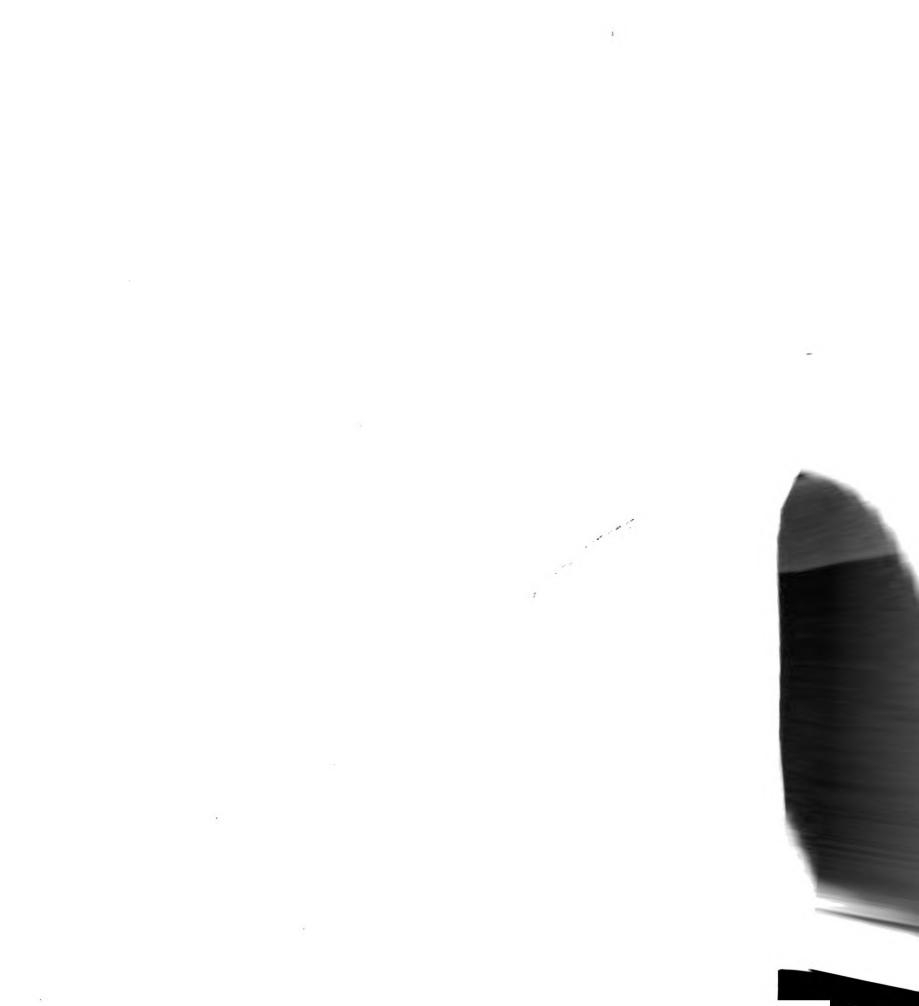


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ignored.

Another important point dealt with in some detail is the question of whether or not the naval treaties established a situation wherein the Navy was weaker than it would have been without the treaties. In view of Congressional refusal to allow the Navy to be expanded to treaty strength, the question is to an extent academic. On the other hand, the opposition of naval officers and big-navy Congressmen was based upon the premise that the treaties did weaken the Navy. In answer to the charge it should be pointed out that the attitude of Congress, the public and most of the Presidents made it unlikely that the Navy's 1916 program would ever have been completed. Even if it had Japanese naval building would probably have given Japan battleship strength well in excess of the 5:3 ratio established by the Washington Treaty. As for fortifications, it is certain that the Navy's desires would not have been met by Congress had there been no restrictions on base construction in the western Pacific. In the case of the London Treaty of 1930 the ratios established for the cruiser, destroyer and submarine categories--condemned by most naval officers as detrimental to American security--actually gave the United States the opportunity to overcome previous neglect and expand its fleet considerably, while denying that right to Great Britain and Japan. It was an opportunity not grasped.

Although this study sought mainly to show the influence

of the disarmament treaties upon naval policy, it also brought out the effect of policy upon the treaties. Estimates of naval planners regarding the minimum strength necessary to execute policy were often accepted by the diplomats responsible for concluding agreements. This was especially true after 1931, when the deterioration of the international situation made naval views more acceptable. The exceptions--at Washington in 1922 and at London in 1930--caused some anxiety among naval strategists, but they were able to adjust to the treaty limitations far more easily than they were able to abide Congressional neglect.

Finally it may be said that the history of naval disarmament indicates an inverse relationship between the existence of fundamental antagonisms among nations and success at disarmament conferences--the more fundamental the tensions the less likely the probability of disarmament. As for the disarmament treaties themselves, it seems they were generally successful in promoting the security of the United States.

UNITED STATES NAVAL POLICY
IN THE DISARMAMENT ERA,
1921-1937.

by
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PREFACE

The serious student of American naval policy finds that only a few others have already trod the path he desires to follow. Studies of naval policy are for the most part of relatively recent origin and reflect to a large extent the growth of the Navy to the primary place in the armed services establishment--a development essentially of this century. After World War II interest in the Navy blossomed, and a number of studies were published, most of them on the subject of the development of naval policy in the Pacific and the problem of Japan. This is understandable, since the manner of our entry into the war so dramatically focused attention upon Japan and since the military position of the two nations upon the outbreak of hostilities and during the course of the war was so largely determined by their relative naval strength. In addition to the problem of Japan, attention of scholars in naval history has been directed to the naval disarmament treaties, which had such profound effects upon the navies of all the powers in the interwar years. Recent scholars, while using much newly available original source material and producing some valuable work, have concentrated upon particular naval conferences or relatively short periods of policy development, and there has been no study of the naval treaties as a whole and their relationship to American naval policy during the entire period from 1921, the date of the Washington

Conference which initiated naval disarmament, to 1936, the date of the second London Conference which was the last attempt in that direction.

This study is an attempt to view the era of naval disarmament as a whole and to construct a coherent picture of American naval policy as it was developed under the restrictions of the naval treaties. To the extent that it covers ground already explored, particularly in relation to the period from 1921 to 1931, it is an attempt at synthesis and analysis; insofar as it enters areas hardly studied previously--the period from the 1932 Geneva General Disarmament Conference to the London Conference of 1935-36--it is an endeavor to present new material and to add to the sum total of our knowledge of naval policy. The work as a whole remains fundamentally a summary of a fascinating and complex era of American naval history and in no sense exhausts detailed study of the subject.

One final word about the scope of this study. Naval policy in all its aspects is an exceedingly complicated subject. The official statement of naval policy, as written by the General Board of the Navy, is a document several pages long, covering in a general way each of the many elements which together comprise the naval policy of the United States. These elements include specific policies governing the construction and maintenance of each type of ship in the fleet; naval aviation, including the development of new aircraft

types; fleet operations; shore establishments, including shipyards, naval bases and air stations; personnel, including procurement and training; and the operation of the Marine Corps, to name only a few of the more important ones. By far the most important single element is that of the ships with which the Navy fights--the types of ships and their number, size and armament. The development of the other elements depends in great measure upon the decisions naval planners make about the ships of the fleet, and these decisions in turn depend to a large extent upon the kind of policy which the Navy develops. The recognition in the interwar period that the ships were the basic factor in naval strength and the development of policy was clearly shown by the purpose of the naval treaties of that period, which was to limit the size and numbers of warships rather than to reduce the number of personnel or to establish ceilings on expenditures for naval purposes. Because of the fundamental importance of the ships as a determinant of all the varied elements of naval policy and because of their intimate relationship to the naval treaties, it was decided to concentrate in this study only upon this aspect of naval policy.

In the research necessary to develop this dissertation many people were involved, and the author desires here to express his appreciation for their efforts in his behalf. The staff of the National Archives, particularly in the Navy Department and Foreign Affairs sections, deserve thanks for

their efforts, as does the staff in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. To the staff of the Navy's Historical Office and naval archives at the Washington Navy Yard an especially cordial expression of thanks is due. Their assistance was most valuable in the preparation of this study. Finally, a debt of gratitude is owed here at home to the staff of the Documents section of the Michigan State University Library and to those on campus who gave their help so willingly.

CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.	viii
CHAPTER I. THE SETTING: POST WORLD WAR I NAVAL COMPETITION.	1
The Naval Armaments Race 1918-1921	11
The Reaction Against Armaments.	16
CHAPTER II. END AND BEGINNING: THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.	25
Origins of the American Proposals.	29
Overcoming the Major Obstacle: Agreement on Capital Ships.	40
The Unknown Quantity: Limitations on Aircraft Carriers.	53
Discord Over Auxiliary Vessels.	61
Naval Reaction to the Treaty.	70
CHAPTER III. AFTER WASHINGTON: RECASTING A POLICY.	82
Battleship Modernization: Legal or Illegal.	91
Building in the Unlimited Classes: A New Naval Competition	93
The Reaction Against the New Competition.	119
CHAPTER IV. THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OF 1927 AND ITS AFTERMATH.	129
The Conference and the Cruiser Question.	135
The Aftermath of Geneva: The American Program of 1929	155
CHAPTER V. A NEW BEGINNING: THE LONDON CONFERENCE OF 1930.	168
Pre-Conference Negotiations: A Question of Cruisers.	171
Failure at the Conference: The French Dilemma.	188
Success at the Conference: The Three-Power Compromise	204
The Treaty and Its Meaning.	209
Dissatisfaction Rampant: American and Foreign Opposition	219

	Page
CHAPTER VI. THE RESULTS OF LONDON: FRUSTRATION MULTIPLIED.	235
Makeshifts and Expedients:	
The Problem of Efficiency	255
The Navy's Darkest Hour.	261
CHAPTER VII. THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OF 1932: AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY.	266
Preliminary Agreements and Disagreements	268
The Geneva Conference:	
First Phase.	285
The Geneva Conference:	
Second Phase.	311
CHAPTER VIII. THE REVIVAL OF NAVAL EXPANSION	321
Warships as Public Works:	
The Navy and the New Deal.	322
Toward a Treaty Navy:	
The Vinson-Trammell Act of 1934	330
Implementation of the Vinson-Trammell Act	337
CHAPTER IX. THE FINAL EFFORT AT LIMITATION:	
The Second London Conference.	345
The Decision to Hold Preliminary Discussions.	348
Anglo-American Preliminary Conversations	353
Conversations with the Japanese.	359
Preparations for the Conference.	369
The First Phase of the Conference.	381
The Second Phase of the Conference.	388
The Treaty: Provisions and Implications.	395
CHAPTER X. THE END OF LIMITATIONS:	
Resumption of Naval Competition.	398
The Acceleration of Naval Construction.	400
The Failure of the Second London Treaty: The End of the Disarmament Era.	406
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY.	415

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Naval Appropriations--Fiscal Years 1921-1929. .	102
2. Ships in Commission and Building, 1921 and 1925..	109
3. Ships Built 1922-1927, and Building 1927. . . .	146
4. General Board's Program of Construction and Replacement--Fiscal Years 1929-1933.	158
5. Fleet Strengths--1929 and as Established Under the London Treaty.	217
6. General Board's Program of Construction and Replacement--Fiscal Years 1932 to 1936. . . .	244
7. United States and Japan: Underage Ships in Commission and Building, February, 1932. . . .	250
8. Tonnages of Categories as Proposed by Japan, December 5, 1932.	308
9. Underage Ships Built, Building or Appropriated For, March 1, 1937.	403

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING: POST WORLD WAR I NAVAL COMPETITION.

The naval policy of the United States during the period between the two world wars was unique in American Naval history, since it was during that period that the unprecedented experiment in the limitation of naval armaments was attempted. The agreements for naval limitation which resulted had a marked effect upon the activities of those naval officers who were responsible for the formulation and execution of naval strategic planning. There can be no doubt that the Navy's leaders were dissatisfied with the situation and that they were annoyed by the limitations placed upon their planning by the disarmament agreements. One would expect that naval officers would look with disfavor upon any agreement which imposed restrictions in sizes, numbers, and types of naval vessels and in the extension of fortified naval bases, as the agreements which were concluded actually did. Yet the hostility of the admirals is not completely understandable simply in those terms. One must also realize the development of American naval policy in the period immediately before the arms limitation experiment began in order to comprehend fully its effects upon subsequent developments.

During the two decades before 1921, United States

naval policy had been undergoing a remarkable transformation. From a naval power of third rank the United States was rapidly developing a navy which by the close of World War I was potentially the world's strongest. The principal reasons for this trend were the development of an increasing economic involvement in world trade and the acquisition of a colonial domain as a result of the Spanish-American War. The chief architects of the transformation were Alfred Thayer Mahan, who was the philosopher of the new movement, and Theodore Roosevelt, who became its foremost early executor. When Roosevelt entered the White House the United States was fifth in battleship strength among the nations--after Great Britain, France, Russia, and Germany--with nine battleships built and eight more authorized or building; when he left office in 1909, the United States stood second only to Great Britain in naval might with a fleet of twenty-seven battleships built and building, nearly all of them equal to the best foreign vessels.¹ In the development of his program Roosevelt relied greatly upon the advice and assistance of prominent naval officers, who like him were interested in building up a first-class navy. In 1903, the General Board of the Navy, founded in 1900 as the primary policy-making and advisory agency of the Navy, recommended

¹Gordon C. O'Gara, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of the Modern Navy (Princeton, 1943), pp. 9, 109.

with Roosevelt's approval the establishment of a fleet "equal or superior to that of any probable enemy".² Since Great Britain was not considered a probable enemy, this pronouncement meant that henceforth our policy would be to maintain second place among the navies of the world.

Roosevelt's ambitious policy was not destined to be carried out for long. As Roosevelt's successor, Taft wished to continue Roosevelt's naval program, but he was prevented from doing so primarily by the splitting of the Republican Party over his domestic program, one element of which was the naval building program, and the strengthening of the Democratic opposition, especially after 1910. During Taft's administration, the naval building program, which under Roosevelt had reached a desired goal of three new battleships a year plus a certain number of other war vessels, was cut by an increasingly hostile Congress to two battleships and finally to one in 1911 and in 1912. Furthermore, in order to retain even one battleship in the building program, the administration supporters had to forego nearly all additional auxiliary warships, such as cruisers and destroyers.³ Thus by 1914, on the eve of the

²Report of the General Board, as quoted in Outten J. Clinard, Japan's Influence Upon American Naval Power, 1897-1917, University of California Publications in History, no. 36 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947), pp. 35-36.

³Harold & Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, 1939), pp. 285-289.

outbreak of the First World War, the United States had not only lost her second place position to Germany but had also a relatively unbalanced fleet in which the number of supporting vessels was becoming increasingly more inadequate.

In 1913 it was not certain what Woodrow Wilson's attitude toward the Navy would be. He himself was considered to be aware of and sympathetic to the cause of naval expansion, while his Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, had supported Taft's naval policy. The first indication that the Wilson administration would simply attempt to keep a balance by asking for some increase in construction, but not radically more than Congress had previously shown itself willing to grant, became clear with the annual report of Secretary Daniels, in which he advocated the construction of two battleships, eight destroyers and three submarines for the forthcoming fiscal year.⁴ The General Board, more closely attuned to purely strategic considerations than to political cross currents, had recommended four battleships, sixteen destroyers, eight submarines and several tenders and supply ships for the fleet train.⁵

⁴Annual Report of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1913. (Washington: 1914), p. 10. This source will hereafter be cited as Navy Dept. Annual Reports with date.

⁵Ibid, p. 29.

Even with the coming of the war and the consequent involvement of American maritime interests, Wilson was not inclined at first to alter his policy toward naval expansion. Soon, however, adverse comment about the Navy's ability to carry out its responsibilities in case of war began to be heard both within and outside of naval ranks, and the inexorable march of events attendant upon the war itself made it impossible for Wilson to continue for long a policy of holding the line. For one thing, Wilson's own determination to uphold our neutral rights in the face of the tremendous changes brought about by the application of technology to the war effort meant that sooner or later a clear confrontation with either Great Britain or Germany was likely to occur, and when it did the armed strength of the United States would be a decisive factor influencing the outcome. Also, fear of a German victory, coupled with the mounting toll of American lives through U-boat attacks on merchant vessels, persuaded Wilson that our only recourse was to prepare for war.⁶ In addition, Wilson experienced growing anxiety over the changes brought to the Far East by the war, involving as they did the increase of Japan's strength

⁶On July 21, the same day in which Wilson dispatched his third Lusitania note, he directed his Secretaries of War and Navy to prepare programs to strengthen the military forces. Harold & Margaret Sprout, Rise of American Naval Power, pp. 328-329.

and ambitions.⁷ Finally there was the growing public clamor for preparedness, a clamor which could have profound effects in the next presidential-congressional election campaign.

The preparedness movement of 1914-16 was an amazing demonstration of the power of organized propaganda and, perhaps, of the gullibility of a large segment of the American public. The Navy League, which had been established in 1901, and the newly organized National Security League took the lead in directing the efforts of a growing number of preparedness societies which finally overcame the protests of the older peace societies in the competition for public attention. Preparedness advocates used every available medium of communication to reach their vast audience and played continually upon fear of invasion as the key to arousing a strong public demand for expansion of the armed services.⁸ A preparedness literature sprang up, much of it in fiction form and most of it devoted to picturing in horrifying detail the effects of an invasion by a vast

⁷Clinard, in Japan's Influence on American Naval Power, pp. 146-172, gives details of Wilson's concern over Japan's motives.

⁸There is no completely adequate study of the 1914-1916 preparedness crusade. Perhaps the best general account is in Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self Interest in American Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century (Chicago, 1953). The role of the Navy League is comprehensively examined in Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, 1962), pp. 47-52. See also the summary in Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917 (New York, 1954), pp. 174-178.

horde which our pitifully inadequate Navy was powerless to prevent. Although practically ignoring the realities of the military situation in Europe and the favorable geographic situation of the United States, preparedness propaganda was notably successful in its efforts, particularly after the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915. The consequent shift of public sentiment was undoubtedly a factor in Wilson's decision to support a strong naval expansion program, although only the most cynical would assert that it constituted the major effect upon Wilson.

By the fall of 1915 Wilson's support for naval expansion was assured, and thereafter the primary concern became an accurate assessment of how much the Navy needed to be expanded, and how much of such a program could be pushed through Congress. When Wilson asked Secretary Daniels for the Navy's estimates of its needs, they were quickly forthcoming; the General Board had as one of its continuing functions the development of a naval building program in terms of what it considered to be the naval needs of the United States. In answer to an earlier request by Secretary Daniels for an opinion on the optimum size of the Navy, the General Board had submitted a report on July 30, 1915, in which it described the altered world strategic situation since 1914 as justifying the abandonment of our previous policy of trying to maintain a Navy equal to that of the

second ranking naval power. It stated:

The current war has shown that a navy of the size recommended by this board in previous years can no longer be considered as adequate to the defensive needs of the United States. Our present Navy is not sufficient to give due weight to the diplomatic remonstrances of the United States in peace nor to enforce its policies in war.⁹

We could no longer afford to satisfy ourselves with a position of second rank. In its most important statement in over a decade, the Board also said: "The Navy of the United States should ultimately be equal to the most powerful maintained by any other nation of the world."¹⁰ In order to reach this ambitious goal a large scale building program should be undertaken over a period of several years, which by 1920 would result in additions to the fleet of ten battleships, six battle cruisers, ten scout cruisers, fifty destroyers and eighty submarines and auxiliary vessels.¹¹

⁹General Board's Report in Navy Dept. Annual Reports, 1915, p. 74.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 80, 83-84, The term "auxiliary vessels" causes some confusion, since as commonly used in naval and diplomatic circles it had two meanings. In its broader sense, and as used in the arms limitation conferences, an auxiliary vessel was a warship other than a capital ship (a battleship or battle cruiser) since it carried out functions auxiliary to and supporting the functions of the capital ship, especially the battleship, which was the main ship of the fighting fleet. The term was also used in a narrower sense in naval circles to apply to the non-combat vessels which provided auxiliary services of fueling, repairing and carrying supplies for the fighting fleet. To avoid confusion, in this study the term "auxiliaries" will

It was a gigantic program, far costlier than any previously undertaken.

In times not long past, such a request would have been totally unacceptable to the administration, but with Wilson now standing as a supporter of expansion there was little difficulty in drawing up a bill which essentially embodied the program of the General Board. In December, 1915, the bill was sent to Congress. Thereupon the full power of both the naval expansionists and the opponents of a big navy came to a focus on Capitol Hill, and the resulting legislative battle was one of the most spirited ever waged on a naval authorization bill. Only after long debate, during which the battle of Jutland provided support for the measure by demonstrating the importance of the battleship, was the bill assured of passage. On July 21 the Senate voted for passage by a margin of 71 to 8.¹² In the House, in spite of a bitter last ditch struggle by the anti-expansionists, the measure was carried through successfully on August 15

be used henceforth in the broader sense in which it was used in the limitation conferences, while the term "naval auxiliaries" will be used to refer to non-combat vessels which service the fleet.

¹²Congressional Record, LIII, 11384. Hereafter cited as CR, with volume number.

by a 283 to 51 majority.¹³

The Naval Act of 1916, in addition to providing the ships originally requested by the administration, telescoped from five years to three the period during which the vessels authorized were to be laid down. It also provided for an increase in personnel to man the new vessels, set forth a plan for establishing a Naval Reserve organization officially created a few years earlier, enlarged the Office of Naval Operations and raised the rank of its chief to Admiral, and authorized the establishment of a Naval Flying Corps with an initial appropriation of \$3,500,000 for aviation. The appropriation for construction of new vessels for the first year was \$139,345,000, with appropriations for all purposes totalling more than \$300,000,000.¹⁴ It was a decisive triumph for the disciples of Mahan and Roosevelt.

¹³Ibid., p. 12700. The votes in Congress on the Naval Act of 1916 illustrate the sectional nature of the cleavage on the big Navy question. In the Senate six of the eight negative votes came from senators who represented Mid-western or Plains states, while the legislators who voted against the bill came mainly from the Midwest, the Plains area and the South. New England, the East and the Far West voted almost solidly for the bill.

¹⁴United States Statutes at Large, pt. 1, 556-619. Just a year earlier Congress had appropriated a mere \$45,054,000 toward the construction of two battleships and some other vessels. Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 1, 952. This source hereafter cited as U. S. Statutes, with volume number.

The full meaning of the 1916 Naval Act went much beyond the unprecedented cost and the number of new vessels contemplated in the legislation. Not only would more ships be built, but they would also be the most powerful ships of their type in the world. Since 1893 the Navy had pursued a policy of trying to build each of its capital ships to be as strong or stronger than any foreign vessel of its class. The 1916 program continued that policy, thus greatly increasing the cost per vessel; the first four battleships to be built under the program were to cost approximately \$11,500,000 each, without guns or armor.¹⁵ It was a high price to pay for preparedness, but the demands of technology and naval warfare made it so, and for the time being Congress and the American people were willing to pay the price.

THE NAVAL ARMAMENTS RACE 1918-1921

As events transpired, the Naval Act of 1916 was of little use after the United States became involved in the war. The blockade and firm Allied control of the surface of the sea left the great battleships and cruisers of the navy with very little to do. To be sure, a division of the best American battleships was sent to the North Sea to cooperate with the British Grand Fleet, but the British

¹⁵Ibid., XXXIX, pt. 1, 616. The two battleships authorized a year earlier were to cost \$7,800,000 each. Ibid., XXXVIII, pt. 1, 952.

had no need of them and they never fired a shot at the enemy. On the other hand, the needs of the anti-submarine campaign swept all before it as funds for battleship building were diverted to a crash program for the construction of destroyers and submarine chasers--these vessels, previously neglected, were now desperately needed to hunt down the U-boats. Construction of the last two of the three battleships authorized under the 1914 Naval Appropriations Act was continued, however, and these were completed in 1917 and 1918, but little work was done on the mammoth warships of the 1916 Act. The continuation of battleship construction was generally interpreted as being directed against Japan, which had achieved a position of dominance in the Far East.

When the war ended, the United States, freed of its preoccupation with wartime strategy, immediately resumed the construction of its 1916 program. With Germany defeated and the counter weight of the German Navy removed, there appeared to be a strong possibility of increasing Anglo-American tension as the United States assumed Germany's pre-war role as a competitor of Great Britain in world trade. Great Britain played an additional role as a possible threat by virtue of her alliance with Japan --a country whose policies were becoming increasingly more hostile to American interests in the Orient.

Japan's activities during World War I had appeared to be a threat to the position of the United States in the Far

East. First Japan had immeasurably strengthened her own position by driving the Germans out of China and taking over most of the German island possessions in the Pacific--many of which lay uncomfortably near Guam and the American lines of communication between Hawaii and the Philippines. Next, Japan made strong claims upon China and showed every intention of retaining the interests in Shantung which she had seized from Germany and of expanding them further. Finally, the Allied intervention in Russia gave Japan an excuse to pour troops into Siberia and to begin the development of a Japanese controlled Siberian sphere extending as far west as Lake Baikal. Wilson was thoroughly alarmed over these developments and began to formulate a policy of opposition, in which case the Navy had to resume its capital ship construction program.

Unfortunately, the problem was not to be so easily solved. Japan responded to the resumption of the American 1916 battleship program with a building program of her own, to which she committed an increasingly large share of her national resources. The Japanese program envisioned the completion of eight super dreadnoughts and eight large battle cruisers by 1928, involving a cost nearly as great as the American 1916 program, a cost which for Japan was a much heavier burden to bear.¹⁶ To make matters worse, Japan

¹⁶Raymond L. Buell, The Washington Conference (New York, 1922), pp. 138-139.

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was not the only nation involved. By virtue of her alliance with Japan and her position as the world's greatest naval power, Great Britain saw the position which she had maintained against Germany at such enormous cost threatened by a massive U.S.- Japanese armaments race and faced with the possibility of war against the United States if the rapidly mounting ill will should lead to hostilities. In order to protect herself, Great Britain would surely be forced to institute a large scale building program of her own, though she could ill afford such expenditures in her war-strained condition.

The stage was thus set for a period of hostile feeling and a piling up of naval armaments surpassing even the celebrated Anglo-German naval race before the war. One result seemed certain-the United States would unquestionably win an armaments race. The construction of many expensive battleships and other vessels was bound to place considerable strain on the economies of all three countries, but it was evident that the economic and financial strength of the United States was such that she was the only nation with much chance of carrying out an extensive program of naval construction.

The United States had by far the most ambitious of the three programs. The objective of the American naval planners was to build a fleet "second to none," which required a program large enough to overcome a commanding British lead

within a few years. In January 1919 the United States had in commission 16 dreadnought battleships aggregating some 400,000 tons, while Great Britain had 33 battleships and 9 battle cruisers totalling 1,000,000 tons. However, the American building program was far larger than Britain's. While Great Britain had authorized but not yet laid down 4 large battle cruisers, the United States had under construction or authorized no fewer than 13 battleships and 6 battle cruisers aggregating 750,000 tons.¹⁷ The completion of these vessels would give the United States approximately equal capital ship tonnage with Great Britain by 1925. Furthermore, most of the American ships would be superior in power to any other vessels of their type, built or building. After the battle of Jutland the General Board had decided that 16 inch guns were the only size worth considering for capital ships, and larger guns meant a greater tonnage and higher cost. The Japanese were mounting 16 inch guns on their post-Jutland dreadnoughts, while Britain was holding to the 15 inch gun which proved so powerful during the war. The four American battleships of the Maryland class were being built to mount eight 16 inch guns, while the six projected battleships of the South Dakota

¹⁷ Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Seapower: American Naval Policy and the World Scene, 1918-1922 (Princeton, 1940), pp. 48-50. Hereafter cited as H. & M. Sprout, Toward a New Order.

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class were each to carry no fewer than twelve 16 inch guns and were to displace 43,200 tons. To match Great Britain's improved Hood class, the American battle cruisers were to displace 43,500 tons each and mount a main battery of eight 16 inch guns while being able to maintain a higher speed than any previous battle cruisers.¹³ There was no question that the United States had it in her power to build the largest and strongest Navy in the world if she chose to do so. From the point of view of the Admirals and exponents of a big Navy the period from 1919 to 1921 was a time of heady optimism and joy as they saw at last their dream of a Navy superior to all achieving reality with each piece of hull plate riveted, each heavy gun mounted, and each hull which slid down the launching ways. Between January 1919 and October 1921, four battleships were commissioned and added to the battle fleet, while another was launched.¹⁹

THE REACTION AGAINST ARMAMENTS

In spite of the development of the 1916 program, there

¹³Statistics on the American capital ship program may be found in CR, LVII, 2695.

¹⁹The ships commissioned were Idaho of the 1914 program, Tennessee and California of the 1915 program and the post-Jutland dreadnought Maryland of the 1916 program. The ship launched was Colorado, a sister ship of Maryland.

were increasing frustrations to be faced by the naval expansionists. In fact, the launching of four or five battleships during a period of nearly three years represented a slowing down of the program. By October 1921 none of the battle cruisers nor the South Dakota class battleships were anywhere near the launching stage, and several of them had hardly progressed further than the laying of the keel.²⁰

The reason was simple--lack of funds. Though the ships had been authorized under the 1916 Act, only part of the appropriations for them had been voted under that Act. The rest had to be approved year by year by successive Congresses, and with the end of the war much of the zeal for naval expansion among Congressmen and their constituents alike began to evaporate. Congress became increasingly reluctant to vote funds which might simply perpetuate the hostility of the postwar period. Besides, the war was over, so why build more battleships? The German Navy, a major rival of the United States Navy in the period before the war, was no longer in existence.

Also, by 1921 a new factor had to be considered before spending any more money on gigantic battleships. This factor was the airplane. The flimsy wood-and-fabric flying machines

²⁰In 1919 and again in 1920 the General Board reminded Congress that the program was lagging. Navy Dept. Annual Reports, 1919, pp. 148-149; 1920, p. 215.

of an earlier day had come of age during the war, and there was a great deal of debate over the future of aircraft in warfare. The role to be played by the submarine was also subject to much speculation. An extensive examination of the lessons of the war was underway in the United States and abroad among naval men and not-so-technical laymen alike. Many of the battleship's critics pointed out that the Grand Fleet could not prevent the U-boats from nearly destroying Britain's commerce, and apart from Jutland the battle fleets of the belligerents had not been engaged but had been idle in harbor much of the time.

The peak of criticism was reached by early 1921, when a series of bombing tests were scheduled to prove or disprove General Billy Mitchell's sensational contention that the airplane spelled the doom of the battleship. In January the Senate passed a resolution introduced by William E. Borah asking that the naval program then in progress be suspended for six months, so that an investigation could be made into the needs of the Navy with a view to providing it "with the types of ships and with the air and submarine weapons that would be most effective in the strategy and tactics of future war on the sea."²¹ The

²¹CR., LX, 19 6. For a typical debate on the aircraft-submarine vs. battleship question see ibid. pp. 2983-96.

Secretary of the Navy referred the resolution to the General Board for an authoritative reply, which was delivered to Congress on February 2.²² While not directly replying to the resolution's implication that the Navy did not know it was doing, the Board gave a report which indicated that it had not ignored the problems posed by the new weapons. While realizing that the airplane had great potential value to the fleet, the Board took the position that the airplane would prove valuable chiefly as a means of improving the scouting functions of the fleet and enabling the battleships to use their heavy guns more effectively at maximum ranges. In essence the Board believed that until the airplane could prove itself--which the Board felt was unlikely in the near future--the battleship would continue to be the backbone of the fleet. As it had on two previous occasions,²³ the Board asked again that Congress appropriate funds to build two aircraft carriers for experimental work. Subsequent developments, to be discussed later, indicated that the Navy during the 1920's was alive to the possibilities of the airplane, both as a menace to the battle fleet and as an aid to fleet operations, but refused to place too much reliance on

²²Issued as Senate Report 766, 66th Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, 1921). The entire text was printed in CR, LX, 2825-28.

²³Navy Dept. Annual Reports, 1919, p. 149; 1920, p. 215.

an untried weapon.

While uncertainty as to the role to be played by the battleship in future warfare was unquestionably involved in the increasing reluctance to support a continuing program of expansion, a far greater factor was the growing feeling, both at home and abroad, that the armaments race was not only an enormously expensive burden, but was also the primary cause of the ill feeling among nations which was daily becoming more widespread. The peace societies, largely silent during the war, now found voice once more and added to the general criticism the theme that world peace was nearer attainment than at any time in the past, if only nations would make positive moves toward disarmament.²⁴ As soon as the war was over, Congress had shown itself willing to trim considerably the annual appropriations for carrying out the 1916 building program just at the time when the Navy hoped for more funds to start the South Dakotas and the battle cruisers, whose keels had not been laid due to diversion of available funds to build antisubmarine craft. Also, the Navy was beginning to realize that the emphasis placed upon battleships in the previous building programs

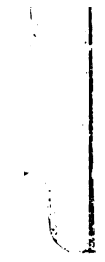
²⁴C. Leonard Hoag, Preface to Preparedness: The Washington Disarmament Conference and Public Opinion (Washington, 1941) is a thorough study of the role of public opinion and peace organizations in motivating the conference. This work relies heavily upon editorial opinion. See especially chapters V and VI.

had resulted in a serious shortage of modern cruisers and long-range destroyers and submarines, thus hampering the efficiency of the whole fleet. The probable nature of a Pacific war between Japan and the United States was convincingly outlined by Hector C. Bywater, a British naval expert much respected in American naval circles. In his work he presented a situation in which the United States would not be able to hold the Philippines against the initial Japanese onslaught, and would probably lose Guam as well, mainly because the Navy in its present state would be unable to operate effectively in the western Pacific.²⁵ Fears for the Navy's position in the Pacific prompted considerable effort on the part of the naval authorities to secure funds to start work on the auxiliary vessels authorized by the 1916 Act but since then largely deferred.²⁶

Meanwhile, by the end of 1920 the cries for an end to the armaments race had reached a crescendo. Official demands for a conference to limit naval armaments had been voiced before, but without result. The first of these was

²⁵Hector C. Bywater, Sea Power in the Pacific: A Study of the American-Japanese Naval Problem (London, 1921).

²⁶General Board report Ser. no. 928/G B 420-2, Oct. 10, 1919. See also testimony of Navy Secretary Daniels in House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings: Disarmament, 66th Cong. 3rd sess. (Washington, 1921), pp. 575-577.



in connection with the Anglo-German naval rivalry, when Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, presented the Naval estimates for 1912-13 to the House of Commons on March 18, 1912. At that time he made the statement that if Germany would agree to postpone or retard its program, Great Britain would do likewise by a proportionate amount.²⁷ Responding to this idea, Walter Hensley of Missouri, an indefatigable opponent of naval expansion, introduced a resolution in the House authorizing the President to cooperate with Great Britain to suspend naval construction for one year. The resolution, amended to authorize the President to call a general disarmament conference in the fall of 1914, passed the House on December 8, 1913, but died in the Senate.²⁸

Wilson's struggle with the Senate over the Treaty of Versailles provided the first really notable efforts to convene an arms limitation conference. In late 1920 the League of Nations sent an invitation to the United States, asking that an American delegation be appointed to take part in the activities of the League's Permanent Military, Naval and Air Commission for the purpose of discussing the

²⁷E. L. Woodward, Great Britain and the German Navy (Oxford, 1935), pp. 368-370.

²⁸CR., L, 5832-35; LI, 386-387.

limitation of armaments.²⁹ Wilson refused, saying in his reply that the United States was not a member of the League.³⁰ Several senators took issue with Wilson, and one of them, Thomas J. Walsh of Montana, introduced a resolution requesting the President to appoint a delegation to go to Geneva.³¹ It was subsequent to and directly counter to the Walsh resolution that William E. Borah introduced his famous resolution which was destined to make the United States a participant in a disarmament conference free of direct connection with the League. The Borah resolution, which passed Congress on December 14, 1920, proposed a fifty percent reduction in naval shipbuilding for five years, stated the desire of other nations for an end to naval competition, and requested the President to invite the nations concerned to send delegates to a conference in the United States.³²

²⁹The full text of the invitation, as quoted in the Washington Herald, Dec. 6, 1920, is in CR., LX, 205.

³⁰Ibid., p. 204.

³¹Ibid. John C. Vinson, in The Parchment Peace: The United States Senate and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922 (Athens, Ga., 1955), believes that the League invitation was the real beginning of the events which led directly to the Washington Conference. p. 49. Hereafter cited as Vinson, The Parchment Peace.

³²The full text of the resolution is in CR., LX, 310.

By the time the Borah resolution was passed, the public demand for a conference had grown to such proportions that it was no longer possible to refuse it. Accordingly, one of the first tasks of the incoming Harding Administration was to prepare the groundwork for a conference, and the new Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, set about the task of issuing invitations to a conference to be held at Washington in the fall of 1921. A new era in the development of American naval policy was about to begin.

CHAPTER II

END AND BEGINNING: THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

November 12, 1921, was unquestionably one of the most dramatic days in the history of diplomacy. The opening session, held in Memorial Continental Hall in Washington, was crowded with delegates on the floor, while members of the House and Senate, other American government officials, and foreign representatives lined the galleries. Charles Evans Hughes, as official representative of the host nation, opened the proceedings after a welcoming speech from President Harding. At first it did not appear that the session would be more unusual than the opening ceremonies of any other international conference. Harding's speech had been undistinguished either in ideas or in presentation, and for the first few minutes it appeared that Hughes would speak similarly. He presented a summary of the various efforts toward arms limitation and the peaceful settlement of disputes which had been made up to that time, stressing particularly the work at the Hague twenty years earlier.¹ After pointing out that most of these efforts had been fruitless,

¹The full text of the Hughes speech, as well as those of the other dignitaries on the opening day, may be found in U.S. Senate, Conference on the Limitation of Armament, Sen. Doc. 126, 67 Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1922), pp. 42-51. Hereafter cited as Conference, 1921.

he stated that greater success in this cause had to be achieved. Then, in a quick change of pace he began to indicate what actually needed to be done.

The question, in relation to armament, which may be regarded as of primary importance at this time, and with which we can deal most promptly and effectively, is the limitation of naval armament. There are certain general considerations which may be deemed pertinent to this subject.

The first is that the core of the difficulty is to be found in the competition in naval programs, and that, in order appropriately to limit naval armament, competition in its production must be abandoned. Competition will not be remedied by resolves with respect to the method of its continuance. One program inevitably leads to another, and if competition continues, its regulation is impracticable. There is only one adequate way out and that is to end it now.

It is apparent that this cannot be accomplished without serious sacrifices. Enormous sums have been expended upon ships under construction, and building programs which are now under way cannot be given up without heavy loss. Yet, if the present construction of capital ships goes forward, other ships will inevitably be built to rival them and this will lead to still others. Thus the race will continue so long as ability to continue lasts. The effort to escape serious sacrifices is futile. We must face them or yield our purpose.²

To a now thoroughly attentive audience Hughes stated that all the naval Powers should share in the sacrifices, then went on to advance a series of concrete American proposals, each of which struck with visible impact upon the anxious and expectant audience.³ First, as a general prin-

²Ibid. p. 45.

³For a good description of the audience reaction see the New York Times, Nov. 13, 1921, pp. 1, 4.

ciple binding upon all the Powers, he proposed that all construction of capital ships be suspended for ten years and that capital ship fleets be held to strengths substantially below those presently afloat. The startled assemblage greeted this proposal with loud applause, but more was to come. With a keen sense of what can best be described as showmanship, Hughes then outlined the steps each nation should take to achieve this principle.

The United States would:

1. Scrap 7 battleships and 6 battle cruisers on the building slips, plus 2 more battleships already launched. Total tonnage--618,000 tons.
 2. Scrap its 15 oldest battleships, including all the pre dreadnoughts. Total tonnage: 227,740.
- Grand total of ships to be destroyed: 30 of 845,740 tons.

Great Britain would:

1. Abandon construction of 4 battle cruisers totalling 172,000 tons.
 2. Scrap 19 older battleships, including all remaining predreadnoughts. Total tonnage: 411,375.
- Grand total of ships to be destroyed: 23 of 583,375 tons.

Japan would:

1. Abandon its program, authorized but not yet begun, of 4 battleships and 4 battle cruisers.

2. Scrap 2 battleships and 4 battle cruisers on the building slips and one more battleship already launched.

Total: 7 ships of 289,100 tons.

3. Scrap 10 older vessels, including all predreadnoughts. Total tonnage: 159,828.

Grand total of ships to be destroyed: 17 of 448,928 tons.

In addition to the immediate reduction by scrapping vessels, Hughes proposed that capital ships remaining would not be replaced until they were 20 years old, that the replacement vessels could be of no more than 35,000 tons displacement, and that total replacement tonnages for the three nations be fixed at a ratio of 5:5:3, with the American tonnage being 500,000, the British 500,000, and the Japanese 300,000. These total tonnage figures, and hence the ratio itself, would not be reached until 1942, when the last overage battleship would be replaced. The scrapping program under the American plan would leave the Americans with 18 ships of 500,650 tons, the British 22 ships of 604,450 tons, and the Japanese 10 ships of 299,700 tons. The tonnage advantage to Britain would be offset by the relatively lower gun power, higher average age and deterioration of their ships due to war service.

Finally the American plan proposed a fixing in the same 5:5:3 ratio of all the other classes of surface warships

and of submarines, with a total replacement tonnage as follows:

	United States	Great Britain	Japan
aircraft carriers	80,000	80,000	48,000
cruisers and destroyers	450,000	450,000	270,000
submarines	90,000	90,000	54,000

Replacements for carriers were to be completed when the vessel to be replaced was 20 years old, while for cruisers the age at replacement was to be 17 years and for destroyers and submarines 12 years. No replacement vessel in the auxiliary classes was to carry guns of a caliber greater than 8 inches.⁴

ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN PROPOSALS

The American plan at the Washington Conference deserves to be examined in some detail, since it was the basis for the actual settlement which was reached. The other delegations did not offer plans of their own, so all discussion dealt with the plan itself or various modifications of it. The basic principles of the plan--that many ships would have to be scrapped, that building programs would have to be practically cancelled, and that capital ship tonnage should be used as the measure of naval strength--were not seriously

⁴The American plan is stated in full in Conference, 1921, pp. 56-63.

questioned at any time during the discussions.

What were the origins of the American plan? To what extent were naval men consulted in its formulation and how much did it represent the views of naval strategists, as distinct from the views of State Department officials intent on reaching agreement through compromise? The process began on July 27, 1921, when Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby asked the General Board to undertake a preliminary study on armaments limitation and to report on their findings by September 20. The Board was specifically asked to give opinions on the following questions: 1. What is a "naval unit" and what was the ratio in strength of the naval powers, both in present strength and in strength if authorized building programs are completed? 2. What is "equitable relativity in strength" of the various naval powers?⁵ After considerable study of the Secretary's request, the Board decided that in view of the lack of time, it would not conduct hearings to ascertain the views of other prominent naval officers but would instead send a questionnaire to gain the information it sought in a minimum time. Accordingly, on

⁵ Secretary Denby to General Board, July 27, 1921, "The General Board and the Conference on the Limitation of Armament". (2 vols.), I, Series I, "Records and Publications accumulated by the General Board relating to the Control and Limitation of Armaments, 1921-1936." Hereafter cited as Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records, with series number.

August 25, the Board sent its questionnaire to 26 key naval officers, requesting their opinions on ratios of naval strength, duration of possible agreements on arms limitation, areas of most likely U.S. naval action, and optimum U.S. naval strength if the Anglo-Japanese alliance were maintained and if the British world situation were considered.

By September 8, the deadline for return of the questionnaires, practically all had been returned and their conclusions were then considered by the Board in drawing up its report to Secretary Denby. While unanimity in all opinions was not expected there was a high degree of agreement on certain points in all the replies. Practically all were agreed that the Anglo-Japanese Alliance must be terminated and that existing tonnages of the fleets were probably the simplest means of measuring naval strength. Nearly all of them felt that the United States should insist upon parity with Britain and should maintain a fleet strength at least double that of Japan. These opinions probably represented an accurate consensus of naval opinion at that time regarding the minimum needs of American naval policy which must be met in any arms limitation agreement.⁶

On September 12, 1921, the General Board submitted its

⁶"Opinions and Memoranda Considered" (Vol. II of "The General Board and the Conference on the Limitation of Armament").

report to Secretary Denby, who in turn would use it to represent the Navy's position to the State Department. Part one of the report was an analysis from the Navy's viewpoint of the world situation. It saw Great Britain as the chief economic competitor of the United States in the postwar world. Britain was seeking to regain her pre-eminent commercial position and "resents its challenge" by the United States.⁷ As for Japan, there was no question that Japan was essentially aggressive, seeking to dominate China and to gain naval supremacy in the western Pacific.⁸ Therefore, the Navy must be strong enough to uphold the national foreign policies, particularly the Open Door. A war with Japan would be essentially a naval war, with Japan holding the geographic advantage because of her bases in the western Pacific and the corresponding lack of American bases in the area.⁹ A 2 to 1 ratio of power over Japan was the preferred goal to be reached; if the Anglo-Japanese Alliance were to continue, a strength equal to both Japan and Great Britain combined was necessary.¹⁰

⁷Ser. 1088/G.B. 438-1, 12 Sept. 1921, pp. 4-6.

⁸Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁹Ibid., pp. 21, 37-38.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 28.

In the second part of its report, the Board dealt specifically with the questions asked in Secretary Denby's letter. The question of equitable relativity, being of greatest importance, was examined at some length. In arriving at a valid conclusion regarding this principle, asserted the Board, the main factor to take into consideration was that the United States must have parity in naval strength with Great Britain. Second, "equitable relativity must mean such relative naval power as compared with Japan as to enable the United States to contemplate a war with her with confidence. . . . The General Board believes that the security of our national interests requires that the naval strength of Japan should not exceed one-half that of the United States."¹¹

Next, the question of definition of a naval unit was considered. A number of factors entered into an assessment of naval strength, many of which included intangibles such as the power conferred by naval bases, a strong merchant marine, shipbuilding facilities and so on. The Board concluded that the simplest way to define a naval unit was in terms of battleship tonnage. Tonnage was a fairly accurate way of taking into account gun power, age, speed and efficiency of armor protection, all of which were usually directly related to tonnage. Battleship tonnage also gave

¹¹Ser. 1088A/G.B. 438-1, 17 Sept. 1921, pp. 4-5.

a reasonably good index of strength in other categories of warships--thus, the nation with the largest battleship tonnage would generally have the largest tonnage in cruisers, destroyers, and submarines as well. Excluding ships older than 20 years and including ships already laid down but not yet completed, the tonnage figures would represent perhaps the best possible measure of naval strength.¹²

Fortunately, the existing capital ship strengths of the three major powers would approximate the ratio desired by the General Board if ships less than 20 years old plus all ships whose keels had already been laid were included in the tonnage figures. Accordingly, the Board urged that the American delegation strive to secure agreement to a plan which would allow building programs under way to be completed but which would prohibit any further laying of keels after November 11. Vessels now in service would continue to exist, and all replacement ships for vessels which reached an age of 20 years should be limited to the tonnage of the largest then being built- - that is, 43,600 tons.¹³

The Board's plan was a limitation of future building rather than an attempt at reduction and fell far short of

¹²Ibid., pp. 6-9.

¹³Ser. 1088-c/G.B. 438, 3 Oct. 1921.

the kind of plan which Hughes and other State department officials had in mind. The qualitative limitations suggested by the Board were more acceptable,¹⁴ but in a memorandum to Hughes, J. Reuben Clark, a State Department adviser, stated that the Department could disregard the Board's discussion of the international situation from the Navy viewpoint and reminded Hughes that the plan provided for limitation only and was not being approved by the Secretary of the Navy.¹⁵

After considerable prodding by Hughes and Denby, the Board scaled down its requirements, from 1,000,000 tons of capital ships to 309,600 tons.¹⁶ This was not enough, and the Board was finally asked to work out a plan based on the cancellation of all construction then in progress. The Board looked on this idea with dismay, calling it "fraught with probable dangerous results." A "stop now" scheme would destroy the fifteen giant capital ships now on the stocks. "It is these capital ships that have influenced

¹⁴Capital ships and aircraft carriers 20 years old could be replaced ton for ton. Cruisers could be replaced at 15 years, destroyers and submarines at 12 years. No auxiliary vessel to be built in the future should carry any gun heavier than 8 inch caliber. Ser. 1088-c/G.B. 438, 3 Oct. 1921.

¹⁵(Memo dated Oct. 11, 1921), State Dept. File 500. A4b/548½ (1) Hereafter cited as SD with file number.

¹⁶Ser. 1088-d/G.B. 438, 14 Oct. 1921.

Japan to attend the Conference on Limitation of Armaments in Washington; they have led her to attempt a settlement of the Yap question and of the points at issue between her and China."¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Board was able to work out a plan which called for the scrapping of all ships on the ways (618,000 tons) and all predreadnoughts (227,740 tons), provided that Great Britain and Japan scrapped in such a proportion as to result in a ratio of 10:10:5, and this plan was presented to the State Department to serve as the basis for the American proposals at the conference.¹⁸ The General Board's acceptance of the scrapping of unfinished capital ships was undoubtedly a major concession by the Navy to Hughes, who seems to have been the guiding spirit behind the "stop now" proposal. Yet the Board's protests indicated that it did not actually approve the scheme but was obeying, however unwillingly, what amounted to an unequivocal order.

Let us now summarize the Navy's position just before the opening of the conference. First, in regard to tonnages, the Navy preferred that it be allowed to complete its program of capital ships then building. It had no particular concern over the scrapping of the predreadnoughts--they were already obsolete--but thought that the large new post-Jutland

¹⁷Ser. 1088-o/G.B. 438, 26 Oct. 1921.

¹⁸Denby to Hughes, Oct. 26, 1921, SD 500.A4b/548½(3).

ships of the 1916 program were essential to provide security in the western Pacific by intimidating Japan. Second, in regard to ratios, the Navy clearly preferred an arrangement giving the United States parity in capital ship tonnage with Great Britain and a two-to-one superiority over Japan. Third, in regard to other warships, the Navy desired the extension of the 10:10:5 ratio to the other classes as well, so that the total tonnages would be proportionate to the ratio set for capital ship tonnages. Fourth, in regard to a possible ban on future construction, the Board had no objection, provided that the 1916 program could be carried to completion first, and provided that the ratios it desired became a reality. Fifth, in regard to the duration of the agreement, the Navy believed that since the American program was due to be completed by 1928, the agreement should expire on January 1, 1928, with a possible extension by mutual consent for another six years.¹⁹ Thus for the term of the agreement there should be, in the Navy's view, no limitation at all but simply the prohibition of new authorizations. Only with the coming into effect of an extension period would a real ban on construction begin and then it would last but six years. Finally, in regard to restriction of fortifications, the Navy made clear its opposition to any dismantling of fortified areas in the western Pacific, even

¹⁹ Ser. 1088A/G.B. 438-1, 17 Sept. 1921, p. 21.

if the Japanese reciprocated;²⁰ it did not at that time reach any conclusion regarding the maintenance of the existing situation. Taken altogether, the position of the Navy was that the United States was in a position at the conference to extract maximum concessions while conceding but few to the other participants.

A comparison of the American plan presented at the conference with the Navy's position as stated in the General Board's detailed report on the eve of the Conference shows that while in some respects the Navy's position was respected and its suggestions used in the presentation of concrete proposals, in many other respects the Navy's advice was simply ignored. Its contention that capital ship tonnage should be used as the basis of measuring naval strength and its demand for parity with Great Britain were advanced without change by the American delegation;²¹ these

²⁰ Ser. 1088-g/G.B. 438, 20 Oct. 1921.

²¹ The American delegation at the Washington Conference consisted chiefly of the following people:

State Dept. & Other Civilian Personnel
 Charles Evan Hughes, Secretary of State
 Henry Cabot Lodge, U.S. Senator
 Elihu Root, U.S. Senator
 Oscar Underwood, U.S. Senator
 Henry P. Fletcher, Undersecretary of State
 J. Reuben Clark, Special Counsel to the State Department
 Naval Personnel
 Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Asst. Secretary of the Navy
 Admiral Robert E. Coontz
 Rear Adm. William V. Pratt
 Rear Adm. William A. Moffett
 Capt. Frank Schofield
 Capt. Luke McNamee

represented the most important of the naval viewpoints accepted for presentation. Also accepted was the Navy's advice regarding the proper replacement age of each class of vessel, as well as its contention that the capital ship ratios should be extended to apply to the auxiliary classes as well.

However, the most important of the Navy's contentions were not heeded. The desire of the naval leaders to complete their program of ships under construction was not accepted; neither was their belief that a two-to-one superiority over Japan was necessary. To accept the Navy's wishes on continuation of construction would have been to defeat one of the main purposes of the conference, which was to achieve immediate limitation with a consequent easing of the financial burden for all nations concerned. In the case of the ratio, it would have been impossible to justify a two-to-one ratio over Japan on the basis of existing strength in capital ships if the large tonnage represented by the American building program were not counted.²² Only

For the complete list of the delegation, see Conference 1921, pp. 21-23.

²²According to the General Board's own figures, if tonnages of all capital ships in commission under 20 years old--including predreadnoughts--were considered, the American-Japanese ratio would be 10:6.8. If predreadnoughts were excluded the ratio would become 10:8.4. If only ships building or authorized were considered the ratio would be 10:9.7. Ser. 1099A/G.B. 438-1, 17 Sept. 1921, pp. 12-13.

by counting ships on the stocks to the extent that they were actually completed could the Americans reach a ratio near 10:5, since the Japanese program had been begun later than the American and was not nearly as far along. By counting tonnage in such a manner, the Americans were able to compute a ratio of existing strength as 10:5.3.²³ Hughes decided to raise the ratio slightly in Japan's favor when he advanced his proposal for 10:6. The American plan, in sum, represented far less than the naval experts felt was the best position for the United States to take at the conference.

OVERCOMING THE MAJOR OBSTACLE: AGREEMENT ON CAPITAL SHIPS

The American proposals on capital ships embodied four major principles which would have to be accepted by all the powers in order to become a reality.

1. Present capital ship building programs would have to be abandoned.
2. Further reduction would be made through scrapping of older vessels.
3. Capital ship tonnage was to be used as the basis for measuring naval strength.

²³Denby to Hughes, Oct. 26, 1921, SD 500.A4b/548½(3). According to Denby's figures, the Americans had 1,074,755 tons of capital ships completed, building or authorized, while Japan had 568,920 tons. The Japanese did not contest these figures.

4. Ratios for future strength were to be based upon existing capital ship tonnage.

Some of these principles were relatively easy for the delegations to accept; others were more difficult. The second principle was the easiest to accept, since for all the Powers the maintenance of old capital ships of little fighting value was more of a liability than an asset. Indeed, Great Britain had already scrapped or was in process of scrapping all her predreadnought battleships. The first principle was more difficult, since it did not involve equal sacrifices for all the powers. Italy and France, financially demoralized by the war and racked with domestic difficulties, had not yet embarked upon programs of capital ship construction, so they were not involved in the abandonment of building already in progress. The Japanese and British programs were largely on paper only; in Japan's case the major part of her program--4 large battleships and 4 battle cruisers--had not yet been appropriated for. The United States, on the other hand, had laid down all the capital ships of the 1916 program and several of them were more than half finished.²⁴ The scrapping of all these

²⁴ Some were more than 80% complete. Memorandum by the American Naval Experts (undated), Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922, I, 73. This source will hereafter be cited as FRUS, with date and volume number.

vessels therefore involved a relatively heavier sacrifice for the United States.

The last two principles were closely related and were the most difficult to compromise. In the first place, there was a great deal of disagreement over the existing strength of the navies. Did the term mean ships actually built and in service, or did it mean ships built and building? If the latter, did it mean that ships which had progressed no further than the laying of the keel and whose completion might be years away should be included in "existing" strength? The Japanese inclined to the view that only ships built should be counted as part of existing strength, since Japan had in commission, according to her own reckoning, 25 dreadnought and predreadnought battleships totalling some 550,250 tons, as against 33 similar American vessels totalling 728,390 tons. On such a basis, Japan could claim a ratio of about 65% of the American strength.²⁵

In answer to this claim, the American delegation stated that its plan took into account the tonnage of vessels on the stocks as far as they had progressed, and that the Japanese contention that a ship is not part of existing strength until ready for action was inadmissible. Several ships on the stocks were nearly ready for launching; several others were already launched. The Japanese themselves included their

²⁵Memorandum by the Japanese Naval Advisors, Nov. 30, 1921, ibid., I, 72-73.

superdreadnought Mutsu, not yet in full fighting condition, as part of their tonnage of completed vessels. "By no logical process of thought can these be considered as non-existent. If no naval strength existed in these ships, there would be no sacrifice of naval strength in scrapping them."²⁶ Such was obviously not the case. Furthermore, a comparison of strength in dreadnoughts built and building indicated that the ratio to which Japan was entitled was nearer 10:5 than the 10:6 which was offered by the American plan, but, as Hughes informed the Japanese, the higher ratio was established to "be fair" and to make acceptance easier.²⁷ The Japanese attitude in the matter raised the suspicion that they were using what was really an unjustifiable demand to gain more concessions.²⁸ Great Britain had already accepted the American definition of existing strength, and failure of Japan to accede could bring the conference to an undignified end. Hughes told his ambassador to explain clearly to the Japanese government "that there is no value in suggestions of agreement in principle if this fundamental principle as to existing

²⁶Memorandum by the American Naval Experts, ibid., p. 73.

²⁷Hughes to Warren (Ambassador in Japan), Nov. 19, 1921. FRUS, 1922, I, 64-65.

²⁸Hughes to Warren, Nov. 27, 1921, ibid., pp. 67-68.

strength is not admitted, and that opposition on this point must inevitably be taken to mean refusal of the American proposal.²⁹

It soon appeared that the demand for the 10:7 ratio was emanating from the Japanese delegation itself, supported by officers of the Japanese Navy at home rather than from the government. The Japanese government did not insist on the 10:7 ratio. However, it did believe that some restriction of fortifications, which had been previously suggested, would be well received by the Japanese public. Powerful fortified naval bases in the Philippines and Guam were a much greater source of concern to the Japanese government than a difference of one or two more battleships in the relative strengths of the American and Japanese navies.³⁰

Eventually the Japanese were persuaded to accept the 5:5:3 ratio, but only after concessions by the Americans and the British. Fortifications and naval bases, another important element in naval power, were now brought into the picture. On December 2, while discussions over the proper ratio for Japan were still deadlocked, Admiral Baron Kato suggested that Japanese abandonment of its insistence on the 10:7 ratio might be easier for the Japanese public to accept if some agreement could be reached which would stop further

²⁹Ibid., p. 68.

³⁰Warren to Hughes, Nov. 30, 1921, ibid. pp. 68-69; Dec. 2, 1921, pp. 88-89; Dec. 10, 1921, pp. 89-90.

construction of British and American naval bases and fortifications in the western Pacific.³¹ The American negotiators had already foreseen that this question might be raised at the conference and they knew American Naval men were much opposed to any agreement restricting the fortification or construction of naval bases.

In spite of the known attitude of the Navy on this point, the negotiators believed that some major concession would have to be made in order to gain Japanese assent to the 5:3 ratio. Therefore an agreement was made which was embodied in Article XIX of the final treaty, providing that the status quo should be maintained and no further fortifications or naval facilities be constructed in the following areas: for the United States, the Philippines, Guam, the Aleutian Islands, and Wake Island; for Great Britain, Hongkong and its colonies in Borneo; for Japan, Formosa, the Pescadores, the Ryukyus, the Kuriles, the mandated islands, and the Bonin Islands. The agreement embodied in Article XIX was perhaps the feature of the Five Power Treaty American naval authorities resented most. Even though Japan agreed to restrict her own fortification construction, she gained more by the agreement, for her home bases--specifically exempted under the provisions of Article XIX--were in the Far East itself, while the nearest bases from which Anglo-American

³¹Memorandum of Conversation at the Department of State, Dec 2, 1921, ibid., pp. 77-78.

naval power could be exerted were Singapore and Pearl Harbor, both a considerable distance away. Its provisions virtually guaranteed security for Japan in the western Pacific, while also assuring that Guam, Hongkong and the Philippines would become hostages guaranteeing good behavior on the part of the United States and Great Britain. Furthermore, although only a few realized it at the time, the agreement rendered the United States powerless any longer to uphold the Open Door Policy. That power had been tenuous at best before Article XIX became a reality,³² but afterwards there could be no doubt that the power had completely evaporated. It is interesting in this connection to recall how easily Japan was able to seize these western Pacific possessions of the United States and Great Britain, in spite of belated efforts over a three year period after 1938 to increase their defenses. All in all, the non-fortification agreement probably worked to the disadvantage of the United States.

The weakened position of the United States in the Far East was not improved by the conclusion of other agreements relating to security in that vast area. In the Four Power

³²As early as 1909 a joint Army-Navy Board saw the Philippines as an untenable position and therefore recommended that primary attention be given to building up Pearl Harbor as the major outlying American base in the Pacific. O.J. Clinard, Japan's Influence on American Naval Power, p. 63.

Treaty the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was dissolved and the United States, Great Britain, Japan and France agreed to respect one another's possessions in the Pacific; while in The Nine Power Treaty, the Open Door Policy was formalized in treaty form, and all the signatories thereto, including Japan, bound themselves to respect China's sovereignty. It was well understood that these treaties were interrelated, and thus the validity and feasibility of naval armaments limitation depended upon the observance of all provisions of all the treaties. The only concrete result of either the Four or Five Power Treaties which did not depend solely upon good faith and which worked to the advantage of the United States was the termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Yet, even here, although American public opinion was much concerned over the Alliance as a menace to the United States,³³ there was a good chance that in a crisis Great Britain would choose to refuse to honor her commitments rather than go to war with the United States.

In addition to the non-fortification agreement, another concession was necessary before the ratios and tonnages for capital ships envisioned by the American plan could be effected. The Japanese could not agree that the battleship Mutsu should be counted as uncompleted. Launched well before the beginning of the conference, in the normal

³³Eleanor Tupper and George McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion (New York, 1937), p. 39.

course of events Mutsu would actually be in commission while the conference was meeting or shortly after it adjourned. There was much sentimental feeling regarding the ship in Japan, where a subscription campaign among Japanese school children had been utilized as a means of obtaining funds to complete its construction. For these reasons the American and British delegations agreed to allow Mutsu to be added to the list of Japanese ships to be retained under the American plan, while the Japanese agreed in compensation to scrap Settsu, the oldest dreadnought which would have been retained. Unfortunately, the Japanese capital ship tonnage thereby was raised from 299,700 tons to 301,700 tons. Also, since the old Settsu, mounting 12 inch guns, did not at all correspond to the giant Mutsu, which mounted 16"guns, the efficiency of the Japanese battle fleet was much improved. The Japanese already had another post-Jutland battleship in commission, while the United States had only Maryland and Great Britain the battle cruiser Hood in the post-Jutland category. Thus in order to restore a balance of post-Jutland vessels and at the same time retain the 5:5:3 ratio, it was necessary for both the United States and Great Britain to complete ships under way and then to scrap several of the oldest dreadnoughts remaining.

At this point another hitch developed. For the United States the problem was relatively easy; it was simply a matter of completing Washington and Colorado--both of them

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already launched and well on the way to completion anyhow-- and of scrapping enough tonnage in old dreadnoughts to obtain a total tonnage of 525,000 tons. But for Great Britain the problem was more difficult. She had only four ships on the stocks--the recently laid down super Hoods. However, if two of these were completed, they would each displace around 45,000 tons, which was substantially higher than 35,000 tons, the maximum tonnage for replacement vessels contemplated by the original American proposals. After a series of lengthy conversations among the principal delegates of the three nations, the British accepted 35,000 tons as the limit for each of their new vessels, and upon completion of these they would scrap four of their oldest remaining dreadnoughts. However, they demanded and received the right to measure these new vessels in terms of British legend tonnage rather than American standard tonnage, which would give a displacement for each vessel of 37,000 tons in American terms.³⁴ The way now was cleared for a tentative agreement which was announced to the press on December 15, along with the agreement regarding fortifications.³⁵ The final capital ship agreement may be summarized as follows: Japan would complete Mutsu and scrap Settsu, leaving 10 ships, the same as in the

³⁴Memoranda of Conversations at the Department of State, Dec. 13, 14, & 15, 1921, FRUS, 1922, I, 102-126.

³⁵Statement to Press, Dec. 15, 1921, ibid., pp. 127-130.

original American plan; the United States would complete Colorado and Washington³⁶ and scrap Delaware and North Dakota, leaving 18 ships, the same as in the original plan; Great Britain would complete two modified super-Hoods of 37,000 tons and scrap four older dreadnoughts, leaving 20 ships, two less than in the original plan. The original plan would have given tonnages for Japan, the United States, and Great Britain of 299,700, 500,650, and 580,450 respectively; under the tentative revision of the plan the tonnages would be 301,700, 525,000, and 559,000.³⁷

It should be noted that the agreement reached among the big three naval powers was labelled a "tentative" agreement. The entire arrangement was conditional upon further agreement with France and Italy regarding their capital ship tonnages. Hughes, in his speech of November 12, had stated that France and Italy would not be called upon to make immediate sacrifices in capital ship tonnage and that their ultimate strength was to be left for negotiation. Now, with the tentative agreement reached, it was imperative that France and Italy be brought into the discussions. There

³⁶ Later West Virginia was substituted for Washington.

³⁷ The reduction of two ships and over 21,000 tons for Great Britain was considered to compensate for the greater efficiency given her battle fleet by the two new vessels which would be built and which would probably be the most powerful battleships in the world.

were real obstacles in the way of agreement in the case of these two nations. While no problems were involved in the scrapping of tonnage by France and Italy, it was known that Italy wanted parity with France in capital ship tonnage, while France was contemplating an extensive ship-building program to replace her 10 battleships, which were all of prewar vintage. At first it appeared that the French Navy would not be content with a ratio inferior to Japan's³⁸ The French government formally announced a French building program of 10 new replacement battleships of 35,000 tons each, although it was careful to express this as an intention for the future and not to be immediately implemented.

It should be said that the American Navy did not consider itself directly concerned with the French naval situation. When asked for its views on the problem of the French Navy, the General Board replied that the Navy did not really care what the French ratio was, so long as it was acceptable to all parties at the conference. The Board believed that any increase of the French Navy would ultimately be of benefit to the United States. A ratio based on the existing strengths of the French and Italian dreadnought fleets would be acceptable.³⁹ Thus the American delegation

³⁸Copy of report by British Naval Attache in Paris to the British Ambassador, 23 Nov. 1921, SD 500.A4b/548½(10).

³⁹Memorandum, Dec. 19, 1921, General Board Advisory Book no. 1 (July 1921-Feb. 1922), Series I, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

at Washington was free to work out an understanding with France and Italy without fear of further antagonizing the Admirals.

In preliminary discussion concerning the problem, Hughes recognized that France and Italy could not be asked to scrap vessels in anywhere near the same proportions as the big three had agreed to do. Hence he proposed that the existing French dreadnought tonnage of 164,000 tons be made the basis of the French ratio, with a slight increase to 175,000 tons. In return for this concession, the French could keep their 3 predreadnoughts as long as they wished.⁴⁰ Briand agreed to the proposal, but said he wanted it clearly understood that France considered such a low ratio a real sacrifice and would not consent under any circumstances to accept a similar ratio for auxiliary vessels.⁴¹ On December 24, at a meeting of the Committee on Limitation of Armament, the French agreed that Italy could have a similar capital ship ratio, but found it impossible to accept less than 330,000 tons of auxiliary surface vessels and 90,000 tons of submarines. They declared ominously that "the French delegation has been instructed to consent to no concession in regard to the above figures."⁴²

⁴⁰Conference 1921, p. 254.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 257.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 309-310.

The French statement cast a shadow over the future negotiations regarding auxiliary vessels, but for the time being the delegates could give way to a feeling of real achievement. At last a secure agreement had been reached on the question of capital ship tonnages and ratios for all five major naval powers. The final ratios were fixed at 5:5:3:1.75:1.75, with Italy and France each being granted the right to begin replacement construction in 1927 instead of 1931, as was the case with the other powers. The agreement on capital ships was the most important single achievement in regard to armaments limitation at the conference; without it no curtailment of building programs could have been possible and the conference could have come to an inglorious end without having accomplished anything of importance.

THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY: LIMITATIONS ON AIRCRAFT CARRIERS

In one other respect there was solid achievement at the conference--definite agreements were made regarding the future status of the aircraft carrier. The Five Power Treaty placed upon this type of warship both quantitative limitations on numbers and tonnage and qualitative limitations on size and gun power. Here indeed was the future capital ship, an expression of the new air age which was to relegate to the scrapping yard or to the "mothball" fleet every battleship

then afloat or to be built, yet it was not really so remarkable that these vessels were restricted. The utility of both the airplane and the aircraft carrier had yet to be demonstrated conclusively in naval warfare, and while American naval authorities were convinced that both airplane and carrier were valuable adjuncts to the fleet, particularly in scouting and artillery spotting, they did not foresee that it would eventually supplant the battleship entirely. Very few of the major naval leaders anticipated the revolution in naval tactics which would take place in the future,⁴³ and many of these perceived it primarily in terms of the effect of land-based aircraft upon attempts to invade the United States, rather than in terms of the airplane-aircraft carrier combination's effects upon naval tactics.

The widely publicized bombing tests in the spring of 1921 served in many ways to confuse rather than enlighten. The advocates of air power were convinced that the tests proved conclusively that the battleship--and therefore sea power in general--was no match for the land based bomber.

⁴³Some naval men dimly perceived the course future events would take. See testimony of Adm. William S. Sims & Adm. Bradley M. Fiske (ret.) in House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings; Naval Policy of the U.S., 67th Cong. 1st sess. (Washington: 1921), pp. 655-671, 689-704.

Certainly it was true that the sinking of the German dreadnought Ostfriesland in the tests clearly demonstrated what many naval men had asserted to be impossible, but it was also true that the tests had been carried on under a series of restrictions which probably hindered the battleship men as much as they did the air power men. After the battleship admirals had recovered from their shock, they began to point out a number of features which did not make for a fair test. It was noted that Ostfriesland had been a stationary target, that there was no antiaircraft defense, that the general condition and watertight integrity of the ship was poor, and that the vessel was not representative of modern battleship construction, having been commissioned in 1911.⁴⁴

In short, the tests did not conclusively demonstrate that the day of the battleship was anywhere near over, and responsible naval leadership was therefore reluctant to abandon a tested and effective weapon for one whose effectiveness was only slightly more noticeable than its limitations. While admitting that aerial bombs could sink battleships, naval leaders were not yet ready to admit that

⁴⁴Report of the Joint Board on Results of Aviation and Ordnance Tests Held During June and July 1921, as reprinted in the CR, LXI, pp. 8622-26. For a detailed study of the condition of the Ostfriesland at the time of the tests, see the statement submitted by Rep. Fred C. Hicks in the addenda to CR, LXI, (Appendix), 8624.

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bombs could sink any battleship. Indeed, their viewpoint was at least partly validated later, in the summer of 1924, when in another series of tests the superdreadnought Washington survived a massive bombing and had to be sunk eventually by torpedoes and naval gunfire. As for aircraft carriers, the tests had proved nothing, except that planes launched from them could cause damage to battleships, but could not sink them. The bombs which were credited with the sinking of Ostfriesland were too heavy to be carried by the naval aircraft capable of operating from carriers at that time. The general view of naval authorities abroad as well as in the United States was, that while the aircraft carrier had a great potential value to the fleet, it was expected that it would act as a supplement to naval power as fully expressed in the heavy guns of the battleship line.⁴⁵

Opinion about the carrier, then, was not crystallized enough to warrant definite objections by the Navy to limitations on carriers proposed at Washington, and the General Board did not voice objections to the American proposals regarding them. Even on the question of the optimum tonnage of the aircraft carrier, there was no certainty in naval circles, although there was a tendency to regard carriers

⁴⁵ See the attitude of the British Admiralty as quoted in the General Board Report to the Senate, CR, LX, 2827; Secretary Daniels' testimony in House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings: Disarmament, 67th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1921), pp. 577-578.

of between 20,000 and 25,000 tons as best, the larger tonnage being necessary to provide greater cruising radius, maximum storage and maximum length of flight deck. Great Britain had 5 carriers, which were purely experimental and nearly all of 10,000 tons or less. In the United States, conversion of a collier into the carrier Langley was practically complete, with the likelihood that its displacement would not exceed 13,000 tons. Hence the very uncertainty about the future of the carrier, both as to the best design and the best use, perhaps made it easier rather than more difficult to reach some accord.

The discussions at the conference regarding the aircraft carrier were not extensive nor very much concerned with its future, but rather with the problem of what minimum tonnage each nation would accept. While there was no objection to the principle that battleship tonnage ratios should be applied to carriers, there was disagreement about accepting the figures in the American plan. That plan had called for 80,000 tons of carriers as the maximum for the United States and Great Britain and 48,000 tons for Japan, with 27,000 tons as the maximum size of any carrier. Although no tonnages were established in the plan for France and Italy, it was obvious that the extension of the battleship ratios would allow Italy and France but 28,000 tons each. In the fourteenth meeting of the Committee on Limitation of Armament on December 30, the question of carriers

was fully discussed, and at that time Admiral Acton, the Italian Naval delegate, pointed out that such a low limit for Italy would allow only one large carrier to be built. A minimum of two large carriers ought to be allowed, which would give Italy 54,000 tons.⁴⁶ The French delegate, Admiral de Bon, spoke in similar fashion, saying that France would prefer a minimum of 60,000 tons so as to provide for as many as three carriers of substantial tonnage.⁴⁷ The Japanese felt that Japan ought to be assured three carriers of around 80,000 tons, while the British stressed their need for at least five carriers. Lord Lee, the British delegate, said that carriers had potential utility for convoy and submarine work and that there should not be too much restriction of tonnage in view of the experimental nature of this type of vessel. He also proposed that there be no restrictions as to replacement--that is, no prohibition of construction for a particular period.⁴⁸ Since none of the visiting delegations was satisfied with the original tonnages proposed, it was accordingly decided to raise the quotas so as to maintain the ratios but to allow for each nation's minimum demands. In the final decision regarding aircraft carriers, the maximum tonnages were fixed at 135,000 each

⁴⁶Conference, 1921, pp. 357-358.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 359.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 358-360.

for the United States and Great Britain, 81,000 for Japan, and 60,000 each for France and Italy, with no restrictions as to replacement of existing carriers. In addition, it was agreed that no carrier could displace more than 27,000 tons or carry guns of a caliber heavier than 8 inches.

No sooner was this agreement reached than an exception had to be made. In the interests of economy, and perhaps fearful that Congress would hesitate to provide funds for more carriers, the American naval delegates proposed that the United States be allowed to convert two of the battle-cruisers then on the stocks into aircraft carriers, thus saving the amounts already utilized in their construction, while Japan and Great Britain were given the same privilege. At meetings of the heads of delegations on January 11 and 12, the question was thoroughly discussed.⁴⁹ At first Lord Balfour, the British chief delegate, was inclined to oppose the proposal, as was Secretary Hughes. Hughes feared that the proposal contradicted the spirit of the conference, and he argued it would be better to scrap all the ships under construction. He preferred, he said, "a repetition of the Scapa Flow sinking."⁵⁰ The American naval delegates, however, strongly pressed their point. By eliminating practi-

⁴⁹Memoranda of these meetings in FRUS, 1922, I, 193, 194-195, 197-200 (Jan. 11), 206-209, (Jan. 12).

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 199-200.

cally all the armor and all the big guns of these vessels, the tonnage could be reduced from over 43,000 tons to about 33,000 tons. The Japanese, who had one battlecruiser and a battleship in fairly advanced stages of construction, supported the plan, and eventually an agreement was reached which was incorporated into the treaty as an exception to Article IX, which set forth the limitations on carrier unit tonnage. It provided that each of the contracting parties could build two carriers by converting ships already under construction; but none of these vessels could exceed 33,000 tons, and the tonnage must be deducted from the total tonnage quotas previously allowed. Thus the United States was able to convert two of the gigantic battle cruisers of the 1916 program, and these became the aircraft carriers Lexington and Saratoga--pioneer vessels which aided greatly the successful development of United States naval aviation in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Japanese also took advantage of the exception provided and converted the battleship Kaga and the battle cruiser Akagi into carriers.

Closely related to carrier limitation was the question of limitation of aircraft. A subcommittee of naval and military air experts, headed by American Admiral William A. Moffett, was established to examine the question. While they agreed that rules might be created to govern the use of aircraft in warfare, they were unable to arrive at any conclusions in regard to limitation. One of the major

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difficulties had to with the difficulty of measuring air strength, while another concerned the interdependence of military and civil aviation--limitations on the former would seriously retard development of the latter.⁵¹

DISCORD OVER AUXILIARY VESSELS

The agreement on aircraft carriers marked the end of further limitation of naval armaments in the Washington Conference. In spite of long and arduous discussion no understanding was reached regarding the other classes of warships. The primary reason was the reluctance of the French to accept limitations as drastic as those which they had felt obliged to accept in the case of capital ships. Early in the conference, as stated before, the French had declared that under no conditions would they accept less than 330,000 tons of surface auxiliaries and 90,000 tons of submarines. These figures represented the tonnages which the French Navy hoped to construct in the course of an extensive ship replacement program, and also represented what the French regarded as their minimum needs. It was evident that unless the French moderated their demands there could be no agreement in this area, since the original American proposals would have given the French 150,000 tons of surface auxiliaries and 30,000 tons of submarines--far below that

⁵¹"Report of Committee on Aircraft", Conference, 1921, p. 404.

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they considered to be their minimum requirements. But the French were adamant. They seemed disposed to question every limitation on auxiliaries, whether quantitative or qualitative. In discussions of the proposed limitation on size of auxiliary vessels to a maximum of 10,000 tons, de Bon stated that he could see no reason why the limitation of gun caliber to a maximum of 8 inches, already agreed to, was not limitation enough. He indicated that the necessity of adequate communication with its far-flung colonies might require France to construct cruisers in excess of 10,000 tons.⁵² Much the same reasoning could also be applied to destroyers and submarines. In spite of several efforts to persuade the French to modify their position, the British and Americans were unsuccessful, and with their failure nothing further could be done to secure the extension of the capital ship ratios to the auxiliary classes. The only limitation finally accepted was one which placed upward limits upon the size and gun power of these vessels. It was agreed that no vessel, other than a capital ship or aircraft carrier, would be built in excess of 10,000 tons or carry guns heavier than 8 inches.

There was no question at the conference which evoked more heated discussion than the question of limitations upon

⁵²Conference, 1921, p. 319.

the subamrine. No other weapon of World War I had had such far reaching and dramatic effects on naval strategy, and none of the delegations at the Washington Conference were able to maintain a sense of detachment regarding it. Of the delegations, that of Great Britain was the most emotional. The British had been brought to the brink of defeat because of the submarine and were resolved that they should not have to undergo such an experience again. Thus the discussions about limitations to be placed upon submarines went beyond the usual arguments over tonnages, gun power or unit size, although these points were considered. Of all the warship types at the conference, the submarine was the only one about which the question of complete abolition was raised.

As could be expected, it was the British delegation which first proposed that the submarine be abolished. Great Britain had far more to gain than any other country if the use of the subamarine could be prohibited. To the British, any gain to the British Navy which would come from the use of the submarine as a fleet weapon was far outweighed by the disaster which could come to the nation through the use of the submarine as a commerce destroyer. In the nature of things, the British would always be more victimized by the submarine than any other nation. Accordingly, Lord Balfour wanted it clearly understood that Great Britain firmly believed that use of the submarine "leads inevitably to acts

which are inconsistent with the laws of war and the dictates of humanity, and the [British] delegation desires that united action should be taken by all nations to forbid their maintenance, construction or employment."⁵³

Other nations were not so sure that abolition of the submarine would best serve their interests. The Japanese were intrigued by the possibilities of large fleet submarines for long range patrol and for harassment of an enemy fleet moving into Japanese waters. They were reluctant to forego the advantages which the Japanese Navy might gain through sound use of such a weapon. The French too were not at all willing to give up the submarine. As one of the weaker naval powers, yet with long lines of communication to her colonial domains to protect, France had need of submarines to help offset the superiority of her enemies. While not showing a realistic assessment of future possibilities--which of the countries party to the conference, save Italy, was a likely enemy of France?--the French were certain that they wanted no abolition of the submarine. Indeed, their performance in discussions showed they wanted no meaningful limitation whatsoever on this weapon. The Italians thought it was unrealistic to abolish

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 302-303. For other expressions of the British position see pp. 265, 277-303.

submarines at the conference when there were several countries --not represented at the conference--which had submarines and which would not be bound by any agreement.⁵⁴

The position of the United States was the most ambiguous. The American plan had called for limitation of submarines, but without a demand for complete abolition. Some members of the American delegation agreed it would be desirable to abolish the submarine but the naval members did not agree. When asked its opinion, the General Board voiced the official naval view that the stigma attached to the submarine was largely emotional and resulted from its misuse, which had focused attention so strongly upon that one aspect of its performance that other features of its operational record in the war had been completely overlooked. The Board indicated that the submarine had proved itself essential in many roles--inminelaying and scouting, for example-- and that it was a weapon of real value to the Navy. While admitting that the submarine was not well adapted to making war on commerce legally, perhaps rules respecting its use against commerce could be formulated at the conference, or perhaps such use could be prohibited.⁵⁵ While sympathizing to an extent with the British position, Hughes thought that

⁵⁴The official attitudes of the various delegations may be found in ibid., pp. 266-276.

⁵⁵Ser. 1088rr/G.B. 438, Dec. 30, 1921; Ser. 1088 G.B. 438, Jan. 7, 1922.

attempts should be made to work out acceptable rules regarding the use of the submarine. After much discussion of the question, a separate treaty was concluded to which the five major naval powers were signatories. The treaty reaffirmed the tenets of international law as they related to the search and seizure of merchant vessels and declared that among themselves the signatory nations renounced the use of submarines against commerce, calling also upon other nations to become parties to the treaty. The result was restriction of the use of the submarine, not its abolition.⁵⁶

On the question of qualitative and quantitative limitations there was no such unanimity of opinion. In the first place, the submarine was undergoing a more rapid evolution than any other warship in this period, excepting possibly the aircraft carrier. The potentialities of the submarine were so varied it did not seem possible to place qualitative limitations upon them. Most German submarines during the war had a surface displacement of about 500-600 tons, but a few much larger boats proved effective. Who could tell what limits there were to the submarine's size? The Japanese and the French seemed especially reluctant to place limitations on size. The United States, while favoring limitation, seemed to prefer that they be minimal. In answering a re-

⁵⁶ This treaty was never ratified by all the signatories.

quest as to the minimum tonnage that the Navy would accept, the General Board stated that a submarine of 2,500 tons surface displacement could perform all the functions reasonably to be expected of a fleet submarine. A total of 12 such submarines, plus about 70 submarines of 900 tons each for station duty, intermediate patrol and training--a total of about 90,000 tons--should serve naval needs adequately.⁵⁷ With opinion varying all the way from total abolition of submarines to practically no limitation on unit tonnage, it is not surprising that agreement could not be reached on either unit tonnage or gun caliber limitation.

The results were no better in the area of quantitative limitation. The Americans had presented a plan which would allow the United States a maximum of 90,000 tons of submarines, with proportions for the other powers so as to maintain the capital ship ratios. This proposal was met head on by the French refusal to permit those ratios to determine French strength in submarines. France demanded instead parity in submarines with the largest naval power. Another attempt was made when the Americans proposed to reduce the tonnages for the United States and Great Britain to 60,000 tons, while Japan, France and Italy could keep the

⁵⁷ Ser. 1088mm/G.B. 438, 12 Dec. 1921.

tonnage they already had.⁵⁸ This was also refused by the French. To them the question of total tonnage was closely tied to that of unit tonnage. If submarines became larger, there would be fewer of them allowed within a given total tonnage. Yet the French foresaw a need for very large submarines for the same reason they thought they might need exceptionally large cruisers--to protect communications with the overseas domains. Indeed, the French believed that universal parity in submarines was necessary. Admiral de Bon stated: "I believe that 90,000 tons is the absolute minimum for all the navies who may want to have a submarine force!"⁵⁹ With such attitudes prevailing, effective limitation of submarines was out of the question.

At this point it would be well to summarize the major provisions of the treaty. The most important part was that which placed limitations upon capital ships. These were as follows:

- (1) No battleships to be constructed for ten years except that
 - (a) United States may complete two battleships.

⁵⁸ At the time of the conference the United States had 95,000 tons of submarines, Great Britain had 82,460 tons, Japan 31,450 tons, France 31,000 tons, and Italy 20,250 tons. T. Roosevelt, Jr. to Hughes, Dec. 23, 1921, SD 500. A4b/548½ (22).

⁵⁹ Conference, 1921, p. 285.

(b) Great Britain may build two battleships.

(c) France and Italy may each lay down new tonnage in 1927, 1929, and 1931.

(2) Ships shall be scrapped so as to result in total tonnages for

(a) United States	525,850 tons
(b) Great Britain	558,950 tons
(c) Japan	301,700 tons
(d) France	221,170 tons
(e) Italy	182,800 tons

(3) Ships could be replaced with new construction after reaching the age of 20 years, beginning in 1931 (with exceptions in (1) above so that by 1942 all present ships would be replaced and tonnages would then be

(a) United States	500,000 tons
(b) Great Britain	500,000 tons
(c) Japan	300,000 tons
(d) France	175,000 tons
(e) Italy	175,000 tons

(4) Replacement vessels could be no larger than 35,000 tons nor carry guns larger than 16 inches.

Other important provisions of the treaty were:

(1) Total tonnage of aircraft carriers was limited:

(a) United States	135,000 tons
(b) Great Britain	135,000 tons

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|------------|-------------|
| (c) Japan | 81,000 tons |
| (d) France | 60,000 tons |
| (e) Italy | 60,000 tons |
- (2) The maximum displacement of a carrier could be no greater than 27,000 tons. They could mount no guns larger than 8 inches.
- (3) The maximum displacement of an auxiliary warship, other than a capital ship or a carrier, could be no greater than 10,000 tons, and could mount no guns of a caliber larger than 8 inches.
- (4) Great Britain, the United States, and Japan agreed not to construct any new fortifications or naval base facilities in the western Pacific, except for the Japanese homeland, Australia, and New Zealand.
- (5) The treaty was to be effective until December 31, 1936, unless terminated upon two years notice by any of the signatory powers.

NAVAL REACTION TO THE TREATY

On February 9, 1922, President Harding sent the completed Washington Treaties to the Senate to secure its "advice and consent" to ratification. As far as he was concerned the main problem was the Senators' fear that there was some secret understanding, not revealed in the treaties,

which would commit the United States to courses of action similar to those implementing the concept of collective security. The irreconcilables in the Senate, who had worked so effectively to prevent American entry into the League of Nations, stood ready to block the acceptance of any American concession to collective security. In his message of transmittal Harding hastened to assure the Senators that "nothing in any of these treaties commits the United States, or any other power, to any kind of an alliance, entanglement, or involvement."⁶⁰ But this was not to say that the treaties were meaningless. An important series of agreements had been made, and the good faith of nations was about to be tested.

If nations may not establish by mutual understanding the rules and principles which are to govern their relationship; if a sovereign and solemn plight of faith by leading nations of the earth is valueless; if nations may not trust one another, then, indeed, there is little on which to hang our faith in advancing civilization or the furtherance of peace.⁶¹

In due time the treaties were approved by the Senate, although not without considerable debate. The major criticism centered upon the Four Power Treaty, since many of the senators could not bring themselves to believe it contained no commitments. Without commitments it appeared to be no

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 11. For Lodge's statement affirming Harding's, see CR, LXII, 4682-83.

⁶¹Conference, 1921, p. 10.

more than a harmless scrap of paper.⁶² Some senators were concerned about the Five Power Treaty, particularly the establishment of the 5:3 ratio with Japan and the renunciation of the right to develop bases in the western Pacific. They believed that by the Five Power Treaty the United States abandoned its ability--and its obligation--to safeguard the sovereignty of China.⁶³

The Senate did not move fast enough to satisfy large segments of the American public. From the time when Hughes' opening speech had burst upon a startled world, the press and public had followed the deliberations closely, and as it appeared that agreements would be reached which would bring about a real measure of disarmament and future limitation on naval building, press and public alike were aroused to an ever increasing pitch of excitement which reached its peak during the Senate debates. To oppose the treaty seemed to be the acme of foolishness. Various attempts were made to show the Senate how overwhelmingly the mass of the people favored the treaties. The Literary Digest announced a poll of editors in which 703 out of 803 papers questioned had favored ratification of the treaties.⁶⁴ Only a few

⁶²Vinson, The Parchment Peace, Chap. XVII, contains a good account of the Senate debate on the Four Power Treaty.

⁶³Ibid., p. 205.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 176.

extremely stout hearted--or stubborn--senators could stand against such a tide, and in the final roll call on the Five Power Treaty only one senator cast his vote against it.⁶⁵

The debates in the Senate and public comment on the Five Power Treaty revealed that the fundamental assumption of the public was the same as the statement which President Harding had voiced as a hope for the future--that the nations could be trusted, and that they would abide by the agreements so painstakingly formulated at Washington. To doubt that assumption was to question the validity of the treaties, for to many people it was apparent that the United States had sacrificed much of her position in the Far East on the altar of good faith.

On the other hand, the position of the Navy and those Congressmen and others who opposed the treaties was based upon the assumption that one of the nations would break faith and that a major world crisis would occur. Almost to a man, the Admirals unequivocally denounced the Five Power Treaty. It will be recalled that before the Conference the Navy had been asked for its opinion regarding an acceptable program of naval limitation and disarmament, and that the Navy's position had been so much at odds with the principle of disarmament that its views could not be heeded except in

⁶⁵This was Joseph I. France of Maryland. CR, LXII, 4718-19. This contrasts with the vote of 67-27 in the case of the Four Power Treaty. Ibid., 4496.

certain particulars. Even the American plan offered at the opening of the Conference had been sadly deficient from the Navy's point of view, but the final agreements as embodied in the treaty were even worse. The chief targets of attack were the 5:3 ratio with Japan and Article XIX, the non-fortification clause. Either one gave Japan a strong position in the waters of the western Pacific and made successful American naval operations in that area extremely doubtful, but the two taken together virtually guaranteed Japan immunity from attack and left the Philippines and Guam helpless enticingly within Japan's reach. Naval officers made several public statements denouncing the treaty;⁶⁶ and one, Captain Dudley W. Knox, one of the Navy's most articulate and scholarly officers, wrote a short book about the treaty.⁶⁷ Individual opinions within the Navy were perhaps best summarized by Captain Frank H. Schofield, one of the naval experts at the Washington Conference. Writing in the Naval Institute Proceedings, he asserted:

Had I been a Japanese naval strategist, I would have done all I could to keep America from fortifying further her naval positions in the Philippines and Guam, and of operating her naval forces there. I would have tried to consolidate and strengthen Japan's hold in the Far East through making it difficult for America to in-

⁶⁶ A good summary of these is in H. & M. Sprout, Toward a New Order, pp. 264-264.

⁶⁷ Dudley W. Knox, The Eclipse of American Sea Power (New York, 1922). His views remained unchanged with the passage of time. See his History of the United States Navy (rev. ed., New York, 1948), pp. 426-428.

terfere.⁶⁸

He claimed the Japanese had accomplished precisely those objects at the conference.

Official naval opinion was not long in coming. At first content to let individual officers voice the Navy's case, the General Board finally made its attitude known when it submitted a report in reply to a directive from the Secretary of the Navy asking the Board to define United States naval policy in terms of the Five Power Treaty, at that time in the final stages of negotiation. The Board began its report by stating:

The General Board desires to record here its opinion that the naval situation of the United States in the Pacific, both as to ships and as to bases, resulting from the Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament. . . will be such as greatly to lessen the power of the United States to prepare to defend its interests or unaided to enforce its policies in the Western Pacific, should these be seriously threatened.⁶⁹

Naval opinion was not unanimously opposed to the treaty. A few officers considered the treaty as not threatening American security to any dangerous extent. The most outspoken of these men was Admiral William V. Pratt, who had been a dele-

⁶⁸ Naval Institute Proceedings, May, 1923, p. 782. The Proceedings are a good source of naval opinion on various aspects of naval policy. For other adverse comments from this source on the Washington Treaty see Adm. Edward W. Eberle, "A Few Reflections on Our Navy and Some of Its Needs" (Sept. 1924) and Capt. L.M. Overstreet, "Danger of Disarming America" (Sept. 1924).

⁶⁹ Ser. 1108/G.3. 420-2, 29 Mar., 1922.

gate at the conference. He believed that the treaty, in spite of its faults, had been instrumental in reducing international tension and helping to restore a climate of peaceful relationships. It was primarily the Navy's power which had persuaded Japan to accept the 5:3 ratio, and the non-fortification clause and the scrapping of most of the 1916 building program were not disastrous, since it was unlikely that Congress would have voted the money to enable ships or fortifications to be completed.⁷⁰

Since American naval officers were generally opposed to the treaty, it is simple to infer that Great Britain and Japan must have found it most advantageous. Such was not the case. British naval leaders were particularly furious at the granting of parity to the United States, which brought to an end a century-old tradition of naval supremacy.⁷¹ In Japan, the press denounced the 5:3 ratio as placing a stamp of inferiority upon Japan which could not be tolerated, and it was only with some difficulty that the treaty received

⁷⁰ "Some Considerations Affecting Naval Policy" Naval Institute Proceedings (Nov., 1922); "The Case for the Naval Treaty", Current History, XVIII (April, 1923). In this connection see the opinion of a British expert, Hector C. Bywater, in his Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments Since the Great War (Boston, 1927), pp. 157-158. Hereafter cited as Bywater, Navies and Nations.

⁷¹ Webster-Wemyss, one of the British naval delegates, wrote a scathing article. "And After Washington", The Nineteenth Century and After (March, 1922), pp. 405-416.

the approval of the Privy Council.⁷² In France there was much discontent over the greatly inferior capital ship tonnage France had accepted, and the French Assembly did not finally ratify the Five Power Treaty until July 10, 1923. Only the Italians seemed content, their primary goal--parity in capital ships with France--having been achieved. The widespread dissatisfaction with the treaty expressed in naval circles in the United States and abroad prompted many to doubt whether any further gains in naval armaments limitation could be made in the future.

In spite of the attacks directed by naval men against the treaty, the man in the street hailed it as a great step forward in human relations, and certainly with all its flaws the treaty deserved to stand as a diplomatic landmark. A contemporary judgment fairly summarized the contribution made by the treaty when it said that three great principles were established by it;

1. It is possible to limit armaments by agreement.
2. A fixed ratio is a feasible means of establishing relative naval strength.

⁷²Tatsuji Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire (Chicago, 1935), pp. 265-273. For a summary of Japanese naval opinion, see Yamato Ichihashi, The Washington Conference and After (Stanford, 1928), pp. 144-146. Ichihashi was the head of the Japanese interpreter team at the conference.

3. The British and American navies should be equal.⁷³

Students of the Washington Conference are generally in agreement concerning the effect of the Five Power Treaty upon the security of the United States. Earlier writers generally expressed satisfaction with the treaty and stressed its positive role in relieving international tension and promoting better relationships.⁷⁴ Nicholas Roosevelt was an exception to this trend. He saw the peace in the Far East in the 1920s as being deceptive in that it was superficial and concealed fundamental antagonisms which were only dormant.⁷⁵ Later writers, benefitting from the perspective afforded by the passage of time, have generally affirmed earlier judgments. They also emphasized the contribution to peace which the treaty made by mitigating the intense rivalries of the postwar period.⁷⁶ This writer agrees with the general judgment; however, it does seem the frequent statements that the United States sacrificed a future naval superiority in order to achieve peace in the Pacific may not

⁷³Nicholas Roosevelt, The Restless Pacific (New York, 1928), p. 268. Roosevelt, a journalist, covered the Washington Conference for the New York Tribune and several European newspapers.

⁷⁴Buell, The Washington Conference, p. 200; Ichihashi, The Washington Conference and After, pp. 146-147; Benjamin H. Williams, The United States and Disarmament (New York, 1931), pp. 158-160.

⁷⁵The Restless Pacific, pp. 268-269.

⁷⁶H. & M. Sprout, Toward A new Order, pp. 284-288; Davis, A Navy Second to None, pp. 298-304.

be fully warranted.

Most of the admirals who objected to the 5:3 ratio in capital ships with Japan failed to point out--and maybe did not consider--that without the treaty the ratio may have been even more unfavorable. The General Board's own figures showed that a two-to-one superiority in capital ships could not have been approached on the basis of ships actually in commission, while if all building programs then under way or authorized were completed Japan would have enjoyed near-equality in superdreadnoughts, the type of capital ship which most counted.⁷⁷ Furthermore, there was every indication that the 1916 program might never be completed, while the probability of the Japanese completing or even increasing their program was greater. Viewed in this light the establishment of a 5:3 ratio with Japan represented not a great sacrifice for the United States but instead a diplomatic achievement of major importance.

Of course, the grave disadvantage to American naval strategy which resulted from the non-fortification agreement must not be minimized. Had the Navy been free to develop fortified naval base facilities in Guam and the Philippines it would have been in a better strategic position. Even though Congress may not have voted funds sufficient to develop a naval base construction program fully in accord with

⁷⁷ See footnote 22 above.

the desires of naval planners, something along this line undoubtedly would have been done, as it was in the case of cruiser construction. In that case Japan would not have enjoyed such a dominant position in the Far East.

With the ratification of the Washington Treaty⁷⁸ an era in American naval policy ended and a new era began. The era just past was one in which the Navy, after long effort, had persuaded a large portion of the public that a strong navy was necessary. But the extension of the idea to one wherein the Navy needed to be not 'just strong but the strongest had not gained acceptance, except temporarily under the stress of crisis. The era just beginning would indeed see the Navy in a position of theoretical equality with Great Britain but prevented by treaty from achieving it. More important, the new era would see the Navy increasingly frustrated in its efforts to provide for what it considered to be the minimum naval needs of the nation. As will be seen, the Washington Treaty provided both limitations and restrictions on one hand and objectives and guidelines on the other; but more and more the limitations were to assume the position of definite, immediate barriers, while the ob-

⁷⁸In this study the Five Power Treaty will henceforth be referred to as the Washington Treaty, although it is understood that actually there was no Washington Treaty but rather treaties.

jectives faded farther from the Navy's reach. The era of disarmament posed a whole series of new problems never before faced by American naval strategists.

CHAPTER III

AFTER WASHINGTON: RECASTING A POLICY

With the Washington Treaty an accomplished fact, the Navy's strategists faced the necessity of developing a new policy to meet the restrictions imposed by that treaty. The most important element of naval power, the battleship, had been effectively prevented from expanding, and the Navy had to adjust its planning to a situation in which it could expect no further augmentation of its battleship arm for at least ten years. In its shipbuilding plans it faced definite limitations upon the size and gun power of battleships, carriers and cruisers--limitations which could greatly affect the broader aspects of strategy. For example, many naval officers thought the 10,000 ton limitation made it extremely difficult if not impossible to provide a type of cruiser which could operate effectively over the vast distances of the central and western Pacific. Finally, because of the complete prohibition of battleship construction, naval planners became aware of the increased importance of auxiliary vessels, which accordingly came to demand the greatest share of their concern. In other countries affected by the treaty the trend was the same, with results arousing such antagonisms as to lead to attempts within the next decade to bring auxiliaries under limitations similar to those previously imposed upon capital ships and

aircraft carriers.

There was one positive result of the Washington Treaty, as far as the Navy was concerned. The treaty had at least set up guidelines which might serve as the basis for a consistent naval policy. Within a few weeks after the signing of the treaty, the General Board was asked by the Navy Department to formulate a clear naval policy based upon treaty limitations, and on March 29 the Board submitted a detailed statement of policy which became, with subsequent minor alterations, the official statement of American Naval policy as long as treaty limitations were in effect. The Board began its statement with a definition of naval policy, illustrating the broad scope and purposes of the term.

Naval policy is the system of principles, and the general terms of their application, governing the development, organization, maintenance, training and operation of a navy. It is based on and is designed to support national policies and American interests. It comprehends the questions of number, size, type and distribution of naval vessels and stations, the character and number of the personnel and the characteristics of peace and war operations.¹

The basic purpose of our naval policy was to provide security for the United States in carrying out its foreign policy, and to that end the "Navy of the United States should be maintained in sufficient strength to support its policies and its commerce, and to guard its continental and overseas

¹Ser. 1108/G.B. 420-2, 29 March 1922, p. 1.

possessions." From a practical point of view this meant, in effect, that the United States should "create, maintain and operate a Navy second to none and in conformity with the ratios for capital ships established by the treaty for the limitation of naval armaments."² In the process of maintaining a navy adequate to achieve these purposes, the Board proposed to use the limitations of the treaty as guidelines to accomplish three major objectives.

1. To make the 5:5:3 ratio, already established for capital ships, the basis of building programs in all other categories of warships.
2. To make superiority of armament a main objective in each category.
3. To make great radius of action another main objective.

The first point, extension of the 5:5:3 ratio, was a logical objective in economic and political terms, though not necessarily in legal terms. There was no statement in the treaty that warships other than aircraft carriers should be limited in the same ratio as the capital ships, although it will be recalled that this assumption was a part of the original American proposals for limitation in all classes. On the other hand, an extension of the ratios would provide the Navy with a convenient and relatively accurate means of

² Ibid.

measuring the strength of other navies relative to itself in the warship classes not covered by the treaty.³ It would also provide a simple measure of naval needs easily understood by Congressmen and other influential laymen. Finally, the extension principle, if actually carried out in building programs, would guarantee the maintenance of the cardinal principle of parity with Great Britain and a high degree of superiority over Japan, since it was not possible to foresee what these nations would actually choose to build in the unlimited classes. So persuasive were the arguments in favor of the extension concept that it became the basis of American diplomacy in future naval limitation conferences.⁴

The second and third objectives were closely related and had to do with the development of a navy which was at least as strong, ship for ship, as that of any other power. The development of maximum efficiency within the tonnage and gun power limitations of the treaty posed an extremely complicated problem for naval designers, in which errors in the form of completed ships of inadequate design would be extremely costly in monetary terms and might lead to disaster

³"Hearings of the General Board, 1922" (Typewritten records, 3 vols.), I, 98-108.

⁴In one of its reports a short time later, the Board did state that in this sense the Washington Treaty made possible the attainment of the basic objective of naval policy since 1915--the development of a navy second to none. Ser. 1130/G.B. 420-2, 31 May 1922.

under the test of war. It was clearly recognized that greater attention would have to be focused on the problem of making all the tonnage in the Navy as effective as possible.⁵ The problem was the more acute because the United States Navy was more restricted than most others by tonnage limitations on warships. With but few naval base facilities developed in its Pacific possessions before 1921 and with further development in most of these now prohibited, the Navy was forced to try to develop ships of all classes with a long cruising radius to enable them to operate for long periods independently of bases and in the vast distances between bases. When coupled with the traditional American insistence upon the highest gun power possible, this consideration called for ships of relatively heavy tonnage. Larger ships were necessary, both to serve as stable platforms for many powerful guns and to provide adequate storage and living space for long cruises. The limitations on tonnages of battleships and cruisers particularly represented the absolute minimum acceptable to American strategists, and the struggle to design ships within these limits was difficult indeed.

As an example, consider the cruiser. Since this vessel was considered the most important in the fleet next to the battleship, naval men focused much attention upon the most

⁵Ibid.

effective design. Before the conference, the General Board had considered the most efficient cruiser design for the purposes dictated by naval needs. At that time preliminary designs for a scout cruiser, to accompany the fleet or to operate independently, ranged from a 12,000 ton vessel carrying eight 8 inch guns to one of 8250 tons carrying six 8 inch guns, with Board opinion heavily favoring the former. Indications were that a 10,000 ton cruiser could be designed to meet the overriding need for a long range vessel, but only with the sacrifice of a degree of gunpower, armor protection, or speed--perhaps all three.⁶ No "treaty cruisers" embodying the restrictions of the Washington Treaty were actually built by the United States until 1929,⁷ and they achieved long range qualities only by sacrificing armor protection and a certain degree of speed.⁸

It developed, however, that treaty limitations were not the greatest obstacle to the development of a post-Washington Navy satisfactory to naval strategists. Naval policy is not made by naval officers alone. Frequently, and primarily, policy is made by the President and the Secretary of the Navy through their approval or disapproval

⁶Ser. 949/G.B. 420-8, 5 March 1920.

⁷Pensacola and Salt Lake City--9,100 tons, ten 8 inch guns, 32 knots speed.

⁸Hector C. Bywater, Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments Since the Great War (Boston, 1927) pp. 184-185. Hereafter cited as Bywater, Navies and Nations.

of programs developed by naval officers; by Congress by virtue of its power to approve or restrict the Administration's and the Navy's requests for funds to carry out their programs; and ultimately by that indefinite but nonetheless powerful force known as public opinion, which both Congress and Administration found it necessary to heed. In the period immediately following the Washington Conference all three forces--President, Congress, and public opinion--were clearly against an expansion of the Navy, even up to the limits prescribed by the 5:5:3 ratio. Probably the fundamental factor was public opinion, which had been practically hypnotized by the apparent success of the conference into a belief that an era of universal peace was imminent, if not already a reality. The treaties which were the fruit of the conference had certainly contributed greatly to the easing of tensions, and the surface tranquillity thereby fostered, together with the immediate financial relief afforded by the abandonment of the massive postwar building programs, led to the obvious conclusion that things were going very well indeed. With no immediate sense of crisis to disturb that tranquillity, it is not remarkable that the general trend of public opinion was opposed to an extensive program of naval shipbuilding, even in the auxiliary classes. The general attitude was that an era of permanent peace had been established and people could concentrate on sharing as much as possible in the great internal economic developments of the twenties. Those

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who persisted in saying that the era of national jealousies and rivalries was not dead were often considered warmongers.⁹

Congress and the Administration both reflected the general attitude to an extent, but were also concerned with naval policy from a fiscal viewpoint. The Administration--particularly under Coolidge--was primarily concerned with balancing the budget, and to accomplish it while reducing both taxes and expenditures. Between 1922 and 1929 the Navy and its supporters had to struggle mightily to secure appropriations commensurate with its expressed needs, and only once, in 1924, was Congress persuaded to vote funds for major new construction for the fleet. In a very real sense Congress made American naval policy in the twenties after the Washington Conference. Many naval men found it difficult to accept this, and persisted in the belief that they, as the experts capable of thoroughly understanding naval needs, should be the proper creators of policy. The role of Congress in modifying or blocking their requests was deeply resented. At a hearing on policy held on March 6, 1922, the members of the Board discussed this problem, and when the question was raised whether the Navy should agree to compromise and to recommend only those plans which it

⁹Nicholas Roosevelt, A Front Row Seat (Norman, Okla., 1953), p. 139. This book of reminiscences contains a chapter on the author's impressions of the Washington Conference, which he attended as a correspondent.

felt Congress would approve, there was a generally strong expression of opinion to the effect that compromise would weaken policy and that the Navy should not yield its claims, even if by so doing it received much less than it asked.¹⁰ Still there was a sense of frustration as these men, who prided themselves on their technical skill and what they considered to be their superior understanding of naval problems, were forced to recognize that the final decisions in policy had always lain and would continue to lie in hands other than theirs. At another hearing on March 10, 1922, Admiral Plunkett reported his fears that members of Congress were convinced that an era of permanent peace had arrived and there was no further need for a large navy. When asked whether he thought navy men should persist in their requests for new construction in auxiliary vessels he replied: "It is going to be filled in for you very shortly. We are going to get a definite Naval Policy for the Navy for the first time from Congress. For the first time a definite Naval Policy will be laid down there."¹¹ He did not have to explain that the policy would be expressed in terms of refusal to vote funds to meet naval requests.

¹⁰"Hearings of the General Board, 1922", I, 67-70.

¹¹Ibid., 150.

BATTLESHIP MODERNIZATION: LEGAL OR ILLEGAL?

One aspect of policy closely related both to the limitation treaty and to Congressional sensitivity to finances was that which involved the modernization of battleships. As mentioned earlier, the series of bombing tests in 1921 and 1924 indicated that battleships could be sunk by aircraft but that various forms of protection would make their destruction much less likely and would help to preserve the primacy of that symbol of naval might. After a lengthy General Board hearing on the problem,¹² it was decided that the fitting of underwater bulges along the sides of the ships would provide a cushion against bomb explosions in the water alongside. These bulges would also provide an extra measure of protection against torpedoes and would serve as convenient storage for fuel oil.¹³ The strengthening of the decks was another element of protection which the board wished to see accomplished. Finally the provision of antiaircraft guns, catapults and catapult seaplanes was felt to be most desirable.

Protection against air and submarine attack was only a part of the improvement needed. In addition, the older

¹²Ibid., III, 815-857.

¹³At this time the Navy was also seriously considering converting its older coal burning battleships into oil burners. Ibid.

battleships built before 1916 required much work to bring their efficiency up to the level of that of the newer ships. New fire control equipment was needed, coal burning propulsion machinery had to be replaced with oil burning machinery, and finally the elevations of the heavy guns of the main batteries had to be increased to enable them to fire at longer ranges, since the use of aircraft for spotting gunfire enabled warships to fire their guns much farther than their fire control equipment could see. All these desired changes required considerable sums of money and ran head on into the determination of many members of Congress to reduce naval expenditures as much as possible. During most of the twenties the battleships were the special target of attack by economy-minded Congressmen. These men frequently pointed out that the cost of operating a battleship was far greater than that of any other type of vessel. The battleship fleet required 20 percent of the total navy personnel to man it, and the payroll for these men alone totalled over \$16,000,000 per year. Add to this the average sum of \$100,000 annually for repairs for each battleship and the cost of gunnery operations and fuel, and the total becomes great indeed.¹⁴ It was a large sum to spend upon ships which many Congressmen believed to be obsolete, for many remained unconvinced by naval arguments that the battleships were the mainstay of the fleet and considered

¹⁴ Gerald E. Wheeler, Prelude to Pearl Harbor: The United States Navy and the Far East, 1921-1931 (Columbia, Mo., 1963), pp. 111-112. Hereafter cited as Wheeler, Prelude to Pearl Harbor.

any expenditure upon them a waste of money. Yet to the naval officers no effort was more necessary than the effort required to keep the battleships in as efficient a state as possible.¹⁵

Here was an interplay of ideals, opinions and prejudices which in themselves made for a long uphill struggle by the Navy in order to attain its goal. But there was another complicating factor to be considered. Were the contemplated changes legal under the limitation treaty? As it turned out, most of them were. The treaty explicitly allowed the installation of bulges and antiaircraft defense, and while there was some disposition to question the legality of conversion from coal to oil burning, this was not seriously contested.¹⁶

The one aspect of battleship modernization which did stir much controversy for several years was the Navy's attempt to increase the elevation of the main battery. It happened that this alteration was considered to be extremely important by the Navy. For some time there had been dissatisfaction over the fact that under the treaty Great

¹⁵The General Board stated that one of the Navy's objectives was to make all retained tonnage as effective as possible. Ser. 1130/G.B. 420-2, 31 May 1922.

¹⁶The Board firmly denied such conversion was illegal under the treaty. To so maintain, it said, would involve a tortured interpretation of the word "reconstruction". Ser. 1212/G.B. 438, 23 April 1924.



Britain retained a substantially larger capital ship tonnage than the United States, and that actual parity in tonnage with Great Britain could not be reached until 1942. It was also believed that the two new 37,000 ton ships which the treaty permitted Great Britain to build would give the Royal Navy a decided advantage over the American battle line. In reporting on the situation the General Board cited a recent Naval War College study indicating that the British battleship fleet was 30 percent stronger than the American, primarily because the British had more ships and because their guns had, on the average, a longer range and greater penetrating power at medium ranges. The Board recommended that the situation should be equalized as soon as possible by the installation of heavier deck protection on the American battleships and by the increase of the maximum elevation of the main battery guns to 30 degrees.¹⁷ Legislation to this effect was introduced in Congress soon thereafter. On January 22, 1923, Navy Secretary Denby told the House Naval Affairs Committee that the British Navy had altered most of their battleships' turrets to allow for greater elevation, and the U. S. Navy had to do likewise.¹⁸ Responding to what was considered a British threat, Congress, on March 4, 1923,

¹⁷Ser. 1153/G.B. 420, 29 Nov. 1922.

¹⁸Enclosure in Geddes (British Ambassador) to Hughes, March 5, 1923. FRUS., 1923, I, 27.

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as part of its Third Deficiency Appropriations bill, granted the sum of \$6,500,000 to commence the required alterations on the thirteen oldest battleships.¹⁹

Complications developed immediately. The next day the British Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes, delivered a protest to Secretary Hughes on behalf of the British Government. He denied elevation of the guns on British battleships had been increased; all reports to the contrary were false. He pointed out that the American naval attaché in London had known as early as January 5 that the British had not made any alterations of any kind to their battleships.²⁰ When it appeared the Navy was going to carry through its elevation alterations, the British protested again. Elevation of main battery guns, they claimed, involved changes in gun mountings and turrets extensive enough to constitute reconstruction, which was prohibited by the treaty.²¹ It was subsequently decided to postpone the alterations, for while naval officers were convinced the British view was mistaken, they did not wish any adverse repercussions from the direction of Capitol Hill while Congress was giving consideration to the Navy's request for eight cruisers.

¹⁹U.S. Statutes, XLII, pt. 1, 1544.

²⁰Geddes to Hughes, March 5, 1923. FRUS., 1923, I, 25-28.

²¹H.G.Chilton (British Chargé) to Hughes, Feb. 14, 1924, FRUS., 1924, I, 7.

After the passage of the cruiser authorization bill of December 18, 1924, the gun elevation question was brought up once more by Congressmen who represented both pro-and anti-expansion factions. In early January, 1925, Congressmen King and McKellar debated the question in the House.²² In reply to attacks on the Navy by King, McKellar called attention to a letter from Secretary Hughes to Thomas S. Butler, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, in which Hughes stated he did not believe elevation of main battery guns was a violation of the treaty. He did admit, however, that such changes "would tend to evoke the competition which it has been the policy of this Government to mitigate."²³

The argument continued. In the spring of 1925, the Navy Department published and publicized widely a pamphlet presenting its case regarding the situation of the Navy and the effects of the limitation treaty upon it, and outlining what needed to be done to bring the Navy to the strength commensurate with its position relative to other naval powers. A part of that pamphlet was devoted to a detailed refutation of the British charges and a strong plea that the entire battleship modernization program should be begun immediately.²⁴

²²CR., LXVI, 1965-68.

²³Hughes to Butler, Jan. 6, 1925, FRUS., 1924, I, 15-17.

²⁴Navy Department, Information Concerning the U.S. Navy and Other Navies (Washington, 1925), 69-70, 76-80.

To this presentation for public consumption was added the report to the Navy Department of a board of naval officers headed by Admiral E. W. Eberle. Called specifically to examine recent developments in aviation and to recommend a policy for naval development in all areas, especially in relation to naval aviation, the Eberle Board clearly stressed the need for complete modernization of all the battleships of the fleet which were in need of it. Only in this way, the Board declared, was it possible for the battle-fleet to remain prepared to meet the challenges being offered by rapid advances in aviation.²⁵ In spite of all efforts by the Navy, however, the decision to postpone the elevation of guns was allowed to stand, and at the time another naval limitation conference was held in the summer of 1927, the maximum elevation of the American battleships' heavy guns was still 15 degrees.²⁶

Meanwhile the other elements of the battleship modernization program were gradually adopted. The first step came in December 1924, when Congress passed the first authorization for new construction since before the Washington

²⁵ The Board's report is well summarized in Archibald Turnbull and Clifford L. Lord, History of United States Naval Aviation (New Haven, 1949), pp. 243-245. Hereafter cited as Turnbull and Lord, U.S. Naval Aviation.

²⁶ For a good presentation of the gun elevation question from the British viewpoint, see Bywater, Navies and Nations, pp. 164-171.

Conference. Along with the authorization of eight 10,000 ton cruisers and six river gunboats the bill provided for the installation of oil burning machinery in the six oldest battleships, and the addition of antiaircraft and antitorpedo protection, and on February 11, 1925, funds were appropriated to begin the work.²⁷ In subsequent years most of the other pre-Jutland dreadnoughts of the fleet were extensively refitted and modernized.²⁸

BUILDING IN THE UNLIMITED CLASSES:

A NEW NAVAL COMPETITION.

At the time the Washington Treaty was drafted, there was adverse comment about the fact that warship types other than capital ships and aircraft carriers were left without quantitative limitations, thus leaving each power free to build as much as it desired in these classes. It has been seen that the principal opposition to the limitation of auxiliary vessels came from France. It would be unfair, however, to blame France entirely, since the other nations registered various degrees of opposition to the principle

²⁷ U.S. Statutes, XLIII, pt. 1, 719; 881-882.

²⁸ Authorization for modernization of Oklahoma & Nevada was passed March 2, 1927; for Pennsylvania and Arizona on Feb. 25, 1929; and for New Mexico, Idaho, and Mississippi on Feb. 28, 1931. U.S. Statutes at Large, XLIV, pt. 2, 1343; XLV, pt. 1, 1261; XLVI, pt. 1, 1453.

of limiting auxiliaries. Japan, for example, did not approve of proposed limitations on submarines any more than did France. Great Britain, while favoring the abolition or drastic restriction of submarines, would not have accepted much limitation of cruisers, which that nation especially needed. That the failure to include quantitative limitations in the auxiliary classes was a serious omission was made clear by the events of the next several years, as another naval race came into existence--this time with cruisers rather than battleships as the main competitors.

That cruisers should assume such a prominent place in the naval building programs of the twenties was not surprising. Since the Washington Treaty forbade the construction of capital ships and since the aircraft carrier was still in an experimental status, the cruiser became the nearest thing to a capital ship that could be constructed without quantitative limitations. The limitations on tonnage and gun caliber, however, did force naval designers everywhere to try to achieve the utmost efficiency in this type of ship; and the limitations of the treaty, instead of being considered maximum limits, were generally looked upon as minimum qualities to be achieved at all costs.

The first round in the cruiser race began almost immediately after the Washington Treaty was signed. Japan initiated a large scale program in auxiliary vessels in 1922, and by mid 1923 had 29 cruisers either built or on the stocks.

Great Britain was in process of completing three cruisers begun before the conference and initiated no new construction until 1924, but that nation already possessed a very substantial cruiser fleet--altogether 57 ships. Against these the United States possessed in 1922 22 older armored and light cruisers and only 2 cruisers of postwar design; in addition 8 more cruisers were building. Since the fighting value of the older ships was practically nil--several of them actually were in decommissioned status, with only skeleton crews--the General Board looked upon the developing situation with apprehension. In its recommendation for the 1925 building program, the Board called attention to the situation described above and pointed out that in order to maintain a 5:5:3 ratio in this class of warship the Navy would have to add 20 more in the shortest time possible. It recommended that 12 cruisers be begun without delay and they be completed within two years. It also pointed out that construction of large submarines was under way abroad and stated the Navy would heed 50,000 tons of submarines, with 6 cruising submarines and 6 minelaying submarines to be undertaken immediately.²⁹ Congress did not share the

²⁹ Ser. 1162/G.B. 420-2, 7 April 1923. Naval shipbuilding programs were recommended annually by the General Board, usually in the spring. The programs were for fiscal years and were made for the fiscal year following the one then approaching--thus, the 1925 building program was prepared and submitted by the Board in the spring of 1923. The Navy's Budget section then made up the requests for funds, which the Navy department submitted to Congress just after it convened at the end of the year. If all went well both the appropri-

General Board's sense of urgency, and nothing was done at that time. A year later, in April 1924, the Board called attention to the fact that nothing had been done, yet the other countries were continuing their programs. Furthermore, large cruisers carrying 8 inch guns were being laid down by these countries. It urged that the 1926 building program provide for the construction of sixteen 8 inch gun cruisers.³⁰

The period from February 1922, when the Washington Conference adjourned, to February 1929, when the famous 15 Cruiser Bill was passed by Congress, was a lean and hungry time for the Navy. With the exception of the bill for construction and modernization which passed Congress on December 14, 1924, no major new construction was provided for or begun during this period. Several cruisers and submarines authorized under the 1916 naval expansion program were completed during the period up to 1925, but little new construction was begun; indeed, by 1930 only two of the eight cruisers authorized by the 1924 Act had been completed. The lack of funds for new construction was also a characteristic of many other naval activities in the twenties. Enlisted personnel strength was reduced from 119,205 in 1921 to 85,321 in 1929.³¹ At the end of 1923, Admiral Eberle told

ations bill and the bill to authorize new construction would be passed before the following June, in time to take effect before the next fiscal year began.

³⁰ Ser. 1206/G.B. 420-2, 18 April 1924.

³¹ Navy Annual Reports, 1922, p. 113; 1929, p. 19.

the House Appropriations sub-committee on Naval Appropriations that the 1923 maneuvers were seriously hampered by lack of fuel and that the plans to hold the following year's naval exercises off Hawaii might have to be abandoned.³² The best general indication of the decline may be seen in the reduction of naval appropriations during the twenties.

TABLE 1
NAVAL APPROPRIATIONS--FISCAL YEARS
1921-1929

Year	Appropriations	Year	Appropriations
1921	\$815,559,000	1926	\$311,703,000
1922	540,430,000	1927	355,801,000
1923	387,494,000	1928	357,670,000
1924	339,712,000	1929	385,262,000
1925	345,869,000	1930	370,245,000

Source: Navy Annual Reports 1921, p. 765; 1932, p. 993.

In only one respect was there a glimmer of happiness for naval planners. In December, 1924, Congress authorized a naval construction program which materially strengthened the

³²U.S. House, Appropriations Committee, Hearings on the 1925 Appropriations Bill, 68th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1924), pp. 80-81.

Navy and enabled it at least to keep the Japanese and British lead in cruisers from growing too far to be overcome. There were several reasons for the passage of this bill in the middle of an otherwise frustrating period for the Navy. First, it was becoming increasingly obvious that with the passage of time the Navy's strength relative to the naval power of Great Britain and Japan was becoming progressively less. The Japanese building program had been under way since 1922,³³ while early in 1923 Great Britain had announced plans for a large scale program which had not been acted upon by Parliament by 1924. Also, the menace of a possible Japanese-American naval war became more real when relations between the two nations deteriorated in late 1923 and early 1924 over the question of Japanese immigration. Thus public attention was focused upon the problem of naval preparedness, and the naval expansionists, led by the Navy League, stood ready to exploit the situation to the fullest. The Navy League and the Navy had already prepared the way to some extent by sponsoring the annual celebration of Navy Day, which was begun in 1922. The second celebration, on October 27, 1923, was especially successful, with large public attendance at various assemblies marking the day and with crowds visiting naval vessels in port at major cities. Opportunities were

³³ Actually, the Japanese program had been authorized in 1920, but had been largely suspended during the Washington Conference. Y. Takenobu, Japan Year Book, 1921-22 (Tokyo, 1922), p. 156.

taken to acquaint the public with the Navy's deficiencies and the need to correct them.³⁴

The drama in the passage of the 1924 authorization bill commenced in December 1923, when the sixty-eighth Congress met for its first session. The Navy Department introduced its bill calling for the enactment of legislation to authorize the modernization of the six oldest battleships and the construction of eight 10,000 ton cruisers.³⁵ There was an immediate outcry from the opponents of the measure, who pointed to what they considered its excessive cost and the fear of the probable consequences in the acceleration of naval competition. Several could see no reason for the bill, since the country was not being menaced.³⁶ The supporters of the bill were not at a loss for words or action. They emphasized the favorable press comment on the proposed bill and the need of the Navy for more cruisers to maintain a respectable relation to the other navies.³⁷ On May 5 the proponents of the bill in the House, in an attempt to clarify

³⁴Armin Rappaport, The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, 1962), pp. 98-99. Hereafter cited as Rappaport, The Navy League.

³⁵This number, it will be recalled, was four less than the number recommended by the General Board.

³⁶Cong. Rec. LXV, 9753-54 (Pou), 9755-56 (Huddleston), 9759-60 (Lozier), 9769-71 (Steagall), 9772-73 (Carter).

³⁷Ibid., pp. 9751-52, 9774-75 (Vinson); 9755 (Gallivan); 9757-59 (Drewry); 9781 (Celler).

the situation of the Navy, pushed through a resolution calling upon the Secretary of the Navy to report on the actual ratios of strength of the various navies and to reply to the allegation that the United States had fallen to the third rank among naval powers.³⁸ In his reply, Secretary Wilbur stated that while it was not quite correct to say that the Navy had fallen to third place, it was true that the ratios were not presently as contemplated under the Washington Treaty. In overall naval strength, based on tonnage of all categories, he stated the ratio to be about 4:5:3. He strongly urged the passage of the pending bill in order to correct the most obvious deficiencies, especially the shortage of cruisers. On the basis of ships built, building and appropriated for, he estimated that the Navy would need 21 10,000 ton cruisers to reach a 5:3 ratio with Japan.³⁹ Whether the Secretary's statement assured passage of the bill is not certain, but the fact remains that shortly afterward, on May 28, the bill was passed by the House by a vote of 168 to 133.⁴⁰ The Senate, however, failed to take final action upon the bill before adjournment.⁴¹

³⁸Ibid., p. 9427.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 9427-30.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 9783.

⁴¹Actually, the Senate passed the bill on June 5, but a motion to reconsider by King of Utah prevented engrossment. Ibid., p. 10663.

In the interval between adjournment of the first session and convening of the second session, the international situation became much worse. On May 26, 1924--only two days before passage of the naval bill by the House--the Immigration Act of 1924 was passed. This Act, which put the final stamp upon the policy of exclusion of Orientals, aroused the Japanese press to a frenzy. In the United States many thoughtful people criticized the Act, but there were others who saw in Japan's reaction sufficient reason to begin once more a program of naval expansion.⁴² The annual Navy Day celebration on October 27 drew even more public notice of the Navy, as an estimated million persons visited ships of one kind or another.⁴³ The way was prepared for favorable consideration of the cruiser authorization bill by the Senate.

In December, when the second session of the Sixty-eighth Congress convened, confusion and apprehension over the Navy's ability to meet whatever crisis might come made it more than likely that the bill would be approved. The Washington Post summarized much of the prevailing opinion when it said the bill should be passed, but that it was probable that it was only a beginning and that far more needed to be done in the

⁴²Tupper and McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion, Ch. VI, passim.

⁴³Rappaport, The Navy League, p. 100.

near future. The Navy needed to be strong enough to wage war in Asiatic waters as well as in areas near home, and more attention should be devoted to submarines, carriers, and naval aviation as well as cruisers.⁴⁴ Shortly after the session began, the Navy League circulated widely a statement of the Navy's needs which received much attention, particularly among Congressmen and the press.⁴⁵ With Japanese relations in a poor state and with public and press becoming aroused, it was not surprising that the Senate approved the bill, in spite of a last minute effort by President Coolidge to delay consideration. In his annual message on December 3, he indicated his opposition to "any policy of competition in building and maintaining land or sea armaments." Friendship and understanding, not terror and force, he said, should be the measure of our relations with other nations.⁴⁶ Coolidge was particularly worried about the effect a large scale naval expansion program would have on his policy of budgetary discretion.

With the passage of the Naval Authorization Act of 1924 the hopes of naval officers began to revive. At last, they believed, work could be begun upon the long deferred program

⁴⁴Issue of Dec. 11, 1924, Quoted in CR., LXVI, 444.

⁴⁵Rappaport, pp. 100-101.

⁴⁶CR., LXVI, 55.

to bring the Navy to the strength dictated by the 5:5:3 ratio in all classes. The task was formidable. The refusal of Congress to vote funds each year to begin new construction had several ill effects upon fleet strength. First was the obvious fact that as other nations developed their programs the U.S. Navy would become relatively weaker unless assured of annual additions to its forces. A glance at the figures for the years 1921 and 1925 will show this deterioration. Only in destroyer strength was the U.S. Navy relatively well off, compared to Great Britain and Japan. In terms of tonnage, the strengths for 1925 showed a ratio of approximately 1:3:2 in cruisers, 1:0.6:0.3 in destroyers and 1:1:1.2 in submarines. The longer the United States delayed new construction the more unfavorable the ratios would become. It was necessary to run fast just to stay even.

But the figures in themselves do not tell the whole story. Of scarcely less importance was the problem of replacement of obsolete vessels. If new ships were not built, not only would the navy remain static in numbers but the efficiency of the fleet would decline as the vessels composing it became older. This was particularly true of destroyers and submarines, which because of the nature of their service wore out much faster than the larger vessels. Naval shipbuilding programs therefore had to be designed to solve two related and concurrent problems--providing tonnage to replace obsolete vessels and providing additional tonnage

TABLE 2

SHIPS IN COMMISSION AND BUILDING, 1921 AND 1925.

1921

	United States	Great Britain	Japan	France	Italy
	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building
Aircraft Carriers	1 / 0	4 / 1	0 / 0	0 / 0	0 / 0
Cruisers	11 / 8	47 / 6	22 / 6	11 / 0	12 / 0
Destroyers	304 / 0	187 / 8	97 / 32	84 / 1	61 / 14
Submarines	113 / 38	87 / 6	33 / 19	50 / 1	53 / 0
		1925			
	United States	Great Britain	Japan	France	Italy
	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building	Built/Building
Carriers	1 / 2	3 / 3	1 / 2	0 / 1	0 / 0
Cruisers	10 / 2	47 / 10	18 / 10	4 / 5	10 / 2
Destroyers	289 / 0	200 / 3	70 / 22	22 / 24	41 / 16
Submarines	48 / 9	40 / 3	40 / 24	18 / 23	10 / 10

Source for 1921 figures: Jane's Fighting Ships, 1921, pp. 58 ff.Source for 1925 figures: Navy Department, Information Concerning the United States Navy and Other Navies, pp. 85-88.

to allow for expansion, if such was deemed necessary. Viewed in this light the Navy in 1925 was in even poorer condition than the statistics already given indicate. For example, while the destroyer fleet was still adequate in 1925, few new destroyers had been built since 1921, while the Japanese fleet had a much higher proportion of destroyers either building or built since 1921. Such vessels embodied the latest refinements in destroyer construction and were considered more efficient in every way. In the matter of submarines the situation was even more acute. Not only did Japan have a higher tonnage of submarines but a greater proportion were fleet submarines of more than 1,000 tons surface displacement, which were especially valuable in the kind of long range patrol work necessary to naval operations in the vast Pacific Ocean.

The twofold nature of naval construction was clearly understood by the General Board of the Navy and by naval officers in general, but Congress was generally most reluctant to vote funds for replacement or expansion. While it was understood that many members of Congress were sincerely opposed to naval expansion as a matter of principle, it was more difficult to understand the opposition of some of these same men and of others to a program of replacement of obsolete vessels, which had to do with efficiency rather than expansion. Perhaps it was due to a lack of understanding of the problems of obsolescence, but more likely it was

due to the intense singlemindedness of these men regarding the subject of fiscal responsibility and economy in government. Whatever the reasons for their actions, they were sometimes led into making statements which bore little relation to reality. Thus, in the debate on the naval appropriation bill in January 1927, Representative Burton L. French, an indefatigable opponent of big navies, presented statistics to prove his contention that the United States had more cruiser tonnage afloat than Great Britain and that therefore we did not need any more new cruisers. His statistics, however included the tonnage of all the old American cruisers in decommissioned status, even counting Dewey's flagship Olympia.⁴⁷

Against such determined opposition the Navy had to try to provide for both new construction and replacement tonnage, and it did not succeed in both until after the coming of Franklin Roosevelt to the Presidency. In submitting its requests for the 1927 building program, the General Board pointed out that in view of the fact that 22 cruisers then on the Navy List were obsolete, the initial 8 cruisers of the 1924 Act should be regarded as replacements and should be followed by 2 more per year until all the old vessels

⁴⁷CR., LXVIII, 1086-87.

were replaced.⁴⁸

The Authorization Act of 1924 initiated another phase in naval competition which had been foreshadowed by the large scale Japanese program begun in 1922. The British, who had contemplated but not actually started a cruiser program of their own, hastened to enter the race which was clearly developing. The British cruiser program of 1925 and subsequent years was a response to the American cruiser program in particular; even before the 1924 bill had been passed by the Senate, the British Parliament hastened to authorize a program of its own,⁴⁹ and in September 1925 the first two 10,000 ton cruisers of their program were laid down. The Americans, having started strong in the authorization race, failed to lay down the first of their eight cruisers until October, 1926, when the keel of Pensacola was laid. By the end of 1926 the naval race in cruisers was well under way, with all the powers represented at Washington in the competition. By January 1, 1927, Great Britain had laid down or appropriated money for 12 cruisers, the United States 5,

⁴⁸Ser. 1271/G.B. 420-2, 3 Apr. 1925. The Navy Department, in offering its program for fiscal 1928 to Congress, passed on all of the Board's recommendations save that pertaining to submarines. House Appropriations Committee, Hearings on Navel Appropriation Bill, 1928 (Washington, 1927) pp. 1, 813.

⁴⁹Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 5th Series, CLXXVI, 2344.

Japan 6, France 3, and Italy 2.⁵⁰ These were nearly all 10,000 ton cruisers mounting 8 inch guns and costing more than \$10,000,000 each. While not as costly as a battleship competition would have been, it was expensive enough to cause consternation among some groups in all the countries involved. It was an illustration of how maximum limits set by the naval treaty came to be accepted as minimum standards.⁵¹

The naval race did not consist only of cruiser building; other auxiliary classes were represented in the competition as well. Destroyers were built in fairly large numbers by all the Washington Treaty signatories except the United States, whose existing destroyer fleet was partly decommissioned because of lack of funds and personnel to man them.⁵² As for submarines, the competition in this class was as intense as it was in cruisers, and submarines were the most expensive per ton of all warships. Increasing desire for large long range submarines led to the construction of boats with heavy armament which reached the practical limit of size compatible with underwater stability and maneu-

⁵⁰ Table in "Miscellaneous Papers and Correspondence Relating to the Limitation of Armaments and the Preparatory Commission," Series VIII, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

⁵¹ Bywater, Navies and Nations, pp. 137-139, 184-185.

⁵² Statement of Secretary of the Navy, as quoted in CR., LXV, 9430. The enlisted personnel of the Navy declined from 88,580 men in 1922 to 82,161 in 1926. Navy Annual Reports, 1922, 113; 1929, 185.

verability. The United States and Japan eventually built some submarines mounting 5 inch and 6 inch guns on a surface displacement of over 2,000 tons, while the French went so far as to build a giant cruising submarine displacing nearly 3,000 tons and mounting two 8 inch guns.

As time passed, it became clear that even with the Act of 1924, the Navy was losing ground. By the end of 1926 the Navy was in relatively weaker condition than it had been two years earlier. In cruiser tonnage laid down or appropriated for the ratio among the American, British and Japanese navies stood at 1:2.4:1.1. Also, both the British and the Japanese were replacing old destroyer and submarine tonnage at a steady pace with more efficient ships of modern design. American naval officers believed that if more cruiser tonnage was not authorized and a comprehensive program of replacement construction of destroyers and submarines was not undertaken the Navy would fall to a position of third rank within a few years. In its report on the 1928 building program the General Board sounded a note of barely concealed desperation when it asserted that the "need of such a program is extremely urgent." The United States must quickly undertake a program in auxiliary construction to reach parity with Great Britain as soon as possible.

Each postponement of the undertaking of essential new construction increases the already pronounced inadequacy of the fleet in certain respects, and extends the period of that inadequacy still farther into the future. To fail to begin now to build up the

fleet to the standard of its requirements deprives the country of an adequate national defense for a period of years, and will entail extraordinary financial burdens in future years.⁵³

It pointed out that so few warships were now being constructed that shipwrights who specialized in that kind of work were shifting to other industries. To prevent the deterioration beyond recovery of this industry and to spread financial burdens over as long a time as feasible, the Board proposed a comprehensive program to be spread over a ten year period and to have as its goal the establishment of a 5:5:3 ratio in auxiliary vessels by the end of that period, assuming no increase in rates of construction by Great Britain and Japan.

The General Board's recommendations deserve to be examined in some detail. For one thing, they contained the most cogent official naval statement of the general situation and of the degree to which lack of annual increments of new construction had weakened the fleet. They also differed in several important respects from previous sets of recommendations since 1921. In the first place, the Board recommended for the first time a comprehensive long range program of annual increments so as to reach a clearly stated goal. In the second place, it visualized that program in terms of both replacement construction and of construction to increase

⁵³ Ser. 1338/G.B. 420-2, 11 Dec. 1926.

total tonnage beyond previous limits. Finally, it indicated a change of attitude toward Congress. No longer was the Navy content to prepare its recommendations with a view to making them mild enough to stand a better chance of Congressional approval. Now the Navy would bluntly tell Congress what it needed in terms clear enough to permit no misunderstanding. As naval officers saw it, the situation was desperate by the end of 1926 and could not decline much further. There had been a noticeable weakening of morale in the service in the period immediately following the Washington Conference. Desertions increased alarmingly,⁵⁴ and public and Congressional attention was called to the worsening state of affairs by a series of accidents which plagued ships and aircraft in the years from 1922 to 1925.⁵⁵ While the situation was somewhat improved by the end of 1926, Naval officers had been forced to spend a great deal of time denying anything was wrong,⁵⁶ while at the same time recognizing that poor morale would remain a problem so long as appropriations remained so low as to preclude higher pay for officers and enlisted men and so long as the personnel continued to serve in a fleet whose ships grew progressively

⁵⁴In 1923 there were 3483 desertions from the Navy, and 3161 in 1924. In 1921 there were 1317. Navy Annual Reports, 1921, p. 71; 1925, p. 68; 1926, p. 19.

⁵⁵Statement of Sen. William King in CR., LXVI, 444.

⁵⁶Navy Annual Reports, 1925, pp. 68-70.

more obsolete with little hope of replacement.

The General Board's recommendations were specific. It said that the 22 obsolete cruisers then on hand should be replaced with an equivalent tonnage of new 10,000 ton cruisers, 9 of which should be laid down in 1928, 3 in 1929, 3 in 1930, and 2 in 1931. The last three cruisers would be replacements for the first three of the Omaha class scout cruisers which would become overage beginning in 1935. All these vessels, together with the eight cruisers authorized in 1924 and the seven underage Omahas, would provide 32 cruisers for the Navy by 1936. As for destroyers, the primary need was for destroyer leaders--larger destroyers, more seaworthy and with increased living space--to serve as flagships of destroyer divisions. The United States did not possess any of this type of vessel, and the Board accordingly recommended that 9 be authorized, with 6 to be laid down in 1928 and 2 in 1929. Also, by 1931 the oldest of the existing destroyers would become overage, and a replacement program should be begun which would involve the laying down of 12 destroyers each year from 1930 to 1941. In submarines the United States already had parity with Britain but most of its tonnage was in coastal submarines, which were inadequate to serve the fleet. To replace these would require a total of 20 large fleet submarines of about 2,750 tons each--5 to be laid down in 1928, 3 each in 1929 and 1930, 2 each in 1931, 1932, and 1933, and 1 each in the years 1934 to 1936. To maintain a 5:3 ratio

with Japan an even larger tonnage would be needed--a total of 33 new fleet submarines laid down or built by 1936. Finally, the Board considered aircraft carriers. Great Britain's lead could be overcome only by the construction of an additional 38,500 tons of carriers for the American Navy. The recommendation was for the laying down of one 23,000 ton carrier in 1928, plus the construction of enough aircraft to comprise its complement and to provide reserves for it and for Saratoga and Lexington. Altogether the program would cost \$80,937,500 in 1928 and would average about \$130,000,000 each year thereafter until 1936.

The Board's report was made the more urgent by the trend of international relations during the years since 1923. The competition in auxiliary construction among the Big Three was causing anxiety and suspicion in London, Tokyo and Washington, while the French building program was provoking an Italian response in the form of a program of their own. The situation was such that any untoward event, even if not intended as hostile, was likely to be interpreted by one country or another as directly threatening to its interests. For example, in the fall of 1924 the Navy announced that its fleet exercises in early 1925 would be held in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands and that at the conclusion of these a portion of the fleet would cruise to Australia and New Zealand. The announcement touched off a wave of anti-American pronouncements in the Japanese press,

while the Japanese Government by its silence served to encourage it. The passage of the cruiser bill of 1924 was interpreted partially as a response to what was considered as a veiled Japanese threat, as was also--in a different way--Coolidge's plea for postponement of the program.

Eventually the Japanese held maneuvers of their own in the waters east of the Bonins, while the Japanese government made statements to calm the excitement at home in Japan.

The American exercises and the Australian cruise were held as scheduled.⁵⁷

THE REACTION AGAINST THE NEW COMPETITION.

From the time of the conclusion of the Washington Conference, there were many people who foresaw that the failure to restrict auxiliary vessels would inevitably lead to new naval rivalry. Beginning with the 1922 naval appropriation bill and continuing each year thereafter, Congress inserted a clause calling upon the President to convene a second Washington Conference.⁵⁸ With the increase of inter-

⁵⁷Wheeler, Prelude to Pearl Harbor, pp. 36-37; Tupper & McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion, pp. 243-244.

⁵⁸A typical statement, in the Naval Appropriation Act of Feb. 11, 1925, stated that such a conference "shall be charged with the duty of formulating and entering into a general international agreement by which armaments for war, either upon land or sea, shall be effectually reduced and limited in the interest of the peace of the world." U.S. Statutes, XLIII, pt. 1, 881.

national tensions of the mid-twenties and the closely related development of the naval armaments race, demands for an international conference to deal with the situation grew more insistent. It was almost a repetition of the situation in the period 1919-1921, and it was perhaps to be expected that an attempt would be made to solve the problem in the same way out of the impasse.

The conference was not destined to be held in Washington. Shortly after the beginning of the post-Washington naval rivalry, the League of Nations became interested in it to the extent of establishing a commission to study the bases upon which the nations could agree to disarm. The Preparatory Commission, as it was called, was established by the Council of the League in 1925; it was to meet in 1926 "to prepare the ground for an international conference at an early date."⁵⁹ Since the United States, though not a member of the League, would be intimately concerned in any further moves either in the direction of intensifying the existing rivalry or in the attempt to eliminate that rivalry through agreements providing for armaments limitation, the League decided to invite the United States government to attend the deliberations of

⁵⁹ U.S. Senate, Records of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armament Held at Geneva, Switzerland, from June 20 to August 4, 1927. Sen. Doc. no. 55, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928), p. 4. Hereafter cited as Conference, 1927.

the Preparatory Commission. It was realized that a conference to discuss the agenda prepared by the Commission would be more likely to attract American participation and subsequent approval of its results if Americans contributed to the formulation of that agenda by the commission. Accordingly, on December 12, 1925, the League officially invited the United States to send delegates to the forthcoming meetings of the Preparatory Commission at Geneva.⁶⁰ In a message to Congress on January 4, 1926, Coolidge said he had decided to send an American delegation to Geneva and asked for appropriations for that purpose. To allay the suspicions of isolationist Congressmen who might feel that such action represented a precedent for ultimate American entry into the League itself, Coolidge pointed out that the Preparatory Commission was only a preliminary step toward a disarmament conference sponsored by the League and that our participation did not in any way oblige the American government to accept its recommendations.⁶¹

From the American point of view, the deliberations of the Preparatory Commission were hopelessly confused and pointless. The Commission at the outset attempted a formidable task when it set up for itself the goal of establishing bases for discussion of limitation of land and air as well as

⁶⁰FRUS, 1926, I, 40-42.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 42-44

naval armaments. It was assumed that the disarmament conference, since it was sponsored by the League, should be a much more comprehensive and ambitious undertaking than the Washington Conference and should of necessity include all the member nations of the League as participants. The result was easily predictable. Although several committees and subcommittees were formed to deal with various aspects of the whole land-sea-air disarmament problem, it proved practically impossible to separate effectively all the questions which arose. The situation was further complicated by the fact that no fewer than nineteen nations sent delegations to the meetings of the commission. One of the American naval advisers, Commander Adolphus Andrews, noted that the large number of delegates at each meeting of the Naval Committee caused inordinate delay as each member rose to make his point. "Thus a great deal of time is wasted and the progress of the Committee is retarded by a great deal of talk and minor details which do not lend themselves to quick or concrete conclusions."⁶²

It was evident that not only were conclusions extremely difficult to reach, but also that there was serious disagreement among the delegations as to the basic principles to be followed in formulating another disarmament accord. One persistent thread of discord which ran through the deliber-

⁶²Entry of 8 June, 1926, "Log of Capt. A. Andrews, USN, May-Nov. 1926" (2 vols.) in Series V, Gen.Bd. Disarmament Records.

ations of the naval subcommittee was the insistence of France and Italy upon a system of limitation by a single total tonnage, whereby the maximum tonnage of an entire navy was stipulated and within which that navy was left free to decide what proportion of the total would be allotted to submarines, what proportion to cruisers, and so on. The Franco-Italian position was supported by a number of the other delegations. Against them stood the American and British delegations, supported by some others; they favored the system of limitation by categories, wherein the tonnage of each class of warship was fixed in the manner which had been successfully used at Washington.⁶³ No agreement was likely to be reached on these divergent positions. A similar situation developed in the subcommittee on aircraft, where a deadlock eventuated between those delegations which felt that total horsepower was an adequate measure of air strength and those who felt that a formula which considered wing area and total number of aircraft as well as total horsepower would be more accurate.⁶⁴

By the end of 1926 it was apparent that the deliberations of the Preparatory Commission were not going to produce an agenda or set of principles to serve as the basis for

⁶³League of Nations, Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference: Report of Sub-Commission A (Military, Naval and Air), (Geneva, 1926), pp. 43-46, 53-54, 78-111,

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 48-49, 111-120.

discussion at the next conference, either then or in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the American Government initiated negotiations among the five major naval powers with a view to convening a conference which would be limited to those powers and which would discuss naval armaments limitation only.

As it happened, Congress was at that very time deliberating the latest building program submitted by the Navy Department. A program of eight additional cruisers had been recommended, partly in order to allow the American delegation to go to Geneva in a stronger position. While supporting the Navy's request, Coolidge nevertheless urged Congress not to vote appropriations necessary to begin the last three cruisers of the 1924 Authorization Act. Under that law, all the cruisers were supposed to be begun by the end of the 1927 fiscal year, but Coolidge believed that while authorizations for new construction were proper at that time, the actual laying of keels would tend to alarm other countries and to destroy the spirit with which the nations should approach the forthcoming conference.⁶⁵ Spirited debate over Coolidge's request followed. Anti-Navy Congressmen echoed Coolidge's contention that the laying of keels would aggravate rather than calm the existing trouble, and wondered why the Navy was so anxious to speed up cruiser construction. In the Senate, Frank B. Willis of Ohio refused to believe that the United States had

⁶⁵CR., LXVIII, 95.

to build up to a 5:5:3 ratio in the auxiliary classes and professed no alarm over the fact that Great Britain had 54 cruisers built or building while the United States had only 15. He confessed he could not visualize the United States going to war with Great Britain.⁶⁶ Frederick Gillett of Massachusetts voiced similar views.⁶⁷ On the other hand, supporters of the bill spoke forcefully for the idea that the United States could negotiate successfully only from a position of strength.⁶⁸ Ultimately Congress refused to heed Coolidge's plea, and the Naval Appropriation Act of March 2, 1927, made available a sum to be "immediately available toward the construction of the last three of the eight scout cruisers authorized by section 2 of the Act of December 18, 1924."⁶⁹

The Congressional rebuff did not change Coolidge's plans; negotiations for a naval armaments limitation conference were continued. On February 10, 1927, Secretary of State Frank Kellogg invited the governments of Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy to send delegates to a conference which would be held at Geneva, but completely apart from any of the disarmament machinery of the League of Nations. The pri-

⁶⁶Ibid., 2528.

⁶⁷Ibid., 2538-39.

⁶⁸Ibid., 1097-99 (Black), 1124-24 (Britten), 2533-34 (Hale), 2537-38.

⁶⁹U. S. Statutes, XLIV, pt. 2, 1295.

mary reason for a conference separate from the League was stated to be the Preparatory Commission's failure to make any progress with the problem, yet a beginning had to be made. The Commission's discussions had clearly shown that, "should all effort to bring about the reduction or limitation of armament be conditioned upon the acceptance by all the world of a comprehensive plan covering all classes and types of armament, there would be little, if any, prospect of actual progress toward arms limitation in the near future."⁷⁰ Congress, after some expression of apprehension about a meeting in such close proximity to the League, appropriated funds to meet the initial expenses of an American delegation.⁷¹

In their replies to the President's invitation, the Japanese and British governments announced their acceptance, but the British stated that the deliberations must have due regard for Britain's special position which required the protection of inter-Imperial communications and supply lines.⁷² The French and Italians, on the other hand, announced that they would not attend. The Italians stated that their naval program was so small that any limitations agreed upon at the conference could not be applied to Italy. Furthermore, the conference did not propose to consider the limitation of land

⁷⁰ Conference, 1927, p. 4.

⁷¹ CR., LXVIII, 4169-87.

⁷² Conference, 1927, p. 12.

and air armaments, and the Italians considered that their navy could not be limited without reference to limitations on land and air forces as well.⁷³ The French held the same view as the Italians with regard to the principle of interdependence of armaments, and further believed disarmament negotiations would proceed best under the authority of the League of Nations rather than outside it.⁷⁴ The French attitude was based upon their realization that in a conference of the naval powers alone France would have a minor voice because of its relatively weak naval position, whereas in a general disarmament conference within the framework of the League, it would have a dominating position because of its great land power on the European continent. Then too, the French continued steadfast in their opposition to extension to auxiliary vessels of the quantitative limitations on capital ships adopted at the Washington Conference, and in their refusal to accept meaningful qualitative limitations in the auxiliary classes.

The refusal of the French and the Italians to attend the forthcoming conference dampened but did not destroy the enthusiasm of the representatives of the big three naval powers. In a way, the absence of the French and the Italians might make the success of the conference easier, since none

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-9.

of the big three were opposed to the principle of either quantitative or qualitative limitations on auxiliaries. On the other hand, while the Americans and Japanese were not directly concerned with the problem of the growth of the French and Italian navies or of Franco-Italian naval rivalry, the British were, by virtue of Britain's position as a Mediterranean power possessing major communications lines through that sea. The British connection thus tended at the outset to impose certain limits upon whatever agreements the British delegation could approve, and these limits would naturally affect the American and Japanese positions as well. Nevertheless, in the weeks before the opening of the conference many people were willing to give voice to a cautious note of optimism. While not likely to be as far reaching in its success as the Washington Conference had been, it was hoped that the naval rivalry in auxiliary vessels--particularly cruisers--could be ended and that France and Italy could be brought to agree to whatever principles of limitation would be adopted.

CHAPTER IV

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OF 1927

AND ITS AFTERMATH

When at the end of 1926 it became clear that the United States would attend a naval limitation conference, various groups of big navy advocates began a publicity campaign to call attention to the Navy's deficiencies. They believed the American delegates should go to the conference prepared to negotiate from a strong position, which could arise only from the threat of a building program already approved by Congress and ready to be implemented. There were at that time two measures concerning naval expansion pending before that body. One was the bill to appropriate funds to begin the last three cruisers of the 1924 program; the other was the Navy Department's bill for the 1928 building program. The latter measure, which partly embodied the General Board's recommendations in their December 11 report, had been introduced into the House on December 18 by Fred Britten as HR-15415 and called for the authorization of ten cruisers.¹ The House Naval Affairs Committee reported favorably on the measure and pointed out that in order to reach parity with Great Britain, based upon existing British building programs and authorizations, the United States would have to build 21

¹CR., LXVIII, 732.

cruisers within the next few years.² The Navy League and other big navy groups put as much pressure as they could upon Congress by means of a publicity campaign. The League disseminated to Congress and the press two statements which called attention to the serious deficiencies of the naval establishment.³ It was the same strategy which may have been instrumental in securing the passage of the 1924 cruiser bill, but this time the results were not the same. In 1924 many Congressmen and large segments of the press had been influenced by the threat of adverse international conditions, which had probably been the decisive factor in the Congressional decision to authorize new naval construction. In early 1927, however, the international picture was not critical but to an extent hopeful. Another limitations conference was about to begin, and only a few members of Congress or of the great mass of the public were ready to believe that the authorization of ten more cruisers would help rather than hinder the chances of success in the negotiations which were to take place. Both Congress and the public had shown that they tended to approve naval expansion when a critical period was already under way, rather than to anticipate critical

²House Report 1635, 69th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1927), p. 2.

³Rappaport, The Navy League, pp. 104-105.

events by early construction programs. It was so once more. Naval expansion in the face of efforts at limitation seemed unwise, and the Navy Department's request for new construction was not acted upon. Yet the attitude of Congress was not consistent, for while it refused to authorize new construction it did, as has been stated earlier, approve as part of the 1927 naval appropriation bill a sum to begin construction of the last three cruisers of the 1924 program in accordance with the stipulations laid down in that program. Thus the action of Congress left both opposing groups in the naval construction dispute to some extent gratified and to some extent annoyed.

Just before the beginning of the conference, the Navy was given the opportunity to present its case concerning what limitations would be acceptable. That the Navy was dissatisfied with Congressional refusal to approve the 1928 building program was clear, for within a short time after the action of Congress, the General Board reported its recommendations for the 1929 program. It requested authorization and appropriations to modernize five battleships and to begin construction of eight 10,000 ton cruisers, six destroyer leaders, three fleet submarines and a carrier of 23,000 tons.⁴ It was practically a repetition of its earlier request for

⁴Ser. 1345/G.B. 420-2, 5 April 1927.

fiscal 1928. The Navy clearly preferred a strong construction program in being as the best bargaining counter to strengthen the American position at the conference.

The Board was asked for its recommendations regarding the specific proposals which the American delegation should advance at the conference. In its reply the Board advanced a number of principles regarding limitation of the various classes which it felt should be incorporated in any treaty. As general principles it asserted: that limitations on capital ships should not be adopted at the conference but should be left for the future, since the limitations already in effect were the most the Navy was in a position to accept; that an attempt should be made to extend the 5:5:3 ratio to cruisers, destroyers and submarines; and that there should be no attempt "to bring forward the subject of further limitation of bases and to discourage its being brought forward."⁵ Thus in essence the Navy's position was that the conference should not seek to reopen questions already settled at Washington but should confine itself to concluding successfully the business left unfinished at that time.

The Board also advanced specific proposals for each class of warship. These may be summarized as follows:⁶

⁵Ser. 1347-14(k)/G.B. 438, 2 June 1927, pp. 1-5.

⁶Ibid., p. 305.

Cruisers: (1) Ratio should be 5:5:3.

(2) All vessels from 3,000 to 10,000 tons should be in one category. No subdivision into 8 inch and 6 inch cruiser classes.

(3) Total allowable tonnage of cruisers for Great Britain and the United States should be 400,000 tons, with 300,000 preferable.

(4) No change in present qualitative limitations (10,000 tons and 8 inch guns).

Destroyers: (1) Should include combat vessels of more than 17 knots speed and tonnage between 600 and 3,000 tons.

(2) No subdivision in the destroyer category.

(3) Total tonnage quotas should allow the United States and Britain 250,000 tons each, Japan 150,000 tons.

(4) Maximum allowable gun caliber should not be lower than 5 inches.

(5) No destroyer limitation at all if submarines are not limited.

Submarines: (1) 5:5:3 ratio in total tonnage limitation with no subdivision in the category.

(2) Total tonnage limitation as low as 60,000 tons for the United States and Great Britain.

(3) Limitation on unit tonnage to be no less

than 1700 tons.

(4) Gun caliber may be limited to 6 inches,
torpedo tubes to 21.7 inches.

(5) No limitation on minelaying capability.

Carriers: Unit tonnage may be reduced from 27,000 tons
to 23,000 tons.

These recommendations of the General Board provided the basis from which the American proposals could be formulated, but it was not expected that the diplomats at Geneva would adhere to all the recommendations any more than they had at Washington.

As the time for the conference approached, the governments concerned developed further their attitudes as press comments multiplied. On one point it was evident that the American delegation would stand firm--the decision not even to discuss any proposals to extend the existing limitations on bases. On April 23, Hugh Gibson, the American chief delegate at the Preparatory Commission who had been chosen to head the delegation to the conference, asked what the American reaction should be if the Japanese requested an alteration in the status quo of fortifications and naval bases in the Pacific. The question was referred to a joint Army-Navy board, and on May 10 the board reported that it considered that "freedom of action to develop naval base facilities and to defend the Hawaiian Islands and the Canal Zone is essential to the national security of the United States. The Board

therefore recommends that the United States delegation. . . be instructed to reject, as a subject for discussion, any question of elimination or limitation of permanent fortifications, base development, or mobile defense in these areas."⁷ Kellogg accordingly instructed Gibson not to consider the question if it arose.⁸ There were indications that the Japanese would likewise oppose the reopening of the battleship clauses of the Washington Treaty for negotiation and that, while they approved the principle of extension of ratios to the auxiliary classes, they might demand a ratio for themselves higher than the 5:3 ratio in existence for battleships.⁹

All statements were speculation, however, and none could be certain what position each nation would take until the delegates presented their proposals at the conference.

THE CONFERENCE AND THE CRUISER QUESTION

On June 20 the conference held its opening session, and Hugh Gibson immediately offered the American proposals. He stated that the United States government believed that methods of limitation "as set forth in the Washington Treaty are both practical and effective and should be extended to all cate-

⁷Ser. 291/Joint Board no. 338, 10 May 1927, as quoted in Kellogg to Gibson, June 8 1927, SD500.A15 A1/268.

⁸Kellogg to Gibson, June 8 1927, SD500.A15 A1/269.

⁹Armour (Ambassador in Tokyo) to Kellogg, June 14 1927, SD500.A15A1/276.

gories of combatant vessels of the Three Powers."¹⁰ Specifically, he proposed: First, that the ratios and principles of the Washington Treaty be applied to auxiliary vessels; second, that there should be established four categories of vessels, cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and an unrestricted class; and third, that any agreements reached should be coterminous with the Washington Treaty.¹¹ Later he offered details for his second proposal. Cruisers would be defined as warships ranging from 3,000 to 10,000 tons and destroyers from 600 to 3,000 tons, while tonnage limits for submarines and the unrestricted class were to be open to negotiation. He also suggested total tonnage limits for each country as follows:¹²

(1) Cruisers

- (a) United States and Great Britain. . .between
250,000 and 300,000 tons
- (b) Japan. . .between 150,000 and 180,000 tons.

(2) Destroyers

- (a) United States and Great Britain. . .
between 200,000 and 250,000 tons
- (b) Japan. . .between 120,000 and 150,000 tons.

It was perhaps Gibson's intention, by offering immediate-

¹⁰ Conference, 1927, p. 19.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 20

¹² Ibid. pp. 26-27.

ly the American proposals, to duplicate the strategy which Hughes had used so successfully at Washington. However, the reaction of the other delegations was quite different. As soon as Gibson finished speaking, the other delegations, instead of sitting openmouthed, immediately offered proposals of their own. The British chief delegate, W. C. Bridgman, First Lord of the Admiralty, presented a number of British counter proposals: first, that a 5:5:3 ratio be applied only to 8 inch cruisers, that their life be extended to 24 years, and that no future cruisers, except replacements, displace more than 7,000 tons or mount guns of a caliber greater than 6 inches; second, that the life of destroyers be established at 20 years, that they be classified in two categories, one of a maximum size of 1750 tons and the other 1400 tons, with neither to mount guns greater than 5 inches; third, that the life of submarines be extended to 15 years, that the tonnage of submarines be limited to a maximum of 1600 tons, and that they carry no gun heavier than 5 inches; fourth, that aircraft carriers be limited to a tonnage of 25,000 tons and that their gun power be reduced from 8 to 6 inches; and fifth, that the life of battleships be extended from 20 to 26 years, the size of battleship replacements be reduced from 35,000 to 30,000 tons, and that their guns be reduced from 16 to 13.5 inches.¹³

After the conclusion of Bridgeman's address, the chief

¹³Ibid. p. 30

Japanese delegate, Admiral Viscount Makoto Saito, delivered the Japanese proposals. First, the Japanese proposed that a naval holiday involving prohibition of further building of auxiliaries for a certain length of time be adopted. Second, they suggested that naval strength in auxiliaries be defined so as to include surface and undersea craft actually commissioned or under construction, but that the tonnage allowed each power in each category must take account of overage vessels and ships authorized but not yet laid down. Third, ages of vessels at replacement should be 16 years for ships above 3000 tons and 12 years for submarines and surface ships below 3000 tons. Fourth, there should be no restrictions on vessels displacing less than 700 tons and carrying guns 3 inches or less, nor on aircraft carriers displacing less than 10,000 tons.¹⁴

At the end of the first day's session, it was clear that the road to agreement on limitations at Geneva would be far rougher and more difficult than it had been at Washington. Each set of proposals revealed far more differences than similarities, with many of those differences being fundamental. Perhaps the most nearly irreconcilable of these concerned the British proposals on battleships and on cruisers, both of which the Americans could not accept. Other differences, such as those involving the replacement ages of

¹⁴ Ibid. pp. 33-34.

various kinds of ships and maximum tonnages for destroyers and aircraft carriers, were of a relatively minor nature which could be adjusted by negotiation, but the British and American viewpoints on battleships and cruisers stemmed from fundamental differences of conception of the role of their respective navies.

In regard to battleships, the American position was that large vessels of long cruising radius, heavy gun power and strong armor protection were essential to the American Navy, which had to conduct major operations in areas where base facilities were few in number and separated by vast distances. Such requirements called for relatively large ships, and the Navy had already indicated its belief that 35,000 tons, the figure adopted at Washington, was the minimum tonnage upon which a battleship design could be based incorporating all the desired features. The British, on the other hand, possessed a relatively complete global network of bases and did not have to maintain battleships with long range cruising capability; hence the British Navy could carry out its basic mission of protection of Imperial communications with smaller battleships, which would incidentally be less expensive to build--an important consideration for the national pocketbook.¹⁵ The American position against

¹⁵Ichihashi, The Washington Conference and After, p. 150.

reopening of negotiations on battleships clashed with one of the main British objectives and was maintained tenaciously throughout the conference. When, on June 28 the Japanese held a press conference during which they referred favorably to the British proposals on battleships, the Americans immediately suspected that a private understanding had been reached between the British and Japanese.¹⁶ The Japanese were made aware of the American suspicion and hastened to assure them that there had been no understanding on battleships.¹⁷

As to cruisers, the positions of the two countries were relatively the same as in the case of battleships. The United States needed large cruisers capable of cruising long distances. Since it was expected that they frequently would be operating independently, they should be provided with armament sufficient to overcome any enemy vessel they could not outspeed. The British, with their global network of bases, had less need for long range capability than for sheer numbers of smaller cruisers.¹⁸ In the case of the cruisers, however, the differences in function had given rise to two different kinds of cruisers, the 8 inch gun and the 6 inch

¹⁶Gibson to Kellogg, June 28 1927, SD500.A15A1/339.

¹⁷Kellogg to MacVeagh, (Chargé, Tokyo), June 28 1927, SD500.A15A1/343; MacVeagh to Kellogg, June 29 1927, SD500.A15A1/353.

¹⁸Statements of Bridgeman and Jellicoe, Records of the Conference, 1927, pp. 37-41, 41-45.

gun cruisers, sometimes referred to as heavy and light cruisers. The United States Navy, as we have seen, had already decided before the Washington Conference to concentrate upon the construction of large cruisers mounting 8 inch guns, and its decision practically forced the other navies to adopt the large 8 inch gun cruiser as well. In the case of Japan the change may have been welcome, since the Japanese Navy had strategic problems to overcome which likewise required relatively long range capabilities coupled with heavy gun power, but for the British the change was unwelcome. The coming of the heavy cruiser made inferior the large number of light cruisers already in the Royal Navy, so the British felt obliged to construct heavy cruisers during the twenties, although they were reluctant to do so.¹⁹

The development of the two types of cruisers in the twenties gave rise to the so called "Cruiser Question" which was the cause of much angry argument and embittered feeling between the United States and Great Britain and was the major cause of the failure of the Geneva Conference. As has been

¹⁹It is ironic that the American 8 inch gun cruiser, which created such a problem for the British, was itself created in part because the British had laid down during the war--and continued to build after the war was ended--the Hawkins class cruisers. These vessels displaced 9,800 tons, mounted 7.5 inch guns, and were intended to track down and destroy German surface raiders on the high seas. Bywater, "The Cruiser Question" London Telegraph, January, 1929. Copy of article in Book no. 4, Series VIII, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

noted, the attitude of naval officers of the two countries toward cruisers was fundamentally irreconcilable and was based upon the different strategic roles of the two navies. The proposals of the delegations of the two countries at Geneva reflected their complete opposition. The American proposals on cruisers were designed to set up a maximum total tonnage within which each nation was left free to decide for itself whether it preferred to build its tonnage in heavy or light cruisers or a combination of both types. This position reflected American Naval officers' desires, for they felt that the Navy had no use for the light cruiser, and wished to concentrate on the heavy type. If the British, with the same total tonnage, wished to build a larger number of light cruisers to suit their needs, that was perfectly permissible. Each navy could build according to its needs. The British, however, could not accept this reasoning. As long as the Americans and others continued to build heavy cruisers, the British would be forced to build a certain number also, with a consequent reduction in the amount of their total cruiser tonnage remaining for the more important light cruisers. The solution to the problem, as the British saw it, was to divide the cruiser tonnage and to fix separate total tonnages for heavy and for light cruisers. To the Americans, the British view was unacceptable, since the American Navy had no need for more 6 inch gun cruisers and did not wish to be forced to build any. Unless one side or

the other was willing to modify its demands in some fundamental way, there was little likelihood that the efforts of the Geneva Conference would meet with any success, at least in regard to cruisers.

The impasse over cruisers was enough in itself to place an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of agreement at Geneva, but the situation was made even more difficult by the American and British disagreement on precedence of discussions on cruisers over negotiations on other matters. The British, recognizing the nature of the cruiser problem, wanted to discuss and reach agreement on other matters first, then come back to cruisers later. Thus even if no agreement on cruisers could be reached, the conference would have achieved a measure of success.²⁰ The Americans, however, preferred to negotiate the cruiser question first, since it was the most important, and they were supported in their view by the Japanese.²¹ Eventually discussions were held on all categories of vessels, but it was understood that all agreements reached would be contingent upon the settlement of the cruiser question.

The American-British disagreement over cruisers was never settled, although there was a slight narrowing of the

²⁰Conference, 1927, pp. 78-81, 93-94. Entry of June 25, 1927 in "Log of Cmdr. H. C. Train, 20 June, 1927 4 Aug. 1927," Series VI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records. Train was secretary to the naval delegation at Geneva in 1927 and at London in 1930.

²¹Records of the Conference, 1927, p. 94.

gap between them as the conference proceeded. The British were willing to admit the application of the principle of parity in cruisers for the United States and Great Britain.²² Also, mainly because of the insistence of the Japanese who absolutely refused to accept total auxiliary tonnage limits for the navies much higher than tonnages already in existence or building,²³ the British lowered the figures of total tonnages for the auxiliary classes.²⁴ The Americans, for their part, examined the possibility of modifying their position that each nation should be free to build, within the total tonnage limitations for cruisers, ships of any size up to 10,000 tons, and Admiral Jones offered an American proposal to refrain from building any more 10,000 ton cruisers and to construct the rest of the allotted American cruiser tonnage in smaller vessels, though they might carry 8 inch guns.²⁵ The naval delegates thought that an acceptable 8 inch gun cruiser might be designed on a displacement of 8,300 tons, but when asked for its opinion the General Board indicated that while such a cruiser could be built, it would sacrifice several desirable characteristics which the larger displace-

²³Ibid., pp. 155-156; 169-170.

²⁴Compare the initial British demand for 15 10,000 cruisers (150,000 tons) and 55 smaller cruisers (6,000 tons each, or a total of 450,000 tons) with their later proposal for 590,000 tons of cruisers, destroyers and submarines combined. Ibid., pp. 122-123; 58-59.

²⁵Conference, 1927, pp. 160-161.

ment could retain.²⁶ The Americans also were willing to raise the maximum cruiser tonnage which they would accept from 250,000 to 400,000 tons, provided that 250,000 tons of the total could be in 10,000 ton cruisers.²⁷ Yet the fundamental position of the two delegations remained irreconcilable in spite of these concessions. The British position continued to uphold the principle that Great Britain needed a large number of smaller cruisers, and that the United States would have to agree to build a number of cruisers with 6 inch guns; to this position the Americans could not accede.

The Japanese were in a position at the conference similar to that of the bystander warching a family quarrel. The major goal of the Japanese at the conference was to arrive at total tonnage figures low enough to establish a status quo at about the levels of existing tonnage in auxiliary vessels. It was to their advantage to do this, since the Japanese building program in the years from 1922 to 1927 had been the largest of any of the three powers and Japan had a higher proportion of new vessels, especially destroyers and submarines, than either Great Britain or the United States.

²⁶Gibson to Kellogg, July 18 1927, SD500.A15A1/446; Kellogg to Gibson July 19 1927, SD500.A15A1/442.

²⁷Conference, 1927, p. 161.

TABLE 3
SHIPS BUILT 1922-1927,
AND BUILDING 1927.

	United States	Great Britain	Japan
Battleships		2	
Aircraft Carriers	2	2	2
Cruisers	2	11	12
Cruiser-minelayers		1	
Destroyers		2	35
Submarines	3	4	30
Gunboats	6	4	4
Minesweepers			6
Submarine Tenders			2
Tankers			3
Supply Ships			1

Source: CR., LXVIII, 1095-96.

The Japanese had no fundamental objection to either the British or the American position and thus were enabled to play the role of mediator. During the discussion it was the Japanese who persuaded the British to reduce their figures for total auxiliary tonnage,²⁸ and when it was evident that

²⁸ The Japanese refused to accept tonnage limits for the British and Americans which would force the Japanese to main-

the deadlock on cruisers would remain unbroken and preparations were made to adjourn the conference, it was the Japanese who attempted a final effort to prolong the negotiations. On July 31 members of the Japanese delegation presented a paper to the naval members of the American delegation, in which they outlined a series of compromise proposals which both the British and Americans might accept. It was evident that the proposals had been hastily formulated, for many points were not clear to the Americans, who had to ask for explanations. Later, Captain Toyoda, one of the Japanese delegates, indicated to Admiral Schofield that the Japanese plan did not have much chance of acceptance.²⁹ On August 3 the plan was discussed at an informal meeting of delegates. It suggested that Great Britain and Japan not lay down any more auxiliary vessels until the end of 1931, except for replacements; that the number of 8 inch gun cruisers be limited to 12 each for the United States and Great Britain and 8 for Japan; that the maximum tonnage of smaller cruisers be 8,000 tons; that the United States agree not to build more auxiliary tonnage than Great

tain a total combined tonnage for cruisers, destroyers and submarines much in excess of 300,000 tons. Conference, 1927, pp. 70, 165-170; "Notes of Cmdr. A. Andrews, USN.", entries of July 13 & 14 1927, Series VI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records. Andrews was a member of the American naval delegation.

²⁹"Log of H.C. Train", entry of July 30, 1927; "Diary of Adm. Schofield", pp. 103-105. Both in Series VI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records. Admiral Schofield was one of the chief American naval delegates.

Britain in the period before December 31, 1931; and that another conference be held not later than the beginning of 1931 to settle outstanding points of dispute.³⁰ The plan did not really offer anything the Americans or the British could accept, and on the next day the conference was formally adjourned.

The disappointment was great. Bridgeman reflected the general feeling when he said: "It is a great disappointment to us to part without arriving at a comprehensive agreement, and we should have been glad of an agreement even if it had only included those items on which there seems to be no difference of opinion."³¹ A note of optimism was voiced by the final joint declaration of the delegates, who stated that they desired

to place on record a statement of their conviction that the obstacles that have been encountered should not be accepted as terminating the effort to bring about a further limitation of naval armament. On the contrary, they trust that the measure of agreement which has been reached, as well as the work which has been done in clarifying their respective positions, will make it possible. . .to find a basis for reconciling divergent views and lead to the early conclusion of an agreement for the limitation of auxiliary naval vessels. . .³²

Thus the Naval Limitation Conference of 1927 ended without producing a treaty for the limitation of naval armaments.

³⁰Conference, 1927, pp. 130-181.

³¹Ibid., p. 58.

³²Ibid., p. 70.

As far as the American naval officers were concerned, the responsibility for the failure lay with the British, who had steadfastly refused to grant the American wish to utilize their tonnage to build only 8 inch gun cruisers. Admiral Jones summed up the navy's viewpoint when he told the House Naval Affairs Committee on Feb. 1, 1928, that the British had insisted on a large tonnage of small cruisers and had tried to limit strictly the total tonnage of 8 inch gun cruisers. "In other words," he said, "there was apparently a desire to standardize navies in types that were of small value to us and fix the main limitations in types that would be of value to us."³³ In Great Britain there was a strong body of naval opinion which had viewed the acceptance by Great Britain of the parity principle in capital ships as a grave mistake, and were determined that the principle should not be extended to other classes. Winston Churchill expressed this point of view when he stated:

The fundamental cause which prevented agreement lay in the different views taken of what constitutes naval equality by the Americans and ourselves. . . Therefore, we are not able now--and I hope at any future time--to embody in a solemn international agreement any words which would bind us to the principle of mathematical parity in naval strength. . . The doctrine of naval equality, if it is to be accepted by us, must take into consideration the whole position of the two countries on the sea,

³³ U.S. House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment, 1927-28, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928), p. 1170.

and their respective risks and vulnerability.³⁴

One feature of the Geneva Conference which made it considerably different from the Washington Conference was the preponderance of naval officers in the American delegation. While Gibson headed the delegation in a diplomatic sense, in fact Admiral Jones had practically equal authority and dominated the American side much of the time. Gibson generally agreed with Jones in any case. Unlike Hughes at the Washington Conference, Secretary of State Kellogg did not personally lead the American delegation, nor did he demonstrate initiative in advancing new lines of approach when the proceedings ran into obstacles. The domination of naval views at the conference, as asserted by officers who thought in terms of naval strategic and tactical requirements, and the consequent slighting of the kind of spirit of give-and-take which might have been more evident if the delegations had not been so largely composed of naval officers led many to conclude that the failure of the conference was due to the inflexibility of the "military mind". In a speech in Commons on November 24, 1927, Ramsay MacDonald--soon to become Prime Minister--stated that each country's naval officers at the conference thought in different terms, and in effect pursued war methods instead of peace methods. If the problem had been to formulate an

³⁴As quoted in Davis, A Navy Second to None, pp. 324-325.

arrangement for Anglo-American naval cooperation in the event of war against a third power, the delegations would have been perfectly suited to the task. As it was, no agreement was possible, since agreement demanded compromise--and the spirit of compromise was foreign to naval men.³⁵ Later Charles G. Dawes, American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, asserted at a banquet speech on June 18, 1929, that naval experts were competent to define principles which determine relative naval strengths, but they cannot be impartial--they want their own navy to be superior to that of any probable enemy. For them compromise is impossible.³⁶

Naval men on the other hand, contended that participation of naval officers in disarmament conferences was a duty on their part, since diplomats were not sufficiently aware of certain technical aspects of naval limitation to be able to reach agreements which did not in some way endanger the vital interests of the nation.³⁷ Regardless of which side in the dispute was correct, it remained true that neither the United States government nor the British government trusted the entire management of disarmament negotiations to the admirals, nor did they neglect to have admirals along to give advice on the more technical side of the discussions.

³⁵ Memorandum, 25 June 1929, Memo book #4, Series VI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

³⁶ Office of Naval Intelligence, Monthly Information Bulletin, XII (August, 1929), pp. 16-17.

³⁷ Knox, History of the United States Navy, p. 429.

In spite of the fact that no treaty emerged from the negotiations at Geneva in 1927, it is not correct therefore to conclude, as have some writers on the subject, that the conference was a total failure.³⁸ The acrimonious argument and subsequent failure to agree on cruisers served both to take attention away from the large measure of agreement in negotiations concerning the other classes of warships and to make it impossible to draw up a treaty embodying the substance of those agreements. It will be recalled that the American proposals contemplated a division of warships to be included in the discussions at Geneva into four categories: cruisers, destroyers, submarines, and a class not subject to restrictions. With the exception of the first category, concrete agreements of a qualitative nature were concluded during the course of the discussions, and these agreements, while not formally adopted and thus not legally binding, in most cases remained as statements of the basic positions of each country and made subsequent final commitments in treaty form much easier to develop at London three years later.

The first area of agreement reached concerned the unrestricted class. Even though all three delegations at the conference submitted proposals for this class,³⁹ it proved relatively easy to reconcile differences and reach a tentative

³⁸ Rappaport, The Navy League, p. 109.

³⁹ The proposals are conveniently summarized in Conference, 1927, pp. 208-209.

agreement in this area. The American contention that all surface warships under 600 tons should be exempt was approved, as was the British view that vessels between 600 and 2,000 tons should be unrestricted, provided they carried no gun larger than 6 inches nor more than four guns of a caliber larger than 3 inches and had a speed no greater than 18 knots. Also adopted was the American proposal that vessels larger than 2,000 tons should not be subject to limitation if they fulfilled the conditions for vessels in the 600-2,000 ton group and in addition were not fitted to launch torpedoes or mines or to land aircraft on board, were not armored, and were not equipped with more than two aircraft catapults.⁴⁰

Agreement was also relatively easy on destroyers, although in this case quantitative limitations had to be closely tied to limitations on total submarine tonnage. The British favored division of destroyers into two groups--regular destroyers and destroyer leaders. For these they proposed maximum displacements of 1400 tons and 1750 tons respectively. While the Americans agreed to two groups of destroyers, they favored somewhat higher tonnages--1500 and 2,000 tons respectively. The Japanese proposed one destroyer grouping, of 1500 tons maximum displacement. Eventually agreement was reached by a compromise which proposed that the maximum ton-

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 110-114.

nage of destroyer leaders should be 1850 tons and of destroyers 1500 tons. The replacement age of both destroyers and leaders was to be 16 years, the maximum size gun allowed to be mounted was 5 inches, and no more than 15 percent of the total destroyer tonnage was to be in leaders.⁴¹ Only the British were willing to state a quantitative limitation for their fleet; they said that the Royal Navy required 221,600 tons of destroyers, of which no more than 29,600 tons would be in leaders.⁴²

In the case of submarines agreement was more difficult, yet even in this category it was possible to reach a certain consensus--a remarkable achievement in view of the emotional attitudes displayed by the delegations at Washington over the submarine problem. After some argument over maximum tonnages it was agreed that submarines should not exceed 1800 tons surface displacement or carry any gun larger than 5 inches. The age at replacement was set at 13 years.⁴³ The Japanese wanted to place submarines under 700 tons in the unrestricted class, on the ground that they were strictly for coastal operations and hence were defensive weapons, but were eventually persuaded to abandon the idea in favor of the American and British view that no submarines should be exempt from limitation.⁴⁴ A comparison of the agreements on limitations

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 132-147, 197-198.

⁴²Ibid., p. 198.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 148-158, 199.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 116-117, 160.

reached at Geneva with those limitations actually formulated in the London Treaty of 1930 shows a close relationship.

THE AFTERMATH OF GENEVA:
THE AMERICAN PROGRAM OF 1929

There was little question in most minds that the Geneva Conference had failed of its primary purpose, which was to halt the naval rivalry in cruisers. One result of the conference was to focus public attention to an unprecedented degree upon the vision of Great Britain as a greater threat than Japan to the security of the United States. The rapid development of American foreign trade and investment during the decade following the World War and American annoyance with the British and the French over the European war debts-reparations problem, combined with the easing of Japanese-American tensions after 1925, were in part responsible, but without question another factor was the clash of views at Geneva, and the consequent disposition of each nation's citizens to look upon the other's as being primarily responsible for the disappointment of the hopes which earlier had been aroused.⁴⁵

The problem of the protection of trade was a particularly sensitive one for American naval strategists, since the ex-

⁴⁵Rappaport, The Navy League, p. 112; George V. Fagan, "Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1927-1937" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954), pp. 51-53.

perience of the belligerents in the last war indicated that adequate protection of trade in wartime was an extremely difficult goal to reach even with an overwhelmingly superior fleet, while the advent of the submarine made the whole problem appear nearly insurmountable.⁴⁶ To American strategists, the effects upon our Pacific commerce of a war with Japan were depressing enough to contemplate, but the possibilities with regard to our total overseas trade in the event of a war with Great Britain were positively dreadful to consider.⁴⁷ All in all, the pressures brought about by the naval competition between the United States and Great Britain contributed greatly to creating in the years 1927-1929 the poorest climate of Anglo-American relations since the turn of the century. The competition both intensified the other issues between the United States and Great Britain and was itself intensified by those issues.

Without question the most important American response to the failure at Geneva to limit cruisers was the development of a new large scale American building program--the first adopted since 1924--and a corresponding redoubling of

⁴⁶Cf. Earl Jellicoe's testimony concerning the problems besetting Great Britain, Conference, 1927, pp. 42-45.

⁴⁷A good contemporary summary of the difficulties attending the defense of American overseas commerce may be found in Williams, The United States and Disarmament, Ch. VI.

efforts to construct the vessels which had been authorized in 1924. President Coolidge, whose hopes of having his administration associated with a successful naval disarmament conference had been so abruptly dashed, began to think seriously of a naval program which would achieve distinction by bringing the strength of the Navy somewhere near parity with the Royal Navy. Only a month after the end of the Geneva negotiations, Secretary of the Navy Wilbur requested the General Board to formulate a five-year building program, and in his annual message to Congress on December 6, Coolidge called for Congressional approval of a large but unspecified program. The recent conference, he said, represented a great effort, but even if agreement had been reached a large construction program would have been necessary. "We know now that no agreement can be reached which will be inconsistent with a considerable building program on our part. . .Where there is no treaty limitation the size of the Navy which America is to have will be solely for America to determine."⁴⁸

Though the American program was a direct result of the Geneva failure, it is not safe to assume that there would have been no such program if the conference had been successful. In hearings on the building bill of 1929, the Navy spokesmen denied that their request for a much larger naval

⁴⁸CR., LXIX, p. 104.

construction program was necessarily the result of the failure of the Geneva Conference to achieve limitation, but held that the larger program would have been necessary in any case. While the tonnage figures indicate the Navy's case to have been correct, many Congressmen would not believe that a major construction effort would have been necessary if the conference had been successful.⁴⁹ The General Board's recommendations for a five-year program were submitted at the end of the year. The Board's schedule called for ships to be laid down as follows:

TABLE 4
GENERAL BOARD'S PROGRAM OF
CONSTRUCTION AND REPLACEMENT
FISCAL YEARS 1929-1933

	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Battleships			2	2	1
Cruisers	5	5	5	5	5
Destroyer Leaders	4	4	1		
Destroyers			5	13	13
Submarines	7	7	7	7	7
Aircraft Carriers	1	1	1	1	1

⁴⁹See Adm. Hughes' testimony and Rep. McClintic's reply in U. S. House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment, 1927-1928, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928), pp. 849-850.

The Board said such a program, if carried out, "will create a properly constituted fleet, will furnish sufficient strength to insure the protection of the legal rights of our citizens under international law, provide refuge in time of disorder, protect commerce, preserve our ocean routes of trade, and provide adequate national defense." It cautioned, however, that completion of the program would leave the Navy still short of the 5:3 ratio in destroyers with Japan, well behind Great Britain in cruisers, and only slightly ahead of Japan in submarines.⁵⁰

Even before the Board officially submitted its report, the substance of its recommendations had been approved by the President and embodied in an Administration bill presented to Congress on December 14. As originally drawn up the bill requested the authorization of 71 ships over a five year period--essentially the same as the General Board's proposed program minus most of the destroyers and destroyer leaders. With the full backing of the President assured, the measure's supporters launched a strong publicity campaign to gain public and Congressional support. It was not long, however, before a strong reaction developed. As the enormous cost of the program became evident, the bill lost the support of those who believed economy to be more important than naval expansion. Also, as time passed the fact that the proposed program was

⁵⁰Ser. 1367/G.B. 420-2, 31 Dec. 1927.

largely directed against Great Britain⁵¹ may have caused some disenchantment, as numbers of people remained unconvinced of even a remote possibility of a war with that nation. The 71 Ship Bill, as it was called, was subjected to rough handling in committee, as opponents stressed the enormous cost of the contemplated program.⁵² The reaction was so strong that the proponents of the bill in Congress substituted for it a new bill eliminating the smaller craft and drastically reducing the number of larger vessels. The new bill, H.R. 11526, requested authorization for 15 cruisers and an aircraft carrier to be laid down over a three year period and was introduced on February 28, 1928.⁵³ Though still the most expensive building program since 1916, in its new form it was much less objectionable. Reported favorably by the House Naval Affairs Committee, it was passed on March 17 by a voice vote.⁵⁴ The entire drama in the House illustrated more clearly than any-

⁵¹While testifying before the House Naval Affairs Committee, Admiral Jones was asked why the proposed program was so much larger than the maximum tonnage for auxiliary vessels proposed by the U.S. delegation at Geneva. He replied that Great Britain's program would involve the larger tonnage. U.S. House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Sundry Legislation, 1927-28, p. 1178.

⁵²See McClintic's statement in ibid., p. 882.

⁵³CR., LXIX, 3737.

⁵⁴House Report no. 834, 70th Cong., 1st. sess. (Washington, 1928), p. 1; CR., LXIX, 4924.

thing else the inability or unwillingness of many members of Congress and a large segment of the public to understand the problem of replacement construction. While willing to grant approval for the building of vessels to enlarge the navy, they were not ready to approve a program to provide for a gradual but steady replacement of overage vessels, which was what was represented by that part of the 71 Ship Bill which had been eliminated. Keeping older vessels rather than replacing them followed the line of least resistance by providing the largest fleet at the least cost.

In the Senate, however, the bill was checked. Several influential senators organized a strong opposition to the bill, and they were greatly aided by the attention being given in the spring of 1928 to the negotiations for a pact to outlaw war among the nations--what later became the Kellogg-Briand Pact.⁵⁵ The Senate did not act on the bill before it adjourned, although the Senate Naval Affairs Committee reported it favorably, using the House Committee's report as its main argument.⁵⁶

During the summer, in the interim between the sessions of the Seventieth Congress, negotiations in Paris looking toward the pact to outlaw war progressed, and as they did the opponents of naval expansion became more optimistic. But a

⁵⁵Davis, A Navy Second to None, p. 327.

⁵⁶U.S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Senate Report no. 988, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928).

contrary development was also taking place at that time which was destined to provide strength to the supporters of the 15 Cruiser Bill. The British and French Governments had been working toward composing their differences. The British were more intimately concerned with the development of the French Navy than was the United States, and during the negotiations at Geneva it had been recognized that the failure of France and Italy to join officially in limitations discussions made a really effective series of agreements difficult to reach.⁵⁷ In early 1928 the British began to explore with the French the possibilities of arriving at some agreement which could meet French objections to the existing system of limitations and at the same time not alienate the other naval powers. Eventually, an agreement was reached after lengthy discussion, and on July 31 the British announced the conclusion of an Anglo-French understanding.⁵⁸ The French agreed to drop their demand that land and naval armaments limitation questions be considered together, while the British agreed in general to adopt French contentions that smaller surface auxiliaries and small submarines should

⁵⁷Much of the French press at the time of the opening of the conference had predicted that without French and Italian participation the conference could not succeed. Whitehouse (chargé at Paris) to Moffatt (Asst. Sec. for European Affairs), June 22 1927, SD500.A15A1/308.

⁵⁸Chilton to Kellogg, July 31 1928, FRUS., 1928, I, 264-265.

not be subject to limitation. Specifically, the agreement provided that:

1. there should be four categories of warships subject to limitation:
 - (a) Capital ships (vessels more than 10,000 tons carrying guns larger than 8 inches).
 - (b) Aircraft carriers over 10,000 tons.
 - (c) Surface auxiliaries of or below 10,000 tons carrying guns larger than 6 inches and up to 8 inches.
 - (d) Submarines larger than 600 tons surface displacement.
2. a future conference should seek maximum tonnage limitations on categories (c) and (d).

The reaction in the United States to the agreement was spirited. An exchange of notes for clarification indicated that the agreement was meant to exclude from limitation all submarines of less than 600 tons surface displacement and all surface vessels mounting guns of 6 inches or less.⁵⁹ There was a widespread belief in the United States that the agreement represented a firm Anglo-French commitment at the next limitations conference, and although the British denied that such was the case and offered for publication the British and

⁵⁹ Kellogg to Chilton, Aug. 2 1928; Atherton to Kellogg, Aug. 4 1928, ibid., pp. 266-267, 272-273.

French exchange of notes on the matter,⁶⁰ the suspicion nevertheless persisted that the British had dealt underhandedly. The General Board was asked for its opinion and expressed a dim view of the understanding. The Board wryly noted that under the Anglo-French proposals destroyers were not limited, smaller submarines were not limited, and--most important of all--8 inch gun cruisers were limited while 6 inch gun cruisers were not. It accused the British of having reversed its stand at Geneva on smaller submarines and then concluded by saying that such proposals would do very little to effect limitation, even if adopted. The Anglo-French agreement was "totally unacceptable" to the Navy.⁶¹ The State Department transmitted its attitude to the British, summarizing the Board's objections and reaffirming its desire for limitation in all classes of warships.⁶² The Italians also rejected the proposals.

The annoyance which was aroused by the Anglo-French naval agreement was perhaps the most important factor which aided the final passage of the 15 Cruiser Bill. On Armistice Day, the President gave a speech in which he devoted some time to explaining that the Navy needed to be expanded. He referred

⁶⁰ Atherton to Kellogg, Aug. 10 1928; Enclosures in Chilton to Kellogg, Sept. 26 1928, ibid., pp. 273-275, 286-290.

⁶¹ Ser. 1390/G.B.438, 11 Sept. 1928.

⁶² Kellogg to Armour (charge, Paris), Sept. 25 1928, FRUS, 1928, I, 282-286.

to the building program of Great Britain, which when completed would give that nation 68 cruisers, against 40 American cruisers, half of which were too old to be of any use. We needed cruisers badly, he said. "World standards of defense require us to have more cruisers."⁶³ He reviewed American participation in the naval limitations conferences. Our motives were honorable, he said, but we had been tricked by the other countries, especially Great Britain, because they feared our power and wanted to limit it while keeping their own. "It no doubt has some significance," he noted, "that foreign governments made agreements limiting that class of combat vessels in which we were superior, but refused limitation in the class in which they were superior."⁶⁴ During the rest of November sentiment for the bill grew even stronger, so that by the time the second session of the Seventieth Congress convened in December the Senate opposition led by Norris, LaFollette, and others clearly had to fight an uphill battle.

The Senate debates on the 15 Cruiser Bill began on January 15 and continued to February 5, with hardly a day passing without considerable comment. Those Senators who opposed the bill did so for a variety of reasons, ranging all the way from pacifist sentiment to the belief that the money was being spent on obsolete instruments of war and that it would be

⁶³New York Times, Nov. 12 1928, p. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid.

better spent on submarines and aircraft.⁶⁵ Some of the opposition was not based as much on the idea of naval expansion as on the fear that the program was being hurried, for a provision in the bill required the construction of the first five ships to be initiated by July 1, 1929.⁶⁶ In spite of the stir made by the opposition, it was evident that it was not as strong as it had been in the spring. The show of determination by the President, the continuing contemplation of the results of the failure at Geneva,⁶⁷ the continuing pressure brought by the bill's supporters,⁶⁸ and the abortive attempt by the British to gain French support for the British position on cruisers--an attempt which was widely regarded as a major blunder--combined to produce a dissolution of any solid front which might have been maintained by the opposition. The bill was passed on February 5 by a margin of 68-12.⁶⁹

⁶⁵CR., LXX, 2409, 2414-18.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 2590-94.

⁶⁷In a statement representative of at least a certain number of senators, Simeon Fess stated that he had opposed the building bill of 1927, but the results of the Geneva Conference had convinced him that a large scale building program was necessary. Ibid., p. 2693.

⁶⁸The Navy League made certain that senators would see its poll of editorial opinion which showed that a large and increasing majority of newspapers favored the bill. Rappaport, The Navy League, pp. 121-122.

⁶⁹CR., LXX, p. 2854. With the exception of one vote from Alabama and one from Washington, the twelve negative votes were all from senators representing the Midwest and Plains states. Nye, Borah and Norris were among those voting against the bill.

The Authorization Act of 1929 represented the high tide of the American reaction against what was considered a British attempt to deny to the United States parity in auxiliary vessels and to relegate the American Navy to an inferior position. Many Americans were convinced that a strong ship-building program such as the one undertaken after 1913 was the only way to bring the other great naval powers to recognize and to heed American naval demands. It represented also the climax of one of the worst periods of Anglo-American relations in the twentieth century. The attention of American naval men was turned to a great extent away from their general preoccupation with the problem of Japan and the Philippines for the only significant time between 1907 and the Second World War. Yet even as the Act of 1929 marked the peak of naval resentment against Great Britain, it marked also the beginning of an easing of naval tension between the two countries. Although it could not have been foreseen at the time, the period immediately following the passage of the 15 Cruiser Bill brought a sudden and dramatic improvement in Anglo-American naval relations which paved the way for further armaments limitation and a gradually increasing degree of cooperation in the face of the common menace of a militant Japan.

CHAPTER V
A NEW BEGINNING:
THE LONDON CONFERENCE OF 1930

With the Authorization Act of 1929 on the statute books,¹ the Navy forged ahead at full speed with its plans to overtake the British lead in auxiliary tonnage and to gain again a commanding lead over Japan. Even though the law granted a good deal of what the Navy considered necessary, it fell far short of naval requirements as summarized by the General Board in its five-year program of 1928, and efforts were continued to bring about greater expansion. The time was certainly propitious; crisis and deteriorating relations with other naval powers had often provided the Navy with its best opportunities for expansion. The General Board hastened to remind the Secretary of the Navy that many of the ships requested earlier had not been provided in the new program, and that, while a good beginning had been made, it would be necessary in the future to authorize still more vessels. For the fiscal 1931 program it recommended that authorization for 5 heavy cruisers, 4 destroyer leaders, 11 submarines and another aircraft carrier be sought in addition to the program already approved. It also noted that in 1933 the two oldest

¹The Act, passed on Feb. 5, was signed into law by President Coolidge on Feb. 13, 1929. U.S. Statutes, XLV, pt. 1, 1165 ff.

battleships would reach the retirement age under the Washington treaty and could be replaced with new 35,000 ton vessels, which should therefore be laid down in 1931.²

If there was ever an outside chance that the Navy would see its five year program soon enacted into law, that chance disappeared with the developments of the next few months. The darkness of early 1929 presaged the dawn of a better era in Anglo-American relations. The most important harbinger of change was the inauguration of Herbert Hoover as President on March 4, 1929. Although in his earlier statements as Republican presidential nominee and as President-elect he had indicated support of a policy which would provide a naval force strong enough to defend American interests,³ once in office he showed a stronger inclination to seek arms reduction by international agreement rather than to augment the Navy by responding directly to the challenge offered by the building programs of other nations. During Hoover's Administration no new naval vessels were authorized, but another treaty for naval limitation was concluded and negotiations for a second were inaugurated.

The next phase in the development of better relations with Great Britain commenced on June 7, 1929, when the Con-

²Ser. 1415/G.B. 420-2, 4 Apr. 1929.

³Raymond G. O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium: The United States and the London Naval Conference of 1930 (Lawrence, Kan., 1962), p. 23. Hereafter cited as O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium.

servative Party in Great Britain was turned out of office and a Labor government headed by Ramsay MacDonald took its place. Like Hoover, MacDonald believed that naval limitations could be made a cause of better relations between nations, and he was disposed to consider the improvement of relations to be more important than the preservation of any particular principle of naval superiority. With Hoover in the White House and MacDonald in Downing Street the stage was set for reconciliation, and within a week after MacDonald's accession to power the arrival of the new American Ambassador, Charles G. Dawes, signalled the beginning of conversations looking toward an early solution of outstanding differences. Even before Dawes' arrival it was known that naval questions would be dealt with, and rumors about the substance of proposed solutions flew about in the British press.⁴ It became evident however, that the most important result of these early talks was not the presentation of any concrete proposals but rather the improvement in the general attitude of the respective governments as manifested by a willingness of each to listen to and attempt to understand the other's position and to state general principles to which both could agree.

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

PRE-CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS:
A QUESTION OF CRUISERS

A definite public move toward reconciliation took place on July 24, when MacDonald took the opportunity afforded by the official ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Pact to announce that in order to show its desire for genuine arms limitation and in order to begin a measure of economy, the British Government would suspend all further work on two 10,000 ton cruisers and would cancel two submarines and a submarine tender.⁵ On the same day, Hoover responded by announcing that the laying of the keels of three new cruisers would be postponed pending the outcome of further talks on naval limitations.⁶ This dramatic action was followed by further talks which clarified the situation regarding cruisers and appreciably narrowed the gap between the American and British positions. The announcements of July 24 had also been preceded by private talks in which a measure of agreement had been reached. On July 18 MacDonald had written Dawes that Great Britain agreed with the United States on the following points:

1. The Washington Treaty arrangements regarding battleships and aircraft carriers are not to

⁵New York Times, July 25, 1929, p. 1.

⁶Ibid. The British and American announcements were prearranged. See Dawes to Stimson, July 22 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 154.

be disturbed.

2. The United States should have parity in cruisers with Great Britain, based on a "yardstick" formula.
3. The United States should have parity also in destroyers and submarines, but the British would continue to work for the abolition of submarines.⁷

The British reference to a "yardstick" formula in this message was a reminder of an episode which began in the period before June, 1929, and which had been hopefully regarded as the means whereby the vexing cruiser question could be solved once and for all. Although the idea of a simple formula, whereby the main characteristics of a warship, such as gun power, speed and armor protection, could be computed so as to produce an accurate index of fighting power which could then be compared with a similar index for another warship, had been considered during the Washington Conference,³ a serious attempt to devise such a formula was not made until early 1929. The League of Nations Preparatory Commission was preparing to hold its sixth session, without prospects of better success than had been achieved by any of its predecessors. Partly in order to inject new life into the Com-

⁷ Dawes to Stimson, July 13 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 148-149.

⁸ O'Connor, "The Yardstick and Naval Disarmament in the 1920's", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLV (Dec., 1958), p. 442.

mission's proceedings, the American delegate, Hugh Gibson, was given permission to submit an American proposal for the limitation of naval armaments which would call for such a formula to be used. Accordingly, on April 22, a week after the convening of the sixth session, Gibson rose to present the proposal. The United States, he said, "will be prepared to give consideration to a method of estimating equivalent naval values which takes account of other factors than displacement tonnage alone." He stated that comparison between markedly dissimilar types of vessels would be greatly aided by a formula which also took into account such factors as age and caliber of guns. Then he added, "My Government has given careful consideration to various methods of comparison and the American delegation will be in a position to discuss the subject whenever it comes before the Commission."⁹ The Gibson statement produced an electrifying effect upon the delegates, who professed to see in it the solution of most of the difficulties standing in the way of progress in disarmament.¹⁰ In June, Dawes gave a speech in London, in the course of which he said;

⁹League of Nations, Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference Entrusted with the Preparation for the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments. Series VIII, Minutes of the Sixth Session (First Part) of the Preparatory Commission (Geneva, 1929), p. 57.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 59-62.

It is certainly possible for naval experts to arrive at a definition for evaluation of fighting strength of ships. Thus, for instance, one might find a yardstick with which to determine the military value of individual ships. These ships might differ in displacement, size of guns, age, speed, and other characteristics, and yet such an agreed properly weighted value might be given to each of these differing characteristics as to make it possible to compare, for example, the cruiser fleets or combined fleets of two navies, and establish a parity between them.¹¹

These statements together indicated that such a formula did exist and implied that the question had been thoroughly considered and approved by American naval experts. But this was not the case. The question of a yardstick formula had not been submitted to the General Board until after the Gibson speech, and by the time Dawes made his statement the Board had given an answer which was quite at variance with Dawes' assertion. The Board commented: "It is highly improbable that accurate determination of the fighting or combat value of any unit can be made. Any attempt to establish such a value necessarily must be based upon highly technical assumptions and complex computations upon which general agreement is most improbable if not impossible." The nearest approach to such a formula would be the simple comparison of tonnages and perhaps age.¹² The Board's comment should not have been surprising, for many naval officers had

¹¹Enclosure in Dawes to Stimson, June 20 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 126.

¹²Ser. 1427/G.B.438-1, 10 June 1929.

previously expressed doubt that any truly accurate comparison between dissimilar warships could in fact be drawn.¹³

It was indeed unfortunate that the yardstick idea had been offered without adequate consideration beforehand, for the hopes attached to it were out of all proportion to reality. Those acquainted with naval problems were well aware that the possibility of arriving at an effective formula which would be acceptable to the naval experts of all the nations involved was very remote, but the naïveté of many others was incredible. Dawes himself stated in his June 18 speech that other nations should submit their views on the yardstick, after which a compromise could be arranged which would represent the finally accepted formula.¹⁴ This statement was remarkable in view of his assertion in the same speech that naval experts could not be expected to work out agreements in a spirit of compromise. As the MacDonald statement of July 18 indicates, the Prime Minister himself was convinced that the yardstick could provide the solution of the cruiser question.

¹³While testifying before the House Naval Affairs Committee in January, 1928, Captain William D. Leahy was asked whether it was possible to rate destroyers in terms of cruisers. He replied that everything depended on conditions, that in bad weather a destroyer might have a fighting value of zero. U.S. House, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on Sunday Legislation, 1927-28, pp. 994-995.

¹⁴Dawes to Stimson, June 20 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 127.

The resulting pressure on the Americans to show evidence of the nature of such a formula prompted the Administration to request some concrete positive views on the subject. Upon Hoover's request, Admiral Jones prepared a long memorandum in which he discussed all the problems involved and asserted that the factors which entered into estimates of combat strength were too variable to allow a workable formula to be devised.¹⁵ The General Board was prevailed upon to submit another report, in which it said that displacement, age, and gun caliber could be considered as the main factors in devising a formula for cruisers and conceded that one could be worked out. The formula, however, would be extremely complicated and would have "but a limited application." The Board reiterated its belief that displacement tonnage alone was as accurate a measure of strength as any formula that could be invented.¹⁶

Under the circumstances, it was understandable that the American government did not wish to give the British any information regarding the yardstick, since the Americans then-

¹⁵ Hoover to C.F. Adams (Secretary of the Navy), June 14 1929; Memo of Adm. Jones, 18 June 1929, "General Board Materials Relating to Preparations for the London Conference," File no. 1, Series VIII, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records. For one layman's effort to devise a formula, see H.L. Vickery, "A Naval Yardstick", Foreign Affairs, VIII (Oct. 1929), 142-144.

¹⁶ Ser. 1430/G.B.438-1, 1 Aug. 1929.

selves were not certain of its definition or application. In the absence of such information, the British continued to formulate proposals which seemed unlikely to be accepted. Late in July the British proposed that the cruiser strengths of the two nations be fixed at eighteen 8 inch gun cruisers and twenty 6 inch gun cruisers for the United States, and fifteen 8 inch gun cruisers and forty-five 6 inch gun cruisers for Great Britain.¹⁷ The proposal was completely unacceptable for it involved a gap of approximately 80,000 tons in favor of the British. In the ensuing development of proposal and counterproposal it became evident that much of the problem could be traced to the great difference in the actual cruiser strength of the two countries. The United States was demanding parity, but in order to achieve parity the Americans would have to build a large amount of new tonnage, or the British would have to scrap some of what they had. In a letter to Dawes, MacDonald summed up the situation neatly when he said: "I see your President's difficulty. At the moment the bulk of your main strength is in a program; ours is on the water. If you have parity you have to build a part of your program. That is an increase. Here we are two miserable men in authority determined to do the right thing and kept from it by all the devilish powers which have

¹⁷The exchange of notes on this and other proposals which followed is meticulously set forth in O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, pp. 39-46.

had a hand in making our past."¹⁸ Stimson stated the problem in terms of statistics when he said that even if the British cancelled their program of cruisers not yet laid down they would have 331,000 tons of those vessels, while if the United States built all the ships authorized by the Acts of 1924 and 1929 it would have about 300,000 tons--still substantially less than parity.¹⁹

Another point which clearly emerged from the various proposals offered during this period was that the difference between the two countries largely revolved around a certain number of heavy cruisers. The General Board had steadfastly opposed the division of the cruiser class into heavy and light categories and wanted all of the Navy's new construction to be in 8 inch gun heavy cruisers, preferably of 10,000 tons each. Yet the British proposals, while willing to grant some superiority in heavy cruisers, did not want the disparity to be too great and insisted that the Americans fill the tonnage gap between the two navies largely with 6 inch gun cruisers. The British were not simply concerned with the problem of the American heavy cruiser superiority but also because Japan's quota of these vessels could be too large. The Americans had 23 heavy cruisers building or authorized, and if they were all completed, Japan would be

¹⁸ Dawes to Stimson, Aug. 1 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 173.

¹⁹ Stimson to Dawes, July 21 1929, Ibid., pp. 150-151.

entitled on the basis of the 5:3 ratio to 16 cruisers, or one more than the British had stated they were willing to maintain for themselves.²⁰ In exhaustive conversations the disparity between the two governments' positions was considerably narrowed. The British reduced their minimum acceptable number of cruisers to fifty, for a total of 339,000 tons. The General Board stated that, while it still opposed the establishment of two cruiser categories, on the basis of the British concessions it was possible for the Navy to accept a reduction of its heavy cruiser strength from 23 to 21 cruisers, with compensating increases in the light cruiser category.²¹ The disagreement on cruisers between the two countries thus narrowed to the question of whether the United States would have 21 heavy cruisers as its experts desired, or would reduce that number to 18 cruisers as the British desired.

During the negotiations which took place from the end of July to the middle of September, the yardstick concept receded farther into the background of discussions, and finally disappeared altogether. As an attempt to establish an exact mathematical standard for the comparative measurement of different types of fighting vessels, the endeavor

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 183-185; MacDonald to Dawes, Aug. 30 1929, ibid., pp. 213-214.

²¹ Ser. 1444/G.B. 438-1, 23 Aug. 1929; Ser. 1444a/G.B. 438-1, 11 Sept. 1929.

was a failure. It may be argued that a formula was perfectly feasible, and only the resistance of the American naval officers prevented it from becoming a reality, but available evidence indicates that there were too many factors involved--many of them highly variable or imponderable--to make such a formula very useful. Yet the attitude of the Navy on the cruiser question indicated that some process of comparison was constantly being used to evaluate the various proposals. The General Board obviously did not consider a light cruiser to be equivalent to a heavy cruiser, inasmuch as its members held tenaciously to their insistence on a preponderance of heavy cruisers and consented only reluctantly to a slight reduction from their absolute minimum of 23 cruisers. It was never made clear by what process the figures were reached, or why a figure of 23 cruisers was acceptable while 21 cruisers were agreed to so reluctantly, but evidently the fact that one cruiser had lighter guns than the other was the determining factor--so gun power was of some importance, as well as tonnage. Certainly some mathematical yardstick, if it could have been derived and accepted, would probably have made the cruiser problem much easier to solve, and had it been available at the time of the Geneva Conference, it might have made that conference a success.

By the middle of September, progress toward an understanding on cruisers had been sufficiently developed so that plans for a conference could be made with the hope that the

proceedings could lead to a successful conclusion. MacDonald visited the United States early in October, and from the 4th to the 10th he and Hoover held a series of conversations which centered primarily on naval questions. Various proposals and counterproposals were offered but no further progress toward settlement of outstanding questions was made. It was made clear that the Americans did not wish any further limitations on battleships and that limitation of destroyer tonnages would be contingent upon submarine limitations.²² The question of neutral rights at sea was raised by Hoover, and upon his return to London MacDonald informed Parliament that the British government would be prepared to give serious consideration to the question.²³ The MacDonald visit closed the Anglo-American phase of the negotiations preliminary to the London Conference. Thereafter the two countries directed their main efforts toward ascertaining the conditions which Japan, France and Italy would insist upon at the conference. It was believed that no insurmountable obstacles should be encountered with these nations and that the British and Ameri-

²²Memoranda of the conversations may be found in FRUS., 1929, II, 3-33, and in E.L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.) Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Series 2, I, pp. 106-125. Hereafter cited as British Documents.

²³New York Times, Nov. 6 1929, p. 10. A week later, Hoover proposed unofficially that food ships be declared immune from attack. Aside from humanitarian considerations immunity for food ships, Hoover said, "would greatly tend toward lessening the pressure for naval strength." Ibid. Nov. 12 1929, p. 24.

can understanding on cruisers would go far toward assuring the success of the Conference. There is no question that the concessions made during the Anglo-American exploratory talks were crucial, and the British willingness to grant parity to the United States in overall cruiser tonnage was perhaps the most important of all. One scholar of the conference has written, concerning the granting of parity, that "MacDonald's acceptance of this principle was probably the most important concession made by any statesman during the negotiations which preceded the London Naval Conference of 1930."²⁴

The other countries had demands which would also have to be resolved before the conference could produce a treaty of any value, and in the last three months of 1929 these demands were examined and attempts were made to reach preliminary understandings. Generally speaking, no concessions of the significance of the Anglo-American rapprochement on cruisers were formulated, but the discussions did serve to sharpen the issues and to make clearer the fundamental positions of each of the nations.

In the case of Japan, the discussions were dominated by the question of the 5:5:3 ratio. Ever since the Washington Conference Japanese naval leaders had been dissatisfied with the ratio, and press opinion had become increasingly hostile

²⁴O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, p. 36.

to a principle which was not so much thought of as militarily disadvantageous, but rather as a reminder to the Japanese that the western nations considered them inferior. The Japanese had stated in August that they would insist on a ratio of 10:7 in auxiliary vessels,²⁵ and they held tenaciously to their position during the rest of the time before the conference. There were two major reasons for the inflexibility of the Japanese. The economic situation in Japan was rapidly deteriorating following the collapse in 1927 of the great expansion after World War I. The rapid fall in the price of rice was beginning to cause distress in the countryside, while the decline of the Japanese position in world trade, especially in textiles, was producing unemployment in the industrial areas.²⁶ The resulting unrest communicated itself first to the army, which had strong peasant roots, and thence to all extreme nationalist sentiment. In addition, there was the ironic fact that the long campaign by the jingoistic groups against the 5:3 ratio and its implication of inferiority had hardened nationalist opinion to such an extent that any attempt by Japanese statesmen to extend the ratio literally would have been dangerous. The Japanese approached the conference with an attitude made the more in-

²⁵Castle (Asst. Secretary of State) to Cotton (Under-secretary) Aug. 12 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 188-189.

²⁶G.C.Allen, A Short Economic History of Modern Japan, 1867-1937 (London, 1946), pp. 115-116.

tractable by their suspicion that the Americans and the British had concluded a secret understanding to stand together against the Japanese demands.²⁷

The French approached the conference with the most pessimistic feeling. They believed that a naval limitations conference should be held as part of a general disarmament conference sponsored by the League of Nations, rather than as an independent endeavor; hence they viewed any agreements reached at the conference as contingent upon a general disarmament agreement. Not until the conference was well under way were the French persuaded to abandon their position.²⁸ The French continued to view naval armaments limitation as but one facet in the whole problem of disarmament. They much preferred a general disarmament treaty, closely tied to guarantees of French security by Great Britain and the United States, to a treaty for further naval limitation only which did not afford such guarantees.²⁹

²⁷Gerald E. Wheeler, "Isolated Japan: Anglo-American Diplomatic Co-operation, 1927-1936," Pacific Historical Review, XXX (1961), 165-168.

²⁸Stimson to Cotton, Jan. 20 1930, FRUS., 1930, I, p. 5.

²⁹The French had been trying ever since 1918 to persuade first the United States then Great Britain to furnish workable guarantees against a renewal of German aggression. Louis A.R. Yates, The United States and French Security, 1917-1921, (New York, 1957); Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles (New York, 1940).

French concern over the threat of Italian naval power in the Mediterranean was compounded by 1929 by a possible threat from Germany. The Germans had made plans for building several vessels to replace the overage predreadnought battleships which were the most powerful warships allowed them by the Versailles Treaty. These new vessels were limited in size by the same treaty to 10,000 tons and a maximum gun caliber of 11 inches; but it was rumored that the Germans, while staying within the limitations, were designing a new type of ship especially adapted for long range commerce raiding.³⁰ Under the circumstances, the French considered a mutual security arrangement an essential part of any treaty to come out of the London Conference, especially if Italy continued to demand parity in all classes of vessels with France, as seemed likely. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was not viewed as providing guarantees of the kind the French had in mind. In a memorandum to the American government, they stated as much and suggested that all the Mediterranean nations join France in a mutual security pact.³¹ At the same time, the French were not neglecting their own defenses. A French naval construction program announced just before

³⁰The rumors were true. These vessels were the famous "pocket battleships" Deutschland, Admiral Scheer, and Admiral Graf Spee, three of the most efficient surface raiders ever developed.

³¹French memorandum of Dec. 20 1929, FRUS., 1929, I, 299-304.

the conference began contemplated the laying down of a 10,000 ton heavy cruiser, 6 large destroyers, 6 ocean going submarines, 5 smaller submarines, and several smaller warships between 1930 and 1934, at a total cost of more than 1,267,128,000 francs.³²

The Italians, like the Japanese, had a relatively simple position but one involving a demand unlikely to be accepted. They demanded the parity principle established in the Washington Treaty with regard to capital ships and aircraft carriers be extended to all the other classes of warships. The official Italian naval position was that although Italy did not have two widely separated major coastlines or worldwide colonial interests as France did, Italy's overseas trade was every bit as important in the national economy as the trade of Great Britain and that geographic realities made Italy practically an island, so that a navy at least as large as France's was essential.³³ Although during the twenties Italian naval power, as measured in tonnage, was substantially weaker than that of the French, even in capital ships, they insisted that the parity principle be clearly established as a standard. It was not then likely that the Italians would choose actually to institute a building program to reach

³²Report of Naval Attaché, Paris, 30 Dec. 1929. SD500. A15Z3/633.

³³Translation of article by Italian Chief of Naval Staff in naval attaché report, 18 Oct. 1929, in memo book no. 3, Series VIII, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

parity with France, since to do so would require a huge program to overcome the substantial French lead.³⁴

It was evident, therefore, that while the Anglo-American differences were largely overcome by the time the Conference convened, the same could not be said of the attitude of the other three naval powers. Japan's demand for a higher ratio in particular could disrupt the precarious understanding between the British and the Americans, while the Italian and French impasse over parity could prevent Italian and French adherence to any agreements which the representatives of the Big Three could formulate and could even, under certain conditions, render impossible agreement among the Big Three.

While the State Department was hopeful of the possibilities of success for the coming conference, naval officers were not so sanguine. In a detailed summary of the Navy's position on the eve of the conference, the General Board declared that it was likely that Japan would demand a 10:7 ratio, at least in heavy cruisers, would insist on a minimum of 80,000 tons in submarines and would probably support a British attempt to postpone for at least five years the replacement of existing battleships.³⁵ The French-Italian dispute over

³⁴Garrett (Ambassador in Rome) to Stimson, Jan. 10 1930, SD500.A15A3/658.

³⁵Memorandum, Jan. 6 1930, pp. 31-34, memo book no. 9, Series VIII, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

parity involved the United States only to the extent that the British strength depended somewhat upon French strength. The Board believed that France might not agree to parity with Italy and would certainly demand more than 90,000 tons of submarines and a substantial tonnage in destroyers. Both France and Italy would probably accept postponement of capital ship replacement.³⁶ The Board reaffirmed its complete opposition to any attempts by the British or any other power to reduce the maximum permissible size and gunpower of battleships as already fixed by the Washington Treaty, and its insistence upon the principle of parity with Great Britain in all classes of combatant vessels.³⁷ Except for the willingness to accept a specific number of heavy cruisers, the official position of the Navy on the major issues which were to come before the London Conference remained essentially unchanged since 1927.

FAILURE AT THE CONFERENCE: THE FRENCH DILEMMA

The opening session of the London Naval Conference was held on January 21, 1930 in the Royal Gallery, House of Lords. After an opening message of welcome by King George V, MacDonald was chosen chairman and called for statements by the

³⁶Ibid., pp. 34-36.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 8-10.

delegations. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson made a short speech, in which he stated that the American position was well known--the United States was primarily interested in extending the principles established at Washington for capital ships and aircraft carriers to the other categories of warships.³⁸ After brief statements by the delegates from Australia and Canada, the chief French delegate, Premier André Tardieu, rose to state his country's position. The role of the French Navy, he said, was determined by France's geographical situation and economic and military position as a continental and colonial power. The wide dispersal of French overseas domains and their great economic importance to France meant that communications lines were long yet vital. "France must (1) at any moment be able to reckon on her Navy to insure the possibility of transporting to any point of her empire the necessary forces, and (2) for the defense of the home country, be able to make use of the whole of her resources." In this sense, Tardieu's position was reminiscent of that taken by the British at Geneva in 1927, when they held that Britain needed a certain minimum number of cruisers to guard her overseas communications and

³⁸U.S. Department of State, Proceedings of the London Naval Conference of 1930 and Supplementary Documents, Conference Series no. 6 (Washington, 1931), pp. 47-48. The statements of the other delegations which follow are also from this source, pp. 49-57. Hereafter cited as Conference, 1930.

trade, regardless of how small the navies of other nations were. In sum, the French needs were absolute, not relative. If they interpreted their needs in tonnages which were much higher than the ratios prescribed at Washington--as seemed likely--it was clear that no real limitations could be agreed upon. It was not an auspicious beginning.

The British stated their case next. They had come to the conclusion that relativity was the determining factor in the size of navies,³⁹ and accordingly they differed with the French. "To build up a navy merely upon need is an exceedingly foolish undertaking," said MacDonald. "Naval and military forces are required not because we have certain economic needs and certain lengths of coast line and so on, but are based upon an estimate of how far there is a threat of the deprivation of those needs, . . . Therefore, need and security must always be related together." Thus early in the conference there appeared opposing points of view which, if not somehow reconciled, might prevent any agreement at all. The Americans and Italians agreed with the British position, while the Japanese made statements which were noncommittal and which sought to avoid the issue.⁴⁰

³⁹ As we have seen, they had been willing to reduce their cruiser demands from sixty cruisers, which they had previously considered an absolute minimum, to fifty.

⁴⁰ See the statement of Reijiro Wakatsuki, the chief Japanese delegate, in Conference, 1930, pp. 56-57.

The problem of relative versus absolute needs arose in spite of the fact that attempts had been made to settle the question before the conference began--attempts in which the French were much involved and were instrumental in formulating significant compromises. The question had been of concern to the French ever since the Washington Conference, when it was realized that sooner or later further attempts would be made to limit the auxiliary classes. In early 1927, when the third session of the Preparatory Commission was examining the question of a single tonnage versus tonnage by categories, Jean-Paul Boncour, the French delegate, had suggested a compromise plan which would allow allocation of tonnage by categories, which the Americans and British had consistently favored. At the same time it would preserve some elements of the principle of a single total tonnage figure, which the French and Italians had insisted upon. Called the transactional proposal, the Boncour plan contemplated a global tonnage allowance for each nation, within which division into four and later five categories was made. Each nation would be free to shift a limited amount of tonnage from one category to another.⁴¹ In 1928, in connection with preparations looking forward to the next disarmament conference,

⁴¹U.S. Department of State, Report of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and Draft Convention, Conference series no. 7 (Washington, 1931), pp. 23-24. Hereafter cited as Report of the Prep. Comm.

the General Board was asked its opinion of the transactional proposal and stated that, while the Navy favored limitation strictly by categories, it had no objection to the proposal as a basis for discussion, and Gibson so reported at the opening session of the London conference.⁴²

The French performance at the conference was to some extent ambiguous. On one hand they gave evidence of a desire to reach agreement on many issues, especially those which involved qualitative limitations; on the other hand, they proved singularly inflexible on matters relating to quantitative limitations. As an example of the first point, the French delegation's participation in the deliberations regarding exempt vessels and submarines may be cited. In discussions concerning the minimum tonnage of warships which should be subject to limitation, both the French and the Italians took the position that the minimum should be set as low as possible so that only the smallest vessels would escape some kind of limitation. While both delegations accepted 600 tons as the minimum, which the Japanese especially favored, they said they preferred a lower minimum--the Italians favoring a figure as low as 100 tons. A 400 or 500 ton torpedo vessel, they believed, could be quite a formidable addition to a fleet.⁴³

⁴²Ser. 1371/G.B.438, 27 Feb. 1928; Conference, 1930, p. 68.

⁴³Conference, 1930, pp. 144-163 passim.

As for submarines, the delegations took positions similar to those they had advanced at Washington. The British favored abolition of submarines as the best solution to the problem of submarine warfare.⁴⁴ The French, as well as the Japanese and Italians, believed that the submarine was a legitimate weapon especially valuable to the smaller navies. They felt that the use of the submarine could be circumscribed so as to eliminate past abuses. "Must it disappear", the French said, "because it disturbs the habits and the honored traditions of surface ships?"⁴⁵ And, they might have added, because the submarine was a real menace to merchant shipping which even a large navy could not guarantee to eliminate? The United States was the only country whose official attitude toward the submarine had been noticeably changed since 1921. Speaking for the American delegation, Gibson said that ton for ton the submarine was the costliest of war vessels and the costliest to maintain. Its useful life was relatively short. Further, its existence imposed on navies much higher levels in craft such as destroyers, hence raises the total cost of navies. The submarine lent itself too easily to abuse of the laws of civilized warfare. For all these reasons the submarine should be abolished.⁴⁶ While

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 78-80.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 84-88.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 82-84.

not willing to abolish the submarine, the French were willing to set qualitative limits upon their construction, and at meetings of the Committee of Experts on March 5 and 6, agreements were reached regarding the maximum size and gun power of submarines. The French, who had one unusually large submarine, Surcouf, of nearly 3,000 tons and mounting two 8 inch guns, nevertheless agreed to a maximum surface displacement for submarines of 2,000 tons, provided that they would be allowed to build two more submarines of the Surcouf type.⁴⁷ It is significant that the French were willing to accept limitations well below what they considered most desirable for French needs, and in a type of warship which they particularly favored.

While amenable to limitations on the size and gun power of certain auxiliary warships, the French proved totally inflexible on the question of quantitative limitations. Their concept of an absolute minimum number of vessels to meet their own naval requirements made it impossible to reach agreements based on the parity principle, unless the big three naval powers built to a level which would have made a mockery of the limitation objective of the conference. And, of course, lurking in the background was the Italian demand for parity with France, which the French would not accept.

⁴⁷"Log of H.C. Train," I, entries of 5 and 6 March 1930; Conference, 1930, pp. 171-175.

As if to emphasize their difference with the other powers on this point, the French delegates made a public statement on February 12, in which they announced the French capital ship program for the immediate future and the ultimate size of the fleet considered essential for the security of France.⁴⁸ After reminding the other powers of the fact that France had not exercised her rights under the Washington Treaty to lay down two 35,000 ton battleships, and that completion of the contemplated French program would leave the French Navy smaller by 339,000 tons than it was in 1913, the statement announced that part of the 70,000 tons of capital ships owing France would be utilized to construct a small battleship mounting 12 inch guns, and in the future the rest of the tonnage credit might be used in the same way.⁴⁹ Ultimately, French battleship strength would reach 208,000 tons, and in addition it was anticipated that the tonnage of heavy cruisers would reach 100,000 tons and submarines would eventually total 99,600 tons. Altogether, the French Navy would ultimately be stabilized at approximately 725,000 tons.

The French statement came at the conclusion of negotia-

⁴⁸The French statement in full is in Conference, 1930, pp. 227-230.

⁴⁹This was a direct French response to the threat posed by Germany's pocket battleships. Ultimately the French built two small battleships, Dunkerque and Strasbourg, 26,500 tons and mounting eight 13 inch guns. They were superior to the German ships in every way.

tions over quantitative limitations in which the French had shown themselves irrevocably opposed to any extension of the Washington ratios to the auxiliary classes. The Boncour compromise represented the limit to which the French would retreat from their position favoring a single tonnage figure for each navy, within which each would be free to allocate tonnages to categories as it saw fit. At the second plenary session on January 30 the problem of allocation of tonnages was discussed, but no decision was reached and a committee was established to examine the question.⁵⁰ On February 20, at a meeting of this committee, which was called the First Committee and consisted mainly of the chief delegates of each country, a compromise essentially embodying the Boncour principle was formulated and approved. This compromise had five main points:

1. Each power would indicate the single tonnage figure it would not exceed.
2. The figure would be subdivided into categories on a basis to be agreed upon and would involve five categories.
 - (a) Battleships.
 - (b) Aircraft Carriers.
 - (c) Cruisers, in two subcategories.

⁵⁰Conference, 1930, pp. 64-74.

(d) Destroyers.

(e) Submarines.

3. For the last three categories, qualitative limitations were proposed as follows:

(a) 10,000 tons for cruisers and 8 inch and 6 inch guns for the subcategories respectively.

(b) 1500 tons for destroyers and 1850 tons for destroyer leaders, with a maximum gun caliber of 5 inches.

(c) 1800 tons for submarines with a maximum gun caliber of 5 inches.

4. Tonnages could be transferred between cruiser subcategories on a basis to be agreed upon.

5. Tonnages could be transferred, on a basis to be agreed upon, from the light cruiser category to the destroyer category so as to allow some countries to construct a limited number of very large destroyers.⁵¹

Two points should be mentioned in connection with this compromise proposal. First, the qualitative limitations for cruisers, destroyers and submarines agreed to at Geneva in 1927, but never implemented because no treaty came out of

⁵¹First Report of the 1st Committee, ibid., pp. 123-143.

that conference, were included in the proposal. Second, the most critical point--that of how much tonnage could be transferred from one category or subcategory to another--was not embodied in the proposal but was left to be agreed upon in further negotiations. As events transpired, the French themselves were unable to concur in the proportion of tonnage to be transferred which was acceptable to the Big Three. The latter preferred as limited a transfer as possible in order essentially to preserve the idea of limitation by categories, while the French desired a large permissible transfer so as to allow the concept of a single overall tonnage to be given free play. In short, the Boncour proposal had been only a basis for discussion and had not really solved the basic issue of the question of tonnage limitations at all. Eventually the French were to agree to those parts of the recommendations of the First Committee which established qualitative limitations but not to those which attempted to set quantitative limitations.

The French attitude, seemingly so hostile to the spirit of compromise and sincere desire to effect real limitations, was not based upon obstructionist desires but upon their fears, partly of Italy but primarily of Germany. Ever since 1918 the French had viewed a resurgence of German militarism as a distinct possibility and had sought to guard against it not only by maintaining a strong army but by seeking guarantees of assistance from Great Britain and the United States.

Attempts at Versailles to forge a French-American alliance were thwarted by the United States Senate,⁵² and subsequent agreements made with Great Britain at Locarno and with the United States in the Kellogg-Briand Pact did not represent the kind of firm commitment by these countries which the French desired. By 1930 the French, faced with the Italian insistence on parity and the expansion of the German navy by the construction of their super-cruisers later known as pocket battleships, were thoroughly alarmed, and made it clear that in their view the threat could only be met by an acceleration of naval construction or by guarantees of French security by the British or the Americans.

Unfortunately for the French, their requests for guarantees ran directly counter to established policies in Great Britain and the United States. The British, for reasons partly geographic and partly economic, did not view Germany as a probable menace to the peace of the world but as a prodigal which should be assisted in assuming a responsible place once more in the family of nations. In the United States, the fear of entangling alliances was deeply embedded in the American foreign policy tradition, and it was not likely that any chief executive would even attempt to give assurances of support for the French, however qualified, for

⁵²Yates, The United States and French Security, 1917-1921, Ch. 3, passim.

fear of political repercussions. International realities therefore set the Conference squarely upon the horns of a dilemma. To grant French requests for guarantees was practically impossible; not to grant them was to ruin the prospects of a five-power agreement, and perhaps even a three-power concord, since British naval strength depended to a considerable degree upon French and Italian strength.

In spite of the lack of hope for much success, both the British and American governments devoted a great deal of attention to trying to find a way out of the impasse, and most of the time after the return of the French delegation to London on March 6 was consumed in efforts to reach some sort of arrangement which would be acceptable to all parties. The French knew perfectly well that the desire of the British and the Americans for a five power agreement represented the best opportunity since the Versailles negotiations to secure really strong guarantees, and they did not hesitate to exploit their opportunity. At a meeting of the naval experts on March 10, Jacques-Louis Dumesnil, the Minister of Marine, presented an alarming picture of French naval needs which implied an even larger building program than previously announced. He asserted that France would need twelve heavy cruisers--six to balance the Italian cruiser strength in the Mediterranean, four for the colonies and two to balance the new German program. French needs also made necessary fifteen light cruisers--five or six in home waters, the same

number overseas, and two or three in reserve.⁵³ On March 16, Tardieu stated flatly that French naval requirements could be reduced only if France were given assurances of security through a political pact.⁵⁴

But French efforts were to no avail. The reluctance of the American government to commit itself in any meaningful way proved the major obstacle to a settlement of the difficulty. In the period before March 11, the three governments had explored the possibilities of a pact in which the United States promised to consult with the British and French governments in the event of a threat of France's security. The French did not believe that a consultative pact would of itself provide them with the measure of security which they thought necessary, but that an American commitment, however limited, might persuade the British to offer guarantees of a more definite nature.⁵⁵ Neither Hoover nor Stimson, however, was prepared to make the least change in the traditional American policy of noninvolvement, and on March 11 Stimson announced the official attitude of the American government when he said that a consultative pact would influence French military measures in such a way as to make American involvement in time of crisis practically mandatory.

⁵³"Log of H.C. Train", II, entry of 10 March 1930.

⁵⁴British Documents, 2nd series, I, 253.

⁵⁵O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, p. 101.

In this connection he cited the period before 1914, when a Franco-British arrangement to move the British fleet to the North Sea and the French fleet to the Mediterranean had placed upon the British the responsibility for protecting France's Channel coast when hostilities began, even though there had been no commitment to do so.⁵⁶

Stimson's announcement threw a blanket of gloom over the conference. The Americans may have felt that the French could be persuaded to agree to limitations on their fleet without compensating guarantees; if so, they greatly misjudged the French temper. It soon appeared that the French would leave the conference, and when a rumor to that effect reached Stimson from the Ambassador in Paris, he became thoroughly alarmed and quickly communicated the news to Washington.⁵⁷ Without waiting for definite instructions from Hoover he decided to make an attempt to save the Conference by offering some kind of American guarantee. Accordingly, at midnight on March 25 he dramatically announced that while the United States would not enter into any agreement which involved a promise to render military aid to another nation, if the French demand for security could be met in another way there would be no objection to a consultative pact by

⁵⁶Stimson to Cotton, March 12 1930, FRUS., 1930, I, 57-58.

⁵⁷Stimson to Cotton, March 23 1930, ibid., p. 79.

the United States.⁵⁸ It was a forlorn hope, for French security needs could not be satisfied by a promise which involved no real commitment at all. Nevertheless, the statement was greeted with expressions of hope and a flurry of activity; there was no doubt that it was the dramatic high point of the conference. Stimson had hoped that the announcement would help to bring about a British decision to offer firm assurances to France, but in the end all efforts proved unavailing. Finally, on March 31, Hoover put an end to what was becoming a farce when he sent a personal message to Briand and Tardieu, saying that disarmament in the spirit of the Kellogg-Briand Pact would do more to provide for French security than a consultative pact. A reduction of the British, American and Japanese fleets would help protect France.⁵⁹ The French were polite in their reply, but for all practical purposes their participation in the conference was at an end, for they recognized that the American attitude would also check the British. On March 30, the British government issued a press statement confirming French fears. It said that "any further military or naval commitments are impossible, for that would be tantamount to tying ourselves down to military operations without being able to control the

⁵⁸ Conference, 1930, pp. 273-274.

⁵⁹ Hoover to Briand and Tardieu, March 31 1930, FRUS., 1930, I, 96-97.

situation from which they have arisen."⁶⁰ The British attempted to induce Italy to modify her demands, but without success. Italy's final statement on April 9, refusing to change her demand for parity, was answered on the same day by Dusmesnil, who said that France must have a naval superiority over Italy of at least 240,000 tons.⁶¹ The next day marked the end of further attempts to secure French and Italian agreement at London. A five power pact to extend the limitation principles of the Washington Conference was destined not to become a reality but "a victim of Italian pride, French fears, British caution and American isolation."⁶²

SUCCESS AT THE CONFERENCE: THE THREE-POWER COMPROMISE

That other formidable stumbling block to success at the conference, the Japanese demand for a 10:7 ratio in auxiliary vessels, was fortunately removed from the path to agreement, although not without some difficulty. Before the conference began the Japanese had made their position known, and it was widely recognized that the Japanese were fearful

⁶⁰ British press statement, March 30 1930, ibid., p. 98.

⁶¹ British Documents, 2nd series, I, 302.

⁶² O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, p. 103.

of possible American countermeasures if a serious program of aggrandizement at China's expense should be undertaken. The American ambassador in Tokyo reported the general attitude both in Japan and in the United States when he stated that the 10:7 ratio obviously had significance only in connection with a possible American-Japanese war. Japanese naval experts, he reported, believed that in the event of war the United States Navy would have to try for a quick decision, since a long war would hurt American trade and would work to Japan's advantage. A larger ratio would strengthen immeasurably the Japanese defensive position.⁶³

Closely connected with the Japanese demand was the insistence of the United States on 21 heavy cruisers. The British could not accept the American demand, since to do so would have been to give Japan a number of heavy cruisers equal to Great Britain's and thus to make necessary a British revision of their previously stated minimum requirements in cruisers. Early in the conference Stimson recognized that the Navy's demand, if insisted upon, would wreck the Conference, and he accordingly determined to accept the British proposal that the American heavy cruiser strength be fixed at 18 vessels.⁶⁴ A meeting of the naval advisers

⁶³ Castle to Stimson, Jan. 25, Jan. 31 1930, FRUS., 1930, I, 9-10, 11-12.

⁶⁴ Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1947), pp. 167-168.

was called on January 26 to discuss the American agreement to the British proposal. A "sharp difference of opinion" ensued, as the experts split over whether to accept or to reject the statement. Further argument was ended by Admiral Pratt's sharp statement that the paper had to be delivered as Stimson desired it, and that the naval men were simply supposed to work out the correct technical language.⁶⁵

While the American acceptance of the British view on heavy cruisers resolved the one major question still at issue between the two countries, it was not calculated to bring about Japanese acceptance, since it still contemplated a 5:3 ratio between the American and Japanese fleets. The Japanese insisted on a 10:7 ratio in all classes of auxiliary vessels; thus in the case of destroyers the United States proposed 90,000 tons of destroyers for Japan, while the Japanese insisted upon 105,000 tons.⁶⁶ Senator David A. Reed of the American delegation and Tsuneo Matsudaira, Ambassador to Great Britain and member of the Japanese delegation, were chosen to try to resolve the ratio problem and, after a lengthy series of discussions, an agreement was reached on March 13. Known as the Reed-Matsudaira compromise, this agreement satisfied American demands by providing that the

⁶⁵"Log of H.C. Train", I, entry of 26 Jan. 1930.

⁶⁶Reed to Castle, March 4 1930, FRUS., 1930, I, 43-44.

heavy cruiser ratios of the two nations would be set at 10:6, the Americans completing most of their program of ships authorized by the Act of 1929 and the Japanese agreeing to undertake no new construction of heavy cruisers until 1936. However, in order to grant Japan a ratio greater than 5:3 until the end of 1936, the Americans agreed that three of their heavy cruisers would not be begun until 1934 and these could not be completed until after 1936. As a further concession to the Japanese, the Americans also agreed to accept the Japanese demand for 105,000 tons of destroyers and granted them parity with the United States in submarine tonnage.⁶⁷

The Reed-Matsudaira compromise was a major development at the London Conference, for it made possible the conclusion of a three-power treaty providing maximum tonnage limitations in all the auxiliary classes, thus insuring a large measure of success for the conference in spite of the failure to resolve the French-Italian differences. The compromise was also significant in that it was reached by the civilian members of the respective delegations without the advice of the naval experts. Indeed, on the Japanese side, the naval experts strongly disapproved of what was being done and favored maintaining Japan's claims for a 10:7 ratio even if

⁶⁷Stimson to Hoover and Cotton, March 14 1930, ibid., pp. 62-63.

it wrecked the conference.⁶⁸ On the American side, the naval advisers were kept completely in the dark about the negotiations and only learned about them and about the compromise when they were asked to work out details and to develop a statement for the treaty.⁶⁹

After the resolution of the outstanding differences among the Americans, the British and the Japanese, the discussions progressed favorably in the area of qualitative limitations. Agreements on destroyers were easily reached, and compromise on submarines proved not as difficult as expected,⁷⁰ although attempts to define an acceptable lower tonnage limit for light cruisers were not successful.⁷¹ Still, a large measure of success in defining qualitative limitations for auxiliary vessels which all five powers at the conference could accept was attained to a remarkable degree, providing some tangible proof for the optimism of Stimson's statement on the evening before the final plenary session of the conference on April 22, when he said that "the past fourteen weeks have given me more confidence in my belief that the peaceful methods of diplomacy can eventually

⁶⁸Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire, pp. 292-293.

⁶⁹"Log of H.C. Train", II, entries of 14, 22 and 24 March 1930.

⁷⁰Conference, 1930, pp. 143, 164-168.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 140-142.

take the place of war than anything I have witnessed since the last war drew to a close."⁷² The next day, at an impressive ceremony held at St. James Palace, the head of each delegation affixed his signature to the completed treaty.⁷³

THE TREATY AND ITS MEANING

A summary of the main provisions of the London Treaty of 1930, together with a brief analysis, is in order at this point.⁷⁴ The treaty was drawn up in five parts, four of which were confirmed and signed by representatives of all five delegations at the conference. The chief provisions of each of these parts is as follows:

Part I. Provisions relating to battleships and aircraft carriers, modifying certain provisions of the Washington Treaty.

1. Construction of battleship replacements was postponed until 1936, but France and Italy were allowed to lay down tonnage as author-

⁷²Ibid., p. 289.

⁷³The world was given a graphic description of the ceremony in a radio address by Senator Reed. The text of the address is in Conference, 1930, pp. 292-293.

⁷⁴The full text of the treaty is in Conference, 1930, pp. 205-219. It may also be found as a separate document in U.S. Senate, The London Naval Treaty of 1930, Sen. Doc. no. 141, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1930).

ized in the Washington Treaty.

2. Certain battleships would be scrapped, so that battleship strength would be stabilized at fifteen ships each for the United States and Great Britain, and nine for Japan. The United States would scrap three ships, Great Britain five ships and Japan one ship. However, each nation was permitted to retain one ship for training purposes, with reduced armament and modifications for increased habitability.⁷⁵
3. Aircraft carriers were defined as any vessel fitted exclusively for the purpose of launching and landing aircraft, regardless of tonnage, and carriers of less than 10,000 tons displacement were prohibited.

The battleship provisions effected a great saving for all the countries and were hailed as one of the most important parts of the treaty. The United States, Great Britain and Japan were all deep in the disaster of the Great Depression by 1930 and could ill afford the expense of an extensive battleship replacement program. Had there been no extension

⁷⁵Under this provision, the United States retained Wyoming, Great Britain Iron Duke, and Japan Hiyei (or Hiei). Thus Japan scrapped no battleships at all. After 1936, when the naval treaties were no longer in force, Hiyei was re-armed and recommissioned as a battleship.

of the battleship "holiday" the United States, if it promptly replaced its battleships as they became overage, would have had to lay down ten 35,000 ton battleships in the years from 1931 through 1936, at a cost of about \$400,000,000.⁷⁶

For the other nations the burden would have been even harder to bear. The scrapping provisions had the effect of bringing about immediately the 5:5:3 ratio in unit strength, and nearly that ratio in tonnage.⁷⁷ The provisions concerning aircraft carriers rectified an omission in the Washington Treaty, which had failed to indicate a minimum tonnage for carriers, and defined carriers in such a way as to make it impossible for hybrid vessels designed to function as both carriers and another type--say cruisers--to be charged to the carrier tonnage, but expressly allowed such vessels to be built and charged to the cruiser tonnage.

Part II. Provisions relating to submarines, special vessels and exempt vessels, and rules for replacement.

1. Submarines were not to be built which exceeded 2,000 tons surface displacement or

⁷⁶Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 204-205.

⁷⁷The United States retained 462,400 tons of battle-ships, Great Britain kept 474,700 tons and Japan kept 266,070 tons. U.S. Department of State, London Naval Conference: Digest of the London Naval Treaty of 1930, with Fleet Tonnage Tables, Conference series no. 4 (Washington, 1930), p. 12. Hereafter cited as Digest of the Treaty, 1930.

mounted a gun larger than 5.1 inches. Each nation could retain or build a maximum of three submarines not exceeding 2,800 tons surface displacement and mounting guns no larger than 6.1 inches. The French were allowed to retain Surcouf, which displaced 2,880 tons and mounted 8 inch guns.

2. Exempt vessels--that is, those not subject to limitation of any kind--included:

- (a) surface combat vessels of less than 600 tons displacement.
- (b) surface combat vessels exceeding 600 tons but less than 2,000 tons, provided they did not mount any gun larger than 6.1 inches nor more than four larger than 3 inches, were not fitted to launch torpedoes and could not attain a speed greater than 20 knots.
- (c) surface non-combatant vessels of any tonnage, provided they did not mount any gun larger than 6.1 inches nor more than four larger than 3 inches, were not fitted to launch torpedoes or mines, could not attain a speed greater than 20 knots, were not arm-

ored, could not land aircraft directly on board from the air and had only limited facilities for catapulting aircraft.

3. Special vessels of various kinds, although not meeting the conditions for exempt vessels, were allowed to be retained. These included such ships as old cruisers, monitors, training ships and dispatch vessels, which were listed by name.
4. The replacement age for ships constructed after 1920 was fixed at 20 years for cruisers, 16 years for destroyers and 13 years for submarines.

Part IV. Rules for the conduct of submarine warfare against merchant vessels. In particular they prohibited submarines from sinking merchant ships without warning and stated that the ship's boats were not considered safe places for passengers and crew unless in calm weather or proximity to land or other vessels. Other nations were invited to adhere to this part of the treaty.

Part V. Provided that the treaty was to remain in effect until December 31, 1936, except for Part IV which was to remain in effect indefinitely.

It also provided for another conference, which was to meet in 1935 to seek further limitation after 1936.

The provisions of the first two parts of the treaty provided for both reduction and limitation of naval armaments. Part III of the treaty provided for perhaps the most important limitations--concerning cruisers and destroyers and quantitative limitations on submarines--but to these France and Italy did not subscribe. Thus this part of the treaty applied only to the United States, Great Britain and Japan. It contained three major provisions:

1. Cruisers were defined as surface vessels of war, other than capital ships or carriers, which displaced more than 1850 tons and carried guns heavier than 5.1 inches. They were divided into two categories--category (a), mounting guns greater than 6.1 inches; and category (b), mounting guns 6.1 inches or less. Destroyers were defined as surface war vessels not exceeding 1850 tons displacement nor mounting guns heavier than 5.1 inches.
2. Maximum tonnages for cruisers, destroyers and submarines were established, as follows:

Countries	Cruisers (a)	Cruisers (b)	Destroyers	Submarines
United States	180,000	143,500	150,000	52,700
Great Britain	146,800	192,200	150,000	52,700
Japan	108,400	100,450	105,500	52,700

The United States was given the right to reduce its heavy cruiser tonnage by 30,000 tons--bringing the number of cruisers to 15, the same as Great Britain's--and substituting instead 45,500 tons of light cruisers. This would give the United States parity in cruiser tonnage with Great Britain. In the destroyer category a maximum of sixteen percent of the total tonnage for each country could consist of destroyer leaders displacing more than 1500 tons. Also, a maximum of ten percent increase in cruiser tonnage would be permitted by subtracting that amount from the destroyer tonnage, or vice versa.

3. An "escalator clause" was included, whereby any one of the signatory nations could, upon prior notice, increase the tonnage in one or more of the categories, while the other signatories were given the right to make proportionate increases.

It may readily be seen that the Reed-Matsudaira compromise was at the heart of Part III of the treaty. The destroyer and submarine tonnages were determined largely by the existing tonnages of Japan, since the Japanese were reluctant to scrap much tonnage in these categories. In the case of submarines, the tonnage figure represented the submarine tonnage Japan would have in 1936 after all overage

submarines as of that year were scrapped without replacement.⁷⁸

In order to comprehend fully the implications of the maximum tonnages as established in the London Treaty it would be desirable at this point to compare these figures with the actual fleet strengths in 1929, bearing in mind that the treaty figures represent tonnages to be reached in 1936. Examination of the figures shows that in some cases substantial tonnage would have to be scrapped in order to reach the treaty figures; in other cases much new tonnage would have to be built. The United States would have to scrap nearly half her destroyer tonnage but would have to build even more tonnage in heavy cruisers than was already laid down⁷⁹ and would have to double her existing light cruiser tonnage. Analysis by categories indicates that Great Britain and Japan would have to scrap a small tonnage in destroyers, while the United States would have to scrap an enormous amount;⁸⁰ that the United States would have to

⁷⁸Stimson to Cotton, March 14 1930, FRUS, 1930, I, 62.

⁷⁹But the treaty tonnage of 180,000 tons was 50,000 tons less than the total of heavy cruisers built, building and authorized under the 1924 and 1929 Acts, hence five ships of the latter authorization would have to be cancelled.

⁸⁰The Navy was willing to agree to this since most of the destroyers would have been overage by 1936 and much of the existing tonnage was in excess of the needs of the fleet.

TABLE 5

**FLEET STRENGTHS:
1929 AND AS ESTABLISHED
UNDER THE LONDON TREATY**

Country	Cruisers (a)	Cruisers (b)	Destroyers	Submarines
<u>United States</u> 1929 blt/bldg. Treaty strength, 1936	20,000/110,000 180,000	70,500/0 143,500	290,304/0 150,000	75,520/5460 52,700
<u>Great Britain</u> 1929 blt/bldg. Treaty strength, 1936	149,426/36,800 146,800	177,685/0 192,200	157,585/26,706 150,000	45,534/14,750 52,700
<u>Japan</u> 1929 blt/bldg. Treaty strength, 1936	68,400/40,000 108,400	98,415/0 100,450	107,275/15300 105,500	66,068/11,774 52,700

Source for 1929 figures: Digest of the Treaty, 1930, p. 11.

scrap a large amount of submarine tonnage, Japan a small amount and Great Britain would have to add some tonnage; and that Japan would only complete the cruiser tonnage already laid down, Great Britain would be required to complete about 25,000 tons of cruisers, and the United States would have to add a tremendous amount of tonnage to round out her cruiser fleet. In effect, therefore, the Japanese fleet was fixed at somewhere near its existing strength, the British fleet was allowed some room for expansion, and the American fleet exchanged an existing superiority in destroyers and submarines for a large expansion in cruisers, the attainment of which would depend upon Congressional authorizations and appropriations. On the other hand, the treaty did give the United States a chance to build well beyond the Japanese, who were being asked to stand practically still.⁸¹ Finally, it should be noted that while the Japanese did not receive their desired 10:7 ratio in auxiliary vessels, they very closely approached it. While the official ratio in heavy cruisers was 10:6, the stipulation delaying the laying down of three American cruisers in effect gave Japan a ratio somewhat better than 10:7 in that category. In light cruisers the ratio was 10:7, provided the Americans did not invoke the substitution clause; in destroyers the ratio was 10:7

⁸¹ Stimson's testimony before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee in U.S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on the London Naval Treaty of 1930, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1930), pp. 25-26.

and in submarines the Japanese achieved parity.

DISSATISFACTION RAMPANT:
AMERICAN AND FOREIGN OPPOSITION

That the London Treaty, like the Washington Treaty before it, represented a true compromise is indicated by the fact that it, like its predecessor, was subjected to some criticism in all the countries involved. Since France and Italy had not been parties to Part III, the most controversial part of the treaty, opinions in those countries were not generally unfavorable. In Italy there was rejoicing over the fact that Italy had stood up to France and had refused to compromise her claim for parity. In France, the general feeling seemed to be one of relief that France had not been led to accept an inferior status as she had at Washington, and that a measure of agreement had been reached to keep the conference from being a failure. There was a strong tendency to blame Italy for the failure to achieve a greater degree of limitation. One respected French naval authority claimed that while the treaty had accomplished some gains, these were largely offset by the fact that the escalator clause rendered the entire agreement precarious, and by the heavy blow dealt the League of Nations through the conclusion of yet another limitations agreement outside the League

framework.⁸² British press opinion was divided, with many publications expressing regret that parity had been granted the United States, and that the treaty did not provide for much real reduction in naval strength. Others blamed the United States for the failure to secure French and Italian assent to quantitative limitations. Still others believed that the Reed-Matsudaira compromise and the final settlement of the cruiser question satisfied the big three naval powers and aided greatly in reducing international tensions.⁸³

Opposition to the treaty was strongest in Japan. In spite of having been given practically a 10:7 ratio in auxiliary vessels, the ultra-nationalist elements loudly denounced the treaty, claiming that Japan's interests were sacrificed by cowardly politicians.⁸⁴ The Navy was unquestionably behind much of the agitation, but fundamentally the degree of opposition to the treaty was a reflection of Japanese dissatisfaction with a bad economic situation a-

⁸² André Geraud, "The London Naval Conference: A French View", Foreign Affairs, VIII (July, 1930), 519-532.

⁸³ For a summary of British press opinion, see O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium, pp. 106-107. For other contemporary British opinion, see William Arnold-Foster, The Disarmament Conference (London, 1931); Carlyon W. Bellairs, The Naval Conference and After (London, 1930); Admiral Sir Herbert W. Richmond, Economy and Naval Security (London, 1931); and Henry F. Dorling, "The Naval Treaty and After", The Nineteenth Century and After, CIX (1931), 414-428.

⁸⁴ Grew (Ambassador in Tokyo) to Cotton, June 13 1930, SD500.A15A3/962.

rising out of the worldwide depression--a cataclysm which was ultimately to contribute to a revival of dictatorship and militarism not only in Japan but in much of the rest of the world as well. Had the Japanese leadership been less determined at that time it is likely that the treaty would not have received the approval of the Privy Council which was necessary to final sanction by the Emperor. But Premier Hamaguchi was determined that the pact would be approved, and fortunately he enjoyed the sympathy of the Emperor. After a series of discussions extending from July 24, when the treaty was submitted to the Privy Council, until October 1, the Treaty was approved on the latter date.⁸⁵ Hamaguchi won his battle, but in a sense lost the war, for the ratification of the London Naval Treaty was one important factor in the strengthening of the power of the militarists and helped to bring about his own assassination in November. The leaders of the Japanese Army, who had been growing more dissatisfied over the government's inability to solve the deepening economic distress and its refusal to sanction military expansion as a solution, were joined after 1930 by many dissident naval officers, who previously had exercised a kind of counter-weight to army pretensions. At the least, the Navy was more likely after London to acquiesce in the Army's plans,

⁸⁵ Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire, pp. 322-336.

if not actually to support them.⁸⁶

In the United States, the opinion of high naval officers was practically unanimous against the Treaty. When Hoover submitted the treaty to the Senate on May 1, the opponents of the treaty pursued a strategy of delay, to prevent approval before the end of the session, after which it was hoped that some kind of public antipathy might be aroused which would put an end to further action.⁸⁷ Hoover, however, was determined to secure favorable action as soon as possible, before the opposition could confuse the issues and distort what was to him a beneficial pact. When the session ended on July 3 with the treaty undergoing extensive hearings but with no ratification, Hoover promptly called a special session of the Senate, to convene on July 7.

The hearings in both the Foreign Relations Committee and the Naval Affairs Committee, plus the Senate special session, subjected the London Treaty to the kind of detailed scrutiny which the Washington Treaty had not been forced to undergo. At Washington the opinions of the naval experts had been actively sought before the conference and then in

⁸⁶Richard Storry, The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Nationalism (London, 1957), p. 177. It is significant that the assassination of Premier Tsuyoshi Inukai on May 15, 1932, was engineered and carried out both by army and navy officers.

⁸⁷The Navy League so declared in a public statement on April 28. Rappaport, The Navy League, p. 129.

many important respects had been ignored in order to produce the compromises necessary to obtain a pact; in the case of the London Conference the opinions of the naval leaders had not been specifically sought beforehand, although their views had been a matter of general knowledge since the Geneva discussions. At the conference itself the naval experts did not play an important role in formulating the important parts of the treaty, but in effect were told to work out the details of broad compromises reached without their advice or approval.⁸⁸ Of all the naval delegates at the Conference, only Admiral Pratt had some knowledge of the details of the Reed-Matsudaira compromise as they were being discussed, but he was simply being kept informed, rather than being a party to the formulation of the compromise.⁸⁹ Under the circumstances, it was certain that the majority of naval officers, and particularly the members of the General Board, would be opposed to a treaty which had been concluded with even less regard for naval opinion than had been the case in 1922.

Their disapproval was registered forcefully at the hearings conducted by the Senate Naval Affairs Committee from May

⁸⁸"Log of H.C. Train", entries of 14, 22 and 24 March 1930.

⁸⁹U.S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on the London Naval Treaty of 1930, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1930), pp. 62-75. Hereafter cited as Hearings on London Treaty, 1930.

14 to 29. Officer after officer was called to testify, and their overwhelming opposition was clearly evident--of 25 officers who appeared, all but three opposed the treaty.⁹⁰ The general tone of their opposition was especially hostile to the reduction of permissible American heavy cruiser strength from the 21 recommended by the General Board to the 18 provided for in the treaty, and to the granting of a 10:7 ratio to Japan in light cruisers and destroyers and parity in submarines. On the first point, naval opinion refused to be mollified by the large tonnage in light cruisers which the treaty permitted the United States to build, for the general naval belief was firm that the 6 inch gun cruiser was of little use to the Navy as compared to the heavy cruiser. Stimson should not have allowed the cruiser category to be subdivided. As to the second point, the general opinion was that the London treaty, by giving higher ratios to Japan, rendered even more dangerous the already precarious situation created by the Washington Treaty,⁹¹ and that concessions on

⁹⁰ The officers who favored it were Admiral Pratt, and Rear Admirals Harry E. Yarnell and Arthur Hepburn, all of whom had been naval delegates at the London Conference.

⁹¹ See summaries of testimony in U.S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, London Naval Treaty of 1930, Abstract of Testimony on Certain Salient Questions of the London Naval Treaty Given Before the Committee on Naval Affairs of the Senate, May 14 to 29, 1930, Sen. Doc. no. 197, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1931), pp. 31 (H.P. Jones), 32 (H.E. Yarnell), 34-35 (M.L. Bristol), 39 (M.M. Taylor), 40 (S.S. Robison). Hereafter cited as Abstract of Testimony, 1930. This source well summarizes the long and frequently repetitious testimony in the hearings before the Committee.

ratios to Japan would probably bring Japanese demands for further concessions at future conferences.⁹² In addition, many naval officers doubted that the London Treaty really gave the United States effective equality with Great Britain in naval strength. Their attitude, traceable as far back as the period just before the Washington Conference, was based upon their belief that naval strength could not be measured accurately simply in terms of tonnage, but had of necessity to include other factors, such as bases, length of lines of communications and trade, merchant fleets, and geographical situation relative to probable enemy nations. A nation without adequate overseas bases, yet faced with the necessity of guarding an expanding overseas commerce, was at a grave disadvantage, and needed ships of quite a different type from the maritime nation with many bases. It was precisely in this matter that many naval experts claimed that the treaty limitation on American heavy cruisers to a number lower than naval men believed necessary put the United States in a position of inferiority relative to Great Britain.⁹³

In other less critical matters there was also strong criticism of the treaty. Many naval officers voiced their annoyance that Japan was given parity in submarines with the

⁹²Testimony of Admiral Mark L. Bristol, ibid., p. 35.

⁹³Testimony of Admirals R.E.Coontz, C.F. Hughes, J.R. Pringle, W.H.Standley, L.M. Nulton, J.V.Chase, Taylor and Bristol in ibid., pp. 4-7.

United States. One thought that in a Pacific war in which the United States would have to maintain fleets in the western Pacific at the end of long lines of supply and communication, the Japanese submarine force could exercise a great influence on the course of operations;⁹⁴ another claimed that the tonnage figure for submarines was too low to allow for the minimum needs of the Navy in that weapon.⁹⁵ There was expressed also the belief that the United States should have been allowed to build one new battleship to offset to some extent the power of the British Nelson and Rodney, which had been built in the years between 1924 and 1927 under the terms of the Washington Treaty.⁹⁶ Admiral Henry Hough summarized effectively the overwhelming sense of naval opinion when he said:

We have given up our right to build a type of ship that we need. We have abandoned the 5-5-3 ratio. We have accepted subdivision of the cruiser category. We have surrendered [to] the principle of no replacements until 1936. We should have gotten one more capital ship out of it. We did not press as hard as we might have for actual parity. We gave up our superiority in destroyers. We granted parity in submarines to Japan. We did not insist upon modification of the base and fortification clause of the Washington Treaty when granting an increase of ratio to Japan.⁹⁷

As might have been expected, the treaty was received

⁹⁴Admiral H.L. McLean, ibid., pp. 42-43.

⁹⁵Admiral Jones, ibid., pp. 41-42.

⁹⁶Admiral Henry Hough, ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁷Hearings on the London Treaty, 1930, p. 291.

more favorably by the public at large, the State Department and the civilian elements within the Navy Department. The American press generally commented favorably upon it, but there was no exuberant expression of enthusiasm such as had greeted the Washington Treaty in 1922. It is significant that few newspapers looked upon the treaty as a great milestone in the history of disarmament; rather the general opinion was that the American delegates had done the best they could under the circumstances. Insofar as the conference was successful, it was because there had been a gain in mutual confidence and goodwill, and several areas of conflict had been smoothed over.⁹⁸ The State Department likewise emphasized the gain in better relations, especially with Great Britain. Stimson, the first official called to testify before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, expressed his belief that relations with Great Britain and Japan would now improve, and emphasized his opinion that Japan and not the United States had made the greatest sacrifices at the conference. Considering the powerful influence of the military in the Japanese government and the heated state of Japanese public opinion over the 5:3 ratio, it was a marvel that Japan agreed to so much. "I speak deliberately", he asserted, "when I say that the Japanese delegation, and the Japanese

⁹⁸ Tupper and McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion, pp. 254-256, 258-259, 262-264.

government which confirmed the action of the Japanese delegation, had a harder problem and solved it with a greater faith in the pacific relations of the three great powers than any other nation at the conference."⁹⁹

In matters relating to the provisions of the treaty itself, there was much favorable as well as unfavorable opinion. At the hearings, the principal supporters of the treaty were Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Charles F. Adams, and Admiral Pratt, ably supported from the committee ranks by Senator Reed. These men stressed the idea that the treaty was a solid achievement and that, considering the circumstances, it was not unfavorable to the United States. They believed that parity with Great Britain had been substantially achieved, insofar as comparative naval strength could be measured at all.¹⁰⁰ As for the ratio with Japan, it was pointed out that on the basis of existing strength Japan had a superiority in cruisers over the United States, and that persuading the Japanese to stop much further building and to agree to a 10:7 ratio was a diplomatic triumph for the United States.¹⁰¹ The fact that

⁹⁹Hearings on the London Treaty, 1930, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁰Testimony of Adams and Pratt, Abstract of Testimony, 1930, pp. 4-6, 8-10.

¹⁰¹Testimony of Adams and Admiral Hepburn, ibid., pp. 31-32, 34.

the United States gave up three heavy cruisers was not looked upon as a disaster, for in return a substantial light cruiser tonnage had been gained, and the tonnage of individual light cruisers had not been limited to 10,000 tons. Pratt claimed the scrapping of nearly half our destroyer tonnage and the consequent 10:7 destroyer ratio with Japan was not a dangerous concession, since destroyers are quickly built in time of crisis.¹⁰² On the question of parity in submarines for Japan, the supporters of the treaty indicated that the agreement on parity allowed a lower total tonnage figure and a consequent scrapping of some submarines by Japan. Also, defensive coastal patrol could be better performed by aircraft.¹⁰³

All in all, the exchange of views demonstrated that the treaty's supporters and opponents were looking at it from divergent points of view. The naval opposition was concerned entirely with the military-strategic aspects of the treaty, weighing the situation established by the treaty against their estimate of the naval needs of the United States. Viewing it in this way and ignoring the political, economic and diplomatic aspects of the treaty, it was certainly possible to find much to criticize; the naval

¹⁰²Hearings on the London Treaty, 1930, pp. 66-67.

¹⁰³Testimony of Adams and Pratt in Abstract of Testimony, 1930, pp. 41-43.

officers could not have been expected to view it in any other light, nor would they have been considering strictly their duty as naval experts had they done so. On the other hand, there were practical considerations which weighed heavily in favor of the treaty. The improved diplomatic climate, bringing with it the hope of better relations, was one important factor which justified some sacrifice of purely military considerations, but only one. Also, there was to be considered the degree of economy to be achieved by the scrapping of battleships and the postponement of battleship replacement for six years.¹⁰⁴

The most pertinent consideration, however, was the fact that in every category of auxiliary vessel except destroyers the United States did not actually possess tonnage equal to Great Britain's at the time of the conference, nor did it possess--again excepting destroyers--a tonnage superior to Japan's even in a ratio of 10:7, much less 5:3.¹⁰⁵ Yet most of the naval officers were singularly blind to this fact and preferred instead to stress the

¹⁰⁴ Admiral Pratt stressed this point. Hearings on the London Treaty, 1930, p. 63. Pratt, together with Yarnell and Hepburn, were the only naval officers whose testimony at the hearings indicated an understanding of any implications of the treaty other than purely naval ones. Their participation as delegates in the nontechnical discussions at the conference may have broadened their viewpoint.

¹⁰⁵ O'Connor's analysis of the conference seems to slight this significant point.

abandonment of principles which had never existed as practical facts.¹⁰⁶ Admiral Yarnell, on the other hand, saw what had resulted when Congress failed to provide for an orderly and steady fleet expansion program during the years 1922 to 1929. In a written statement to the committee he noted that the treaty provision establishing parity for Japan in submarines simply recognized the existing situation, then he added: "It is the ships that actually are built or building that count at a conference, and we could hardly expect another nation to sacrifice tonnage already in existence in order to come to a ratio inferior to that which they already possessed, and it would appear from the results that the United States came out very well in the ratios obtained."¹⁰⁷

The inferior position of the United States at the conference was unquestionably the most important single factor which determined the outcome, and was at the same time the most noteworthy factor which distinguished the London Conference from the Washington Conference eight years earlier. At Washington the United States held the high cards and was in a position to force a measure of agreement

¹⁰⁶ See Senator Reed's examination of Admiral Hough, ibid., p. 293.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 366. Another example of this recognition of the facts of the situation was Admiral Pratt's reply to Senator Robinson's comment that under the treaty the United States could have only 16 heavy cruisers by the end of 1936. Pratt observed, "I certainly hope that they will give us those sixteen. We have not had them before." ibid., p. 70.

to American desires; at London, on the other hand, the American delegation had practically no good cards to play. The responsibility for the situation rested primarily with Congress, which had neglected the task of establishing a continuing program of augmentation of the fleet, and secondarily with public opinion, which had exhibited a degree of apathy unwarranted by the circumstances. The Chief Executive could not escape his share of the censure, Coolidge's passion for economy undoubtedly having its effect upon Congress. To Coolidge's credit, however, it should be borne in mind that he supported the authorization bills of 1924 and 1929.

When the London Naval Treaty is considered from the standpoint of the American naval position, it stands as a remarkable achievement for American diplomacy. The British scrapped more battleship tonnage than the Americans did, enabling the latter to achieve substantial equality in battleship strength immediately rather than by 1942. In cruisers the British had maintained a large superiority over us, while the Japanese had also achieved a measure of superiority; yet the treaty in effect forced those two nations practically to stop building, while the United States was permitted to complete most of its heavy cruiser program and to initiate a large program of light cruiser construction. The American concession involved in scrapping nearly half of its destroyers does not represent the sacrifice it appears to be when it is remembered that the United States had not

built a single destroyer since 1922, while both Great Britain and Japan had built large numbers of modern destroyers during the period from 1922 to 1930. Thus the American destroyer fleet represented a degree of efficiency much lower than their numbers would indicate. The process of replacement of the oldest destroyers was not affected by the treaty and would in any case have to be begun in 1931. The situation in the case of submarines was similar to destroyers in that most of the Japanese and a substantial portion of the British submarine tonnage was new construction, while most of the American tonnage was in obsolescent submarines of relatively low displacement.¹⁰⁸ However, the Japanese submarine tonnage in 1929 was already practically equal to that of the United States, and completion of their submarine program would have put them somewhat ahead of the Americans within a few years.¹⁰⁹ Under these circumstances, the treaty's provision for parity in submarines left the United States relatively stronger in this weapon than it would have been had there been no treaty. Finally, it should be pointed out that the London Treaty of 1930 marked the end of

¹⁰⁸ Only ten submarines were commissioned and added to the fleet in the years between 1924 and 1931.

¹⁰⁹ Upon completion of the Japanese submarine building program, they would have a superiority in the ratio of 10:8.9. Tables in Adams to Stimson, 12 Apr. 1930, SD500.A15A3/848½.

further difficulties with Great Britain over the cruiser question and the question of parity of the two navies--questions which had done so much to poison relationships between the two countries. As was the case with the Washington Treaty, the degree of opposition to the London Treaty in Tokyo and in London--opposition which in the former place became quite hysterical--is the best measure of its success from the American point of view.

CHAPTER VI
THE RESULTS OF LONDON:
FRUSTRATION MULTIPLIED

The Senate approved the London Naval Treaty on July 21, 1930, but not until after long and angry debate on the Senate floor. Almost as soon as the special session of the Senate had convened, those senators who opposed the treaty began a number of efforts to modify it or to prevent ratification. One group of senators, led by the redoubtable isolationist Hiram Johnson, tried to prevent action by seizing upon the fact that when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had requested the Secretary of State to furnish them with all the documents bearing upon the conference, only a portion of the documents had been delivered. Claiming that the withholding of part of the record indicated a possible secret understanding not made a part of the published treaty, Johnson demanded that the Senate require Hoover to deliver the rest of the record. On July 7, he introduced a resolution to this effect, and after heated discussion the resolution was amended to require that the President should submit the documents, "if not incompatible with the public interest." In that form it was passed on July 10,¹ and the next day Hoover sent a message to the Senate refusing to deliver the

¹CR., LXXIII, pp. 86-88.

documents, since it would be incompatible with the public interest to do so.² Hoover's reasons for withholding certain documents had to do with his desire not to antagonize the British by allowing some rather frank statements about American reaction to British maneuvering at the conference to become part of the public record, but it was inevitable that many senators would interpret his refusal as proof of a secret understanding.³ It was evident that the misunderstanding on this point could conceivably cause the defeat of the treaty, in spite of private assurances by the Administration that there were no secret agreements. Eventually, the problem was solved by Senator George Norris, who sponsored a reservation to the treaty providing that the Senate would approve the London Treaty on the condition that no secret agreements were involved which could in any way change the meaning or the implementation of the treaty, and that the Senate so understood.⁴ The Norris reservation was adopted by the Senate at the time it approved the treaty, and stands as evidence of the degree to which many senators suspected the London Conference of producing more than was

²Ibid., pp. 108-109.

³See statement of Sen. Henrik Shipstead (Minn.) in Sen. Report no. 1080, pt. 1, 71st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1930).

⁴CR., LXXIII, p. 109.

actually made public.⁵

Members of the Senate had other misgivings about the treaty. Article XIX, which laid down rules for replacement of overage vessels, did not specify whether a light cruiser had to be replaced by a similar vessel, or whether it could be replaced by a heavy cruiser. Several admirals gave their opinion that under the treaty overage light cruisers could be replaced by heavy cruisers,⁶ and the ambiguity was cleared up only when the governments of the United States, Great Britain and Japan completed an exchange of notes in which all agreed that the treaty intended ships to be replaced only within their own category or subcategory, so that a light cruiser could be replaced only by a light cruiser.⁷ A similar difficulty arose in connection with Article XXI, the escalator clause. If a nation desired to increase its cruiser category by building a certain tonnage of light cruisers, did the United States have the right to build a proportionate tonnage of heavy cruisers? Secretary of the Navy Adams thought that the United States had the right, Admiral Pratt and Senator Reed thought not.⁸ The question

⁵The vote on the London Treaty was 58 to 9. Ibid., p. 378. The senators who cast negative votes were generally those who most favored naval expansion and had been leaders in the fight for larger naval appropriations.

⁶Ibid., pp. 343 - 344.

⁷FRUS., 1930, I, 126-127.

⁸CR., LXXIII, pp. 344-345.

was never settled, but in any event it did not become a matter of practical moment, since the escalator clause was never invoked.

One other persistent question was asked by those Congressmen who, while not opposed to the treaty as such, were concerned over the impression that in agreeing to the London Treaty the United States was abandoning the principles established by the Washington Treaty and in subsequent naval policy. Senator Hale proposed two reservations to the treaty. In the first, it was stated that the 10:7 ratio with Japan in auxiliary vessels was only a temporary expedient and was not to be regarded in any way as superseding the principle that the 10:6 ratio represented the true measure of equality between the two navies.⁹ The second reservation proposed to make it clear that the United States did not regard the division of cruisers into two categories as a permanent principle.¹⁰

In their opposition, some senators even tried to nullify the effect of certain parts of the London Treaty itself. Foremost among these were the reservations offered by Johnson,

⁹ Ibid., p. 330. Another expression of concern over the advantage supposedly given to Japan by the 10:7 ratio was voiced in a reservation proposed by George Moses of New Hampshire, in which it was stated that the Senate understood that the granting of such a ratio in the London Treaty nullified the non-fortification agreement in the Washington Treaty. Ibid., p. 374.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 330.

Moses and Bingham. Johnson submitted two reservations--one to the effect that the United States had the right to build heavy cruisers regardless of the provisions of article XV, and the other that the stipulation that three American heavy cruisers not be completed until 1937 should be disregarded.¹¹ The Moses-Bingham reservation provided that under the escalator clause the United States would claim the right to make proportionate increases in any category it wished, rather than in the specific category in which the other parties to the treaty made their increases.¹² Such reservations would have invalidated the whole treaty, which was probably the intention of those who sponsored them.

One other aspect of the Senate debate on the treaty deserves mention. A few senators were concerned over the fact that if the treaty went into effect the United States would have to build substantial tonnage in order to gain parity with Great Britain and to maintain what practically all American naval officers believed was a disadvantageous ratio with Japan, yet the United States was nowhere committed to build the required tonnage. Fearing a repetition of the situation of the twenties, when Congress had refused to grant naval requests for a preconceived naval program, these senators sought to provide a requirement to build as part of the

¹¹Ibid., pp. 374-375, 214.

¹²Ibid., p. 330.

treaty--a kind of advance authorization. Thus David Walsh proposed a reservation providing that the United States intended to build all tonnage allowed it by 1936. This statement was notice in advance that the American program was not the signal for another round in the naval race but instead an attempt to carry out an implied stipulation of the treaty.¹³ Walsh pinpointed what turned out to be the main problem for the Navy in attempting to develop policy in terms of the London Treaty, for the next two years were to prove even more frustrating than the worst periods in the previous decade had been.

Walsh's efforts in the Senate before the London Treaty was approved indicated that the Navy's supporters were anxious to prevent a repetition of the undesirable situation of the twenties, when Congressional opposition to a comprehensive annual program of construction brought about instead a concentration of extensive authorizations at particular times, alarm over American intentions in other countries, and finally a resumption of naval competition. It was recognized that annual increases could be kept relatively small, thus avoiding giving other nations cause for alarm and at the same time minimizing the outcry from Congress and public alike

¹³Ibid., p. 363. The reservation was simply a restatement of a resolution introduced by Walsh on July 19, and overwhelmingly defeated. Ibid., pp. 319-320, 322-323.

over the high cost of a large program. The London Treaty brought the problem clearly into focus, for whereas previously the building of each category of the fleet to a particular strength had been a naval dream which Congress had refused to implement more than partially, now the treaty implied in legal form the obligation to build each category to a particular level. Fully aware that the period following the ratification of the London Treaty was in that sense especially favorable, the Navy redoubled its efforts to persuade Congress to adopt a long range program which would have as its objective the replacement of all overage tonnage by the end of 1936 and the expansion of tonnage to the levels indicated by the treaty. The naval view of the London Treaty was well expressed by the General Board when it submitted its recommendations for a construction program based upon that treaty on October 16. At that time the Board said: "This treaty aims at the maintenance of world peace by establishing a balance of world power. The balance fails unless each navy is actually composed of the specified tonnages and of vessels of comparable useful remaining life."¹⁴

The senatorial reaction to Walsh's reservation and the attitude of the Administration did not portend success in the Navy's attempts to secure an expanded fleet. Unfortunately

¹⁴Ser. 1473/G.B.420-2, 16 Oct. 1930.

for the plans of naval leaders, Hoover did not agree with the Navy's view of the treaty. The President considered the treaty as one of the many steps which would yet have to be taken along the road to complete disarmament and world peace, and he was concerned that the United States should not contribute in any way to a resumption of the international tensions which he believed the treaty had done much to reduce. Probably no other President in the twentieth century was so thoroughly hostile to the concepts of the big-navy strategists, and his attitude proved a decisive factor in the Navy's failure in the years from 1930 to 1933 to begin much more than a token replacement of overage vessels--in authorizations to expand to treaty limits the Navy got no support at all.

While naval officers themselves were not inclined to disagree openly with their commander-in-chief, the Navy League felt itself compelled to disagree emphatically with Hoover's policies. His administration was marked by increasing acrimony between Hoover and the supporters of naval expansion, even to the point where Hoover felt compelled to institute an investigation of Navy League charges of incompetence on his part. Feelings ran high during Hoover's tenure, and the higher the feeling, it seemed, the less likely became the chances of the kind of building policy the Navy desired. An investigating board, consisting of Hoover's friends or associates, deliberated four days, called no

witnesses and issued a report on November 6, 1931, terming the attacks on the President as being wholly unwarranted." Some newspapers called the investigation a "whitewash."¹⁵

Attempts by naval planners to begin a program of expansion under the London Treaty started well before their recommendations in October, 1930. Even while the treaty was being debated in the regular Congressional session, Fred Britten introduced a bill in the House to provide for the building up of the Navy to the tonnages specified in the London Treaty. On May 9 he presented a bill calling for authorization to lay down, before 1936, 73,500 tons of light cruisers, 55,500 tons of destroyers, 42,100 tons of submarines, and 69,000 tons of aircraft carriers. These tonnages, the cost of which would amount to more than \$500,000, 000, would be necessary to bring the Navy to treaty strength by 1936.¹⁶ Somewhat later, the General Board stated that generally the bill represented what the Navy needed to carry out its goal of parity with Great Britain.¹⁷ This early effort to provide for the tonnages envisioned by the London Treaty was unsuccessful, for Congress took no action on the Britten bill.

The Navy's supporters were not discouraged by their

¹⁵Rappaport, The Navy League, pp. 142-150.

¹⁶CR., LXXII, 8707.

¹⁷Ser. 1498/G.B. 420-2, 12 Sept. 1930.

failure. During the interim between the second and third sessions of the Seventy-first Congress they marshalled their forces for a concerted campaign, whose opening move was the General Board's report on the building program for the fiscal year 1932. The report proposed that Congress adopt a program of orderly building to cover the years from 1931 to 1936, to include construction for both expansion and replacement.

TABLE 6

GENERAL BOARD'S PROGRAM OF CONSTRUCTION AND REPLACEMENT,
FISCAL YEARS 1932 TO 1936.

Ship categories	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
aircraft carriers	1	1	1	1	
heavy cruisers		1	1	1	
light cruisers	2	3	1		2
destroyer leaders	1			1	
destroyers	10		4	10	12
submarines	4	7	4	4	5

Note: The two light cruisers for 1936 are replacements for Omaha and Milwaukee. Destroyers and submarines are replacements for overage tonnage. Other tonnage represents expansion.

Source: Ser. 1473/G.B.420-2, 16 Oct. 1930.

As far as the Navy was concerned it was absolutely necessary to institute such a program immediately, for it appeared that at no time since 1921 was the Navy in a weaker position relative to the navies of Great Britain and Japan than it was in the fall of 1930. The scrapping of battleships, destroyers and submarines as required by the treaty, together with the changes in the American-Japanese ratios which it stipulated, made necessary a reexamination of War Plan Orange, the strategic Army-Navy plan for a war with Japan. As has been seen, the Navy had assumed that in case of war with Japan the initial naval task would be the defense of the Philippines and Guam. As a result of the ratios established by the Washington Conference and the scrapping of the gigantic battleship construction program authorized in 1916, naval strategists had assumed that the defense of the Philippines would be extremely difficult and had provided contingency plans which assumed that the Japanese would capture the Philippines, in which case the primary naval task would not be the defense of the Philippines but their recovery--a far more formidable task.¹⁸ The changes in relative naval strength brought about by the London Treaty caused the Navy to institute a re-evaluation of War Plan Orange. In a

¹⁸For a thorough study of the development of War Plan Orange, see Louis Morton, "War Plan Orange: Evolution of a Strategy", World Politics, XI (Jan. 1959), pp. 221-250.

report on October 23, 1930, the General Board indicated that one of the major reasons why a revision of the plan was necessary was the indecision of Congress regarding a program of augmentation of the fleet. The Board pointed out that the Army could not be counted upon to defend the Philippines since there were only 11,000 Army personnel there at that time.¹⁹ Nothing was done about revision, however, since it was hoped that Congress would enact the legislation desired by the Navy within a year. The Navy and its supporters misjudged Hoover's resolution and Congress's inertia. Although Congressional committees reported favorably a bill to authorize the construction of an aircraft carrier, a light cruiser, a flying deck cruiser, and four submarines to cost a total of \$90,635,000²⁰-- in line with the General Board's request for fiscal 1932, minus the destroyers²¹--Congress failed to act before adjournment.

Even this second failure did not halt the Navy's drive for more ships. If anything, each failure to gain new authorizations lent added strength to further efforts, since each ship not authorized at a given time would have to be

¹⁹Ser. 1502/G.B.425, 23 Oct. 1930.

²⁰House Report no. 2291 and Senate Report no. 1322, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, 1931).

²¹Earlier Congressional reports stated that twelve destroyers authorized in 1916 had never been appropriated for, and that authorization was sufficient to permit an appropriation. After some debate appropriations to begin work on eleven destroyers were voted. House Report no. 834 and Sen.

authorized later and simply swelled the total of later recommendations. In April, 1931, the General Board submitted its report on the 1933 building program and urged that the ships of the 1932 program not authorized should be approved and laid down as soon as possible. In the event those authorizations were provided, the Board recommended that the program for fiscal 1933 should include appropriations for one heavy cruiser authorized by the Act of 1929, one carrier, two light cruisers, a destroyer leader and seven submarines. If the ships requested in the 1932 program were not authorized, the Board said that these should be spread out and included in authorizations during the years 1933-1936, with one carrier, one flight deck cruiser and one light cruiser being added to the 1933 program.²²

The Navy's persistence in the face of Hoover's opposition may seem to be remarkable, and might be cynically explained as the result of wounded professional pride and reluctance to see the Navy's growth halted. While these considerations may well have played some part in naval persistence, the best explanation is probably found in reference to the alarming developments on the international scene

Report no. 988, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928); Senate Report no. 1673 and House Report no. 2899, 71st Cong., 3rd sess. (Washington, 1931). CR., LXXIV, 4853-55, 1511; U.S. Statutes, XLVI, pt. 1, 1449.

²²Ser. 1523/G.B.420-2, 20 Apr. 1931.

in 1931 and 1932. As has been noted, American naval officers were fearful that American naval strength under the London Treaty was insufficient to enable the Navy to carry out its mission in case of a war with Japan in the western Pacific, and they would have been concerned even if Congress had voted the funds to build the Navy to treaty strength in all categories. But as long as relations with Japan continued to be amicable there was little likelihood that either Congress or the public could be aroused over a situation which seemed only a remote possibility.²³ Japanese-American relations had been especially good since 1925, and to many Americans, the Japanese approval of the London Treaty gave assurance that good relations would continue. Unfortunately, the treaty itself proved to be a major factor in tipping the scales in favor of the militaristic faction in its long-smoldering feud with the civilian authority and marked the beginning of the end of constitutional and civil party government in Japan. The end of effective civil control also meant the end of a moderate foreign policy not hostile to American interests in the Far East.

²³Will R. Wood, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, had a talk with Hoover on September 12, 1931, and afterward told assembled newsmen that there was no need to build the Navy to treaty strength. "No wars are on now and no wars are in sight". The date of the statement is significant. New York Times, Sept. 13, 1931, as quoted in Rappaport, The Navy League, p. 142.

The assassination of Hamaguchi marked the beginning of the assertion of power by the militaristic faction in Japan, and the coincident increase of hostility between the two countries. But the real nature of the Japanese re-orientation in foreign policy was more clearly revealed on the night of September 18, 1931, when the Japanese Army launched its attack in Manchuria as a means of further strengthening its position and undermining that of the civil authority in Japan. The move was considered both desirable and necessary --desirable because of the strength it would lend to support of the Army in Japanese public opinion, and necessary because of Japan's economic distress which was made nearly unbearable by the worldwide depression, which reached enormous proportions by 1931. The Manchurian Incident and the indications it gave of the significant shift of Japan's attitude toward the United States caused alarm among naval circles in the United States, while Congressional leaders and State Department officials showed concern over the possible effects of the Japanese action on the entire structure of treaties built so painstakingly at Washington. In mid-February 1932, Senator Borah publicly inquired of Stimson whether the crisis in Manchuria made the Nine Power Treaty inapplicable. Stimson, in his reply on February 23, answered that all the treaties of Washington were inter-related and that the violation of any one of them would jeopardize all the rest. In particular, he said, the effectiveness of

the naval disarmament treaty rested to a large extent upon the faithful observance of the other treaties, including the Nine Power Treaty.²⁴ The meaning was clear. Japan's action struck directly at the main assumption upon which the naval treaties were built--the assumption of peace in the Far East.

The American reaction was strong in moral indignation over Japan's flouting of solemn obligations but notably weak in attempts to coerce Japan by a show of force. This was understandable, since American naval power, the chief weapon of the United States in any attempt to intimidate Japan, was not much stronger, relative to Japan's power, than it had been in 1929 when it was perhaps at its weakest. A comparison of the two fleets shows this weakness clearly.

TABLE 7

UNITED STATES AND JAPAN: UNDERAGE SHIPS
IN COMMISSION AND BUILDING, FEBRUARY 1932.

Categories	United States Built/Building	Japan Built/Building
Aircraft Carriers	3/1	3/1
Tonnage	77,500/13,800	61,270/7,600
Heavy Cruisers	8/7	8/4
Tonnage	72,900/70,000	68,400/40,000

²⁴CR., LXXV, 4584-85.



(table 7 continued)

Categories	United States Built/Building	Japan Built/Building
Light Cruisers	10/0	17/2
Tonnage	70,500/0	81,455/17,000
Destroyers	69/5	80/8
Tonnage	81,450/7,500	97,385/12,634
Submarines	65/3	67/5
Tonnage	58,220/3,800	70,973/9,669

Source: U. S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Comparative Strength of Treaty Navies, February 1932, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1932), table no. 1.

Referring to the situation, the General Board noted the necessity for a complete revision of War Plan Orange. Previous assumptions, it said, were based on facts no longer obtaining. Japan had built up practically to treaty limits in underage vessels, and the changes in relative strength "furnish abundant reason for a revision of the estimate of the situation and for a probable rewriting of this plan."²⁵ The lack of American determination to oppose Japan with more than protests was caused also by the economic depression in the United States. In view of the alarming decline in re-

²⁵Ser. 1502/G.B.425, 4 May 1932.

venues and the parallel rise in federal expenditures, the problem for the Navy was not so much how to obtain more funds for expansion but rather how to prevent serious cutbacks in funds available for the Navy. As early as September 1931, Hoover announced that the building program for 1931-32 would be drastically slowed, and for 1932-33 it would be eliminated altogether.²⁶

In the face of the determination of the Administration to reduce naval expenditures, naval spokesmen continued nevertheless to press for increased appropriations, either unwilling or unable to face the possibility of a shrinking of American naval power in the face of the growing menace from Japan. In early 1932 a new effort was mounted to obtain the funds necessary for at least a partial expansion of the fleet to treaty limits. The Secretary of the Navy told Congressmen that in order to reach treaty tonnages in under-age vessels by 1936 the Navy would need 55,200 tons of carriers, 73,000 tons of light cruisers, 133,500 tons of destroyers, and 25,630 tons of submarines.²⁷ He attempted to sweeten the pill by pointing out that an expanded building program would provide relief to shipyards and would especially

²⁶ New York Times, Sept. 28 1931, p. 1.

²⁷ U.S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings on S51: Building Up of the U.S. Navy to the Strength Permitted by the Washington and London Naval Treaties, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1932), p. 17.

benefit the workers in the shipbuilding industry, since nearly 85 percent of the cost of a ship represented wages to labor.²⁸

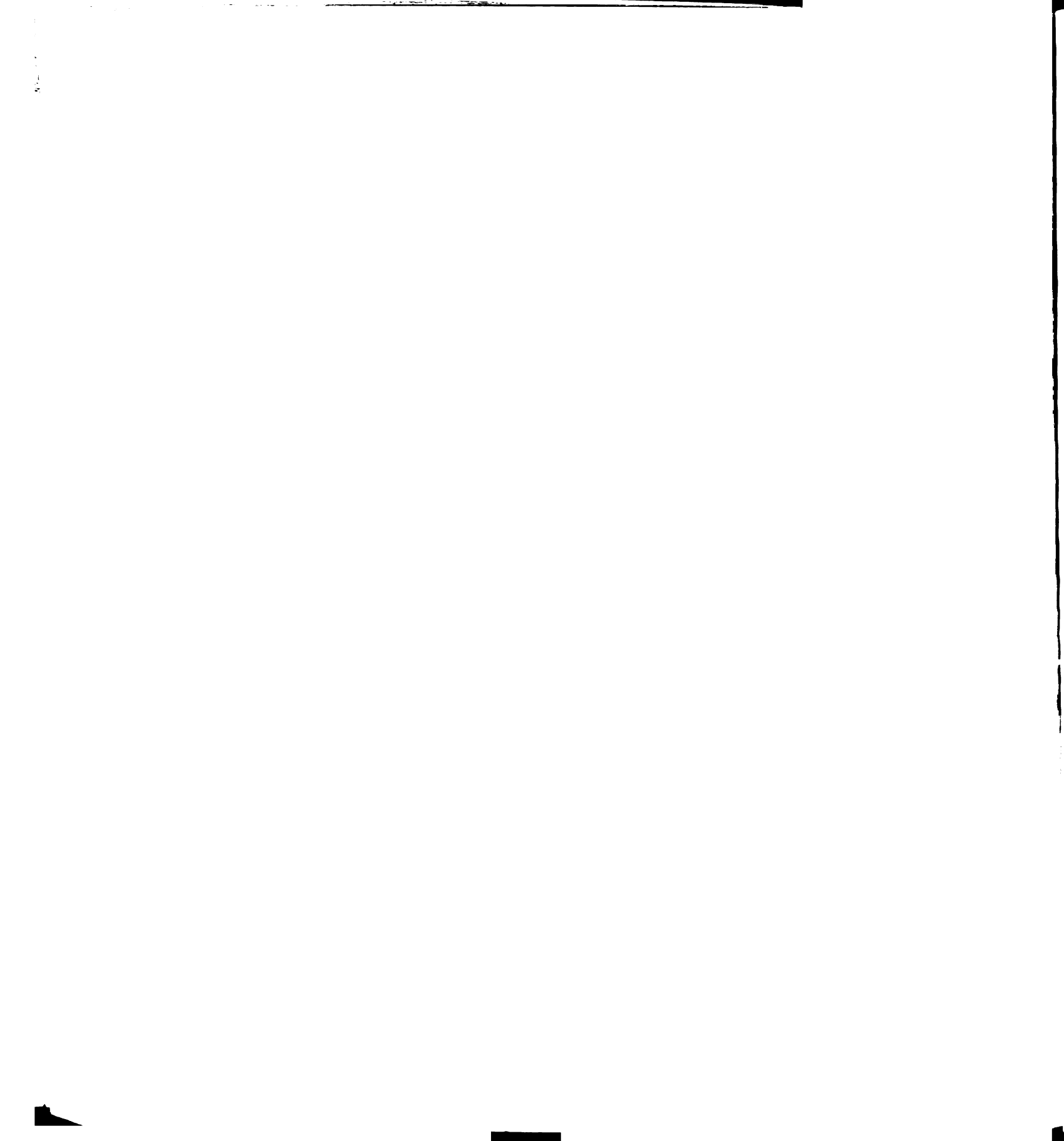
On January 4, 1932, Carl Vinson, the new chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, introduced a bill providing for construction by 1936 of all tonnage needed to reach treaty limits. His bill envisioned a total of 120 ships costing more than \$616,000,000.²⁹ At about the same time Frederick Hale introduced a bill in the Senate which authorized the building up of naval strength to the limits established by the London Treaty, but without asking for a specific number of ships. The bill was reported favorably by his committee on February 24; the report stressed the deteriorating world situation as the most compelling argument in favor of the bill, saying "We believe that it is imperative that the United States authorize a building program at this time and thus give notice to the world that we intend to maintain the ratios established by the Washington and London Treaties."³⁰ Although Vinson's bill was reported favorably by his committee, it was withheld from the floor because the economic situation did not permit its passage.³¹

²⁸Ibid., pp. 17-18, 34-35.

²⁹CR., LXXV, 1275.

³⁰Senate Report no. 280, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1932).

³¹CR., LXXV, 2663.



The Hale bill passed the Senate on May 6 by a vote of 44 to 21,³² but action upon the bill was not taken in the House.

Thus all efforts failed. The idea that naval construction could be a tool to relieve unemployment made no impression on Hoover, who, while not lacking in an understanding of the possibilities of public works expenditures in time of crisis, was not disposed to consider naval vessels as acceptable public works. The extension of the public works concept to naval construction therefore had to await the coming of another Chief Executive. As far as Hoover was concerned the Navy represented a prime target for drastic curtailment of expenses, and many congressmen agreed with him.

By the fall of 1932 it was obvious that a stalemate had been reached. However, a large portion of Congress and public opinion were completely distracted by the enormous economic dislocation in which the nation found itself, and the Manchurian Incident, while deplorable, was not viewed as posing an immediate threat to the security of the United States. Naval officers, on the other hand, were so intent upon the weakness of the Navy in a period which seemed to them critical, that they were oblivious to the condition of the country, which required the most careful attention. In its last building recommendation to the Hoover Administration, the

³²CR., LXXV, 9711.

General Board conveyed forcefully the Navy's concern. The failure of the Congress to enact the programs recommended by the Board for the fiscal years 1932 and 1933 meant that more ships would have to be built in a shorter time in order to provide what were considered the Navy's needs under the naval treaties. Great Britain and Japan, the Board pointed out, would easily reach their treaty quotas by the end of 1936, while the United States would have to make great efforts in the brief time remaining. Altogether it considered "the period in the immediate future a critical one from the international naval standpoint."³³

MAKESHIFTS AND EXPEDIENTS:
THE PROBLEM OF EFFICIENCY.

Under the two fold impact of the limitations imposed by the London Treaty and the reduction of funds for new construction and for operation imposed by the necessities of the times, the Navy had to labor even more manfully than before to keep the fleet at the highest efficiency possible. The Board had approved a plan to retain about 165,000 tons of the most serviceable destroyers, while keeping most of the remaining destroyer tonnage in decommissioned status, to be scrapped as replacements were completed.³⁴ However, it

³³Ser. 1578/G.B.420-2, 11 Sept. 1932.

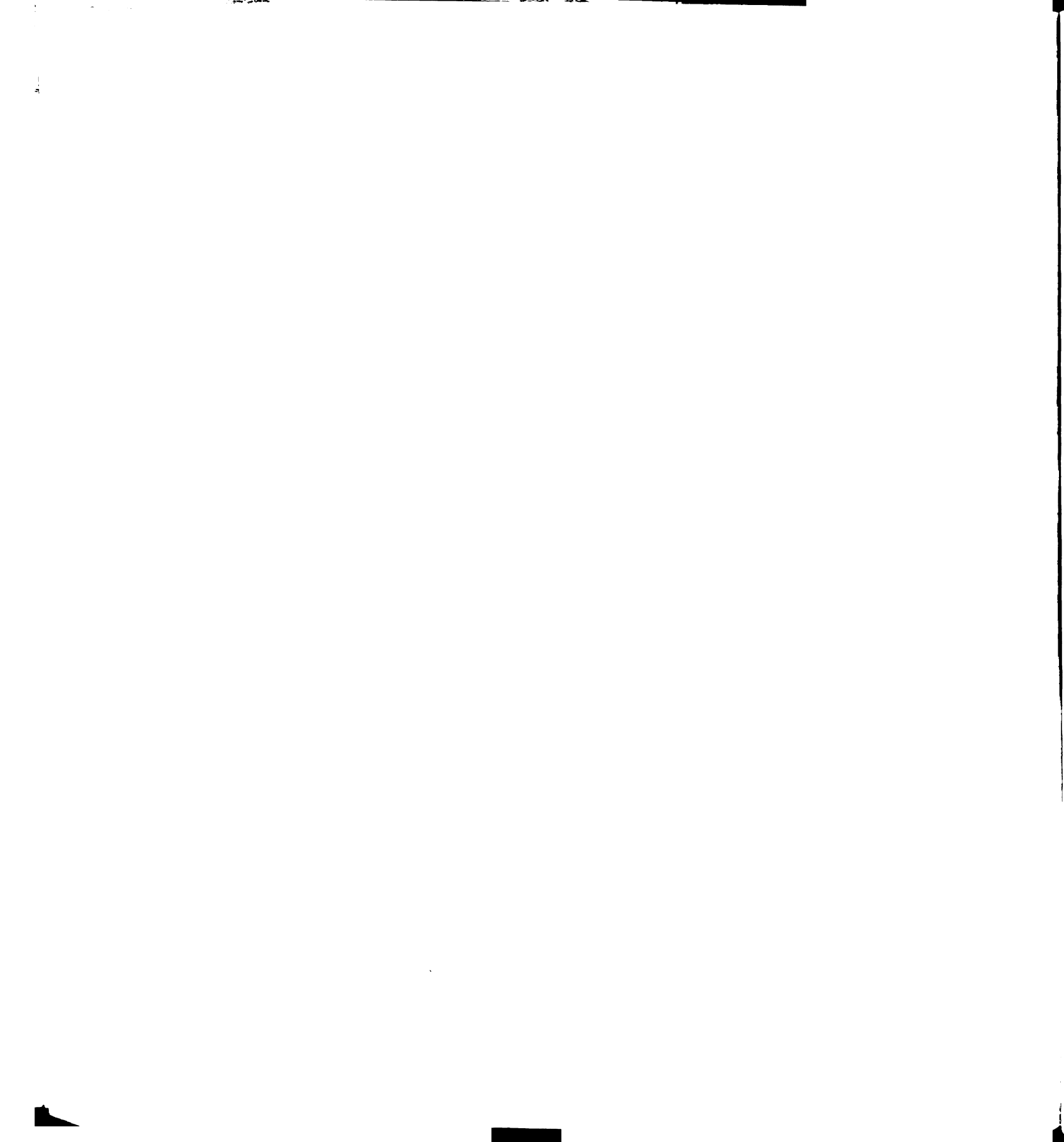
³⁴The tonnage figure included the 150,000 tons permissible under the London Treaty, plus 15,000 tons transferred from the light cruiser category. Ser. 1511/G.B.420-9, 17 Dec. 1930.

proved nearly impossible to keep all the active destroyer tonnage in service. Lack of operating funds and cuts in personnel forced naval planners to consider seriously reductions in the active strength of every category of warship. In September 1931, only a few days before the Manchurian crisis broke upon a startled world, the General Board estimated that the Navy lacked about 12,000 enlisted men simply to maintain the existing fleet.³⁵

One proposal given consideration would have placed about a third of the vessels in each category in a reduced commission status or a reserve status. A reduced commission status would have kept the ships in the active fleet, but with complements only about forty percent of full strength, so that these vessels could not take part in the fleet exercises. In a reserve status the vessels would be practically decommissioned, with crews at only twenty percent of full strength. The idea was to save money and yet allow a certain number of the vessels of the fleet to be maintained in full combat readiness. The reduced commission idea was favored, as it was believed to be "the best operational arrangement and distribution that can be forecast at the present time."³⁶ While an acceptable solution from a financial point of view, it was practically a catastrophe from a

³⁵Ser. 1552/G.B.420, 8 Sept. 1931.

³⁶Ibid.



strategic viewpoint. The London Treaty had given the Navy a strength which most naval officers had considered to be inadequate to deal effectively with a possible Japanese threat, and at the moment that threat materialized, circumstances were forcing the Navy to consider reductions far below even the existing strengths, which in nearly every category were not sufficient even to sustain the ratios prescribed by the treaty. Naval officers were not prominent among those few advocates of a coercive policy against Japan. Even if there had been in the United States the will to oppose Japan's Manchurian adventure in 1931, there certainly was not the means--either then or in the immediately foreseeable future.

The desire to promote efficiency at the lowest cost led to an unusual experiment which began shortly after the London Treaty went into effect and was a direct result of the treaty. Article III of the treaty had made clearer the definition of aircraft carriers and had specifically provided for the construction or conversion of cruisers into a kind of hybrid carrier. At the time it seemed like an experiment worth conducting. If successful, the conversion of cruisers into a kind of carrier--called flying deck cruisers in the United States Navy--could be a relatively cheap way of augmenting the naval air power of the fleet. By 1930 the idea had a great appeal to American naval planners, since the threat of drastic reductions in funds made it less like-

ly that more carriers would be built. Furthermore, the general trend of naval thought regarding the most efficient size for carriers had been proceeding away from the large carrier, partly because the quantitative limitations of the Washington Treaty forced naval planners to try to provide for the largest number of carriers possible within tonnage quotas. Since the United States was granted 135,000 tons of carriers, and since 66,000 tons of that amount was already taken by Saratoga and Lexington, American naval planners felt themselves especially concerned with the necessity of developing an efficient carrier of minimum size.³⁷ By 1927 the General Board had decided that the optimum displacement for a carrier would be about 13,800 tons, and in its recommendations for new construction, the Board had annually requested a carrier of that size.³⁸

By the time the London Treaty became effective the shortage of carriers was keenly felt by the Navy, and the opportunity presented by the treaty provisions regarding flight deck cruisers was eagerly seized by the naval planners. In a memorandum to the General Board dated 28 May, 1930, the chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics called the Board's at-

³⁷ Ser. 1362/G.B.420-5, 1 Nov. 1927.

³⁸ It will be recalled that the 1929 Authorization Act--the 15 Cruiser Bill--provided for one such vessel. This ship, laid down in 1931 and completed in 1934, was named Ranger.

tention to the desperate need for aircraft carriers and urged the Board to consider the recommendation of as many as seven 10,000 ton flight deck cruisers.³⁹ It pointed out that in many situations such a vessel would have great value. Not requiring the extra vessels needed by the large carrier for protection, the flight deck cruiser would still possess to a degree the advantages in scouting and striking power of naval aviation and would work especially well on blockade duty, convoy escort and general scouting.⁴⁰ In a series of studies conducted at the request of the General Board, the Naval War College found that in weather conditions which permitted a flight deck cruiser to launch its aircraft it would invariably emerge the victor in a battle with a heavy cruiser. This result was obtained in spite of the fact that the effectiveness of dive bombing when opposed by anti-aircraft fire was not known with any degree of certainty.⁴¹ Utilizing this study, plus other information, the Board prompted work which resulted in a tentative design for an effective flight deck cruiser. According to the best naval thought at the time, such a vessel would displace 10,000

³⁹In war games between 1923 and 1927, the work of Langley--then our only carrier--demonstrated the value of aircraft carriers. In the maneuvers of 1929 and 1930, in which Saratoga and Lexington took part for the first time, the lesson was even more clearly driven home. Turnbull and Lord, History of Naval Aviation, pp. 214, 270-272.

⁴⁰Enclosure in Ser. 1492/G.B.420-2, 11 July 1930.

⁴¹Ser. 1515/G.B.420-8, 20 Jan. 1931.

tons and mount nine 6 inch guns forward to fulfill its cruiser capabilities. Most of the remaining length would be devoted to a 350 foot flight deck, together with hangar space for about 24 light aircraft. Bridge structure and smokestack would be mounted on the starboard side as in a regular carrier. Top speed would be about 32 knots and maximum range at cruising speed would be approximately 10,000 miles.⁴² As has been already stated, the Board had recommended in its 1932 program that a flight deck cruiser should be authorized, and the results of its studies led it to renew emphatically its request in its recommendations for the 1933 program.

Congress failed to act upon naval requests regarding flight deck cruisers, and during the period from 1932 to 1934 the enthusiasm of naval men for this type of vessel waned. In 1932 the Board did not request a flight deck cruiser in its recommendations for fiscal 1934,⁴³ nor did it do so in the next two years. In the latter year, in answer to requests from several senators who wanted a flight deck cruiser included in the 1936 program, the Board stated that there was "a growing doubt as to the value of this type of vessel." It had been decided that the need for regular cruisers was such that no tonnage could be spared from that

⁴²Blueprint and specifications appended to Ser. 1515/G.B.420-8, 26 Jan. 1931. -

⁴³Ser. 1568/G.B.420-2, 13 Apr. 1932.

category to build flight deck cruisers; furthermore, regular carriers were being requested in the newer programs so that naval aviation would not be slighted.⁴⁴ It appeared that further reflection, after the burst of enthusiasm for the novel had subsided, indicated that such hybrid vessels would possess many of the disadvantages associated with double purpose ships. The flight deck would be restricted, and its vulnerability to shellfire would make it unwise to try to utilize fully the cruiser characteristics of this type of warship. Then too, further work with new types of aircraft indicated the need for larger rather than smaller carriers, and after 1932 the Roosevelt Administration and Congress were much more sympathetic toward the Navy's requests for new vessels. By the time the Board had given the above explanation, two new carriers had been laid down.⁴⁵ With the development of a much more favorable situation naval officers soon lost interest in what was admittedly an experimental expedient motivated by financial considerations which no longer applied by 1934.

THE NAVY'S DARKEST HOUR

During the last months of the Hoover Administration the Navy's fortunes sank to their lowest point in this cen-

⁴⁴Ser. 1642/G.B. 420-2, 20 Feb. 1934.

⁴⁵These were Yorktown and Enterprise, 20,000 tons and designed to carry upwards of eighty airplanes each.

tury. As the depression deepened, the second session of the Seventy-second Congress seriously considered measures which would have reduced the Navy to impotence. In its deliberations the Congress was well aware that any reductions in naval strength would not be a matter of reducing a navy whose power was on a par with those of the greatest naval powers. In his annual report for the fiscal year 1932, the Secretary of the Navy warned that existing building plans were not providing for a fleet even approaching the strength envisioned by the London Treaty. He pointed out that in strength of auxiliary vessels the Navy stood at the end of 1932 about as follows: the United States had in commission 8 heavy cruisers, compared with 21 British and 12 Japanese; 10 light cruisers, compared with 33 British and 20 Japanese; 101 destroyers to 137 for Great Britain and 104 for Japan; and 54 submarines to 52 for Great Britain and 62 for Japan.⁴⁶ For all practical purposes, the Navy was already in a third place position in all categories except battleships and aircraft carriers.

In spite of these warnings many Congressmen went ahead with their plans to reduce expenditures. The depression was reaching its most serious proportions by early 1933, and the necessity for some kind of attack on the constantly growing problems was imperative. Following Hoover's lead, these

⁴⁶Navy Annual Reports, 1932, p. 7.

Congressmen thought of action primarily in terms of reducing all expenditures deemed unnecessary in order to provide as much as possible to combat the tide of business and bank failures and other manifestations of economic chaos. It was not coincidental that those Congressmen who stood in the forefront of the fight against naval expansion in the twenties also led the way in proposing the most drastic reductions of naval strength in the interests of economy--they were certain that a first-rank navy was unnecessary. Thus in December 1932, Representative McClintic introduced a bill which called for the decommissioning of all the battleships in the fleet, because those vessels used up the largest proportion of naval operating funds and naval personnel.⁴⁷ The saving involved in such a move obviously would be large. McClintic's bill died in committee, but other measures constituted a more definite threat to the maintenance of American naval strength at even its existing reduced level. The most dangerous of these was so-called Bratton-Costigan Amendment, an addition to the Treasury-Post Office Appropriation Bill passed by the Senate in early February 1933. The amendment required all heads of departments to reduce expenditures for the fiscal year 1934 to a figure 5 percent below the actual appropriations. The news caused constern-

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CR., LXXVI, 297.

ation in the Navy Department, as well as in others. As various Congressmen began to realize the results which might follow from such a reduction, voices began to be raised against the amendment. Within a few days, Senator Bingham rose on the floor of the Senate to read a letter he had received from the Secretary of the Navy, warning of the dire consequences to be expected if the 5 percent reduction went into effect. The letter, dated February 10, stated that the proposed Navy budget for fiscal 1934 was \$308,689,562. A 5 percent reduction would involve: the concentration of practically all of the fleet in the Pacific, with the consequent closing down of several East Coast navy