and the Far East (Columbia, Mo., 1963), George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None (New York, 1940) and Kenneth Edwards, Uneasy Oceans (London, 1939). In addition, Merle Armitage, The United States Navy (New York, 1940) gave a capsuled history of that force and the happenings abroad which affected it. Quite critical of the Navy at this time was F. Russell Bichowsky, Is the Navy Ready? (New York, 1935).

Among those exploring the background to the confrontation between the United States and Japan preparatory to the Second World War and its effect on the building of

warships were William L. Neumann, America Encounters Japan From Perry to MacArthur (Baltimore, 1963), Edwin A. Falk, From Perry to Pearl Harbor The Struggle for Supremacy in the Pacific (Garden City, N. Y., 1943), and Lawrence H. Battistini, Japan and America, from Earliest Times to the Present (New York, 1954). From his position in the State Department, Stanley Hornbeck, The United States and the Far East: Certain Fundamentals of Policy (Boston, 1942) observed a somewhat different view of the future of American policy in that part of the world.

Important background to the Hoover naval policy is given in Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933 (New Haven, Conn., 1957). Two monographs dealing with a phase of American diplomatic choices in the pre-United States entrance to the Second World War were Manny T. Koginos, The Panay Incident: Prelude to War (Lafayette, Ind., 1967) which attempted to place that situation in its proper perspective and Mark Lincoln Chadwin, The Hawks of World War II (Chapel Hill, 1968) which revealed the intricacies of the pressures exerted in 1940 and 1941 to rearm the United States.

Although weak at this time, the Navy League published several tracts promoting naval building. The most pertinent to this study were American Sea Sense Grows (Washington, 1929), The Treasury Deficit and a Treaty Navy (Washington,

1932), and two contrasting publications with the same title, The President and the Navy (Washington, 1931, an essay critical of President Hoover and Washington, 1934, an essay laudatory of President Roosevelt). Neither Armin Rappaport in his The Navy of the United States (Detroit, 1962) nor Karl Schriftgiesser in his The Lobbyist (Boston, 1951) gave the League much credit for using tactics which were successful in pressuring for a comprehensive building program.

To the contrary, a number of studies have appeared dealing with the climate of isolationism in the United States and its consequent effect upon President Roosevelt. The noted historian, Charles A. Beard, in his The Idea of National Interest (New York, 1934) and in his testimony before Congressional committees illustrated the isolationist position of the early 1940's. Important later studies on isolationism included Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse (New York, 1957), Alexander DeConde, ed., Isolation and Security (Durham, N. C., 1957) and Manfred Jonas, Isolation in America 1935-1941 (Ithaca, N. Y., 1966). Among the books published in the crucial year 1934 were two on the 1916-1918 wartime profits circumstances, Merchants of Death (New York, 1934) by H. C. Engelbrecht and F. C. Hanighen and Iron, Blood and Profits An Exposure of the World-Wide Munitions Racket (New York, 1934) by the well-known George Seldes. In a subsequent biography, Senator Gerald P. Nye and American Foreign Relations (Minneapolis,

1962), Wayne Cole explained the position taken by the group led by Senator Nye emphasizing this facet of the American entrance into the First World War and its consequent effect on America's position in the 1930's.

Various period studies have been presented for the Rooseveltian policies during this period. Favorable to President Roosevelt's action and reaction was a leading study on American diplomacy in the pre-war entrance period, William L. Langer and S. Everett Gleason, The Challenge to Isolation 1937-1940 (New York, 1952) and The Undeclared War, 1940-1941 (New York, 1953). Among a number of critical works on Roosevelt diplomacy was Charles A. Beard, American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940 (New Haven, 1946). Return criticism to this volume came in Basil Rauch's Roosevelt: From Munich to Pearl Harbor (New York, 1950). Edgar E. Robinson, in his The Roosevelt Leadership, 1933-1945, (Philadelphia, 1955) produced a most critical study of the President. Donald F. Drummond, The Passing of American Neutrality, 1937-1941 (Ann Arbor, 1955) presented a balanced account of the pre-United States entrance period.

Eleanor Tupper and George McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion (New York, 1937) provided a chronicle on this most relevant topic. A similar study broken down into sections by George L. Grassmuch, Sectional Biases in Congress on Foreign Policy (Baltimore, 1951) treated the question of naval armament as developed by

public opinion during the 1930's. While much more informal than either of these, Thomas A. Bailey, The Man in the Street (New York, 1948) revealed much on the feelings of people within the United States toward the American foreign policy of the pre-Second World War period. A noted authority on polling, Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk, Public Opinion, 1935-1946 (Princeton, N. J., 1951) investigated the public reaction to government policy during this period.

Several comparisons of the American-Japanese strength such as William D. Puleston, The Armed Forces of the Pacific A Comparison of the Military and Naval Power of the United States and Japan (New Haven, 1941), Hugh Byas, The Japanese Enemy: His Power and his Vulnerability (New York, 1942) and H. Sutherland Denlinger and Charles B. Gary, War in the Pacific: A Study of Navies, Peoples, and Battle Problems (New York, 1936) contain a "port-hole view" of the contestants in an impending struggle. There is excellent resume of the Navy's role in national defense with a history of the background which made the Navy of the year 1941 in Frank Knox, The United States Navy in National Defense (Washington, 1941). The Japanese side of her plans to win a war in Asia has been related in Kinoaki Matsuo, How Japan Plans to Win, translated by Kilsoo K. Haan (Boston, 1942).

In his excellent essay, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Japan, 1913-1933" (Pacific Historical Review, XXII, No. 2,

May 1953), William L. Neumann maintained that the President changed his attitude toward Japan as that of the United States changed. Even as early as 1937, Freda Utley, Japan's Feet of Clay (New York, 1937) forecast the likelihood of wartime Japan finding itself in a very weak economic condition as a war dissipated its strength. Further, and more scholarly, consideration was given this phase of Japanese war potential in Jerome Cohen, Japan's Economy in War and Reconstruction (Minneapolis, 1949).

Some studies are available which portray the ready American fleet of the pre-Pearl Harbor era or of the early seemingly futile months of United States participation: Merle Armitage, The United States Navy (New York, 1940) and Kendall Banning, The Fleet Today (New York, 1942). However, for the entire period under study, there is no substitute for the nearly indispensable photographic-narrative reference work called during this period--Jane's Fighting Ships (London,). Its year by year presentations indicate the trends in naval building throughout the world and most especially in the major maritime nations. Jane's can be supplemented by the regular editions of Brassey's Naval Annual (London,). The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has published to this point four of the volumes in a series, the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships (Washington, 1959, 1963, 1968, 1969). Volumes I and II contain a well-developed

listing of the five major categories of fighting ships (carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines) under the various authorizations provided by Congress. All four volumes encyclopedia the action of all United States Navy ships since the beginnings of that force. These too are nearly indispensable for the student of this phase of naval operations.

The acclaimed classic and the most comprehensive treatment of American Naval action during the Second World War is Samuel Eliot Morison's fifteen volumes, the History of United States Naval Operations in World War II (Boston, 1947-1962). This study can be supplemented by the personal account approach used by Walter Karig, Battle Report (volumes 1-6, New York, 1944-1952). The Navy's part in the Korean War has been soundly treated in James A. Field, Jr., History of United States Naval Operations Korea (Washington, 1962) and in Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson, The Sea War In Korea (Annapolis, 1957).

There are several studies of ship types available including Philip Goodhart's somewhat ambitiously titled Fifty Ships that Saved the World (Garden City, N. Y., 1965) which described the limitations of the "four-stackers" traded to Britain for bases, John D. Alden Flush Decks and Four Pipes (Annapolis, 1965) which gave an extensive treatment of the remainder of the four-stackers (not involved in the destroyer-bases deal), and Donald W.

Mitchell's appraisal of the American destroyer situation in the immediate period before the bombing of Pearl Harbor in the Yale Review, 1939/40. The operational history of this class of ships has been thoroughly covered in Theodore Roscoe, United States Destroyer Operations in World War II (Annapolis, 1953). Submarine action during the Second World War has been treated very extensively in Theodore Roscoe, United States Submarine Operations in World War II (Annapolis, 1949). This work provided figures from which comparative computations were developed for submarines provided by the authorizations under investigation. One of the most effective studies of that ever more important warship, the air craft carrier was that of Clark Reynolds, The Fast Carriers (New York, 1968). Similar studies of cruisers and battleships do not exist at present. Most useful for a study of the final stages of the demise of the Japanese fleet is the joint study by Masanori Ito and Roger Pineau, The End of the Japanese Navy (New York, 1962).

Although no study has appeared on the Vinson Committee (in reality the Naval Affairs Committee) investigating wartime profits, Donald W. Riddle, The Truman Committee: A Study in Congressional Responsibility (New Brunswick, N. J., 1964) treated the Vinson Committee in a positive way as a co-existent investigative agency.

Among the wartime precursors of the mass of literature promoting air power at the expense of sea power was

William Bradford Huie's The Fight for Air Power (New York, 1942). Later, much of the battle between the Navy and the Air Force was carried on through numerous periodicals such as Reader's Digest, Newsweek and the Saturday Evening Post. The early stages of the struggle for a strong postwar naval policy are dealt with in Vincent Davis, Postwar Defense Policy and the U.S. Navy, 1943-1946 (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1966). A second Davis volume, The Admirals Lobby (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1967) elaborated the process of Naval pressure used in the post-Second World War endeavor to keep the fleet at optimum strength.

Although Carl Vinson could not prevent unification, he was a factor in mitigating that process. Especially strong are two studies of Secretary of Navy and the first Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, Robert G. Albion and Robert H. Connery, Forrestal and the Navy (New York, 1962) and Walter Millis, editor, The Forrestal Diaries (New York, 1951). Demetrios Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification (New York, 1966) and Carl W. Borklund, The Department of Defense (New York, 1968) have each discussed at some length the unification confrontation.

A concomitant aspect of unification was the 1949 struggle known as the super-carrier-B-36 crisis which has been so well explained and so well documented by Paul Hammond in his long essay, "Super Carriers and B-36 Bombers: Appropriations, Strategy, and Politics" included

in Harold Stein, editor, American Civil-Military Decisions (Birmingham, Ala., 1963). The same period is covered by Walter Millis with Harvey C. Mansfield and Harold Stein, Arms and the State (New York, 1958). Especially good on the re-armament progress of the early 1950's were the writings of Warner R. Schilling, Paul Hammond and Glenn Snyder in Strategy, Politics, and Defense Budgets (New York, 1962). Much from these areas of contention remains to be analyzed.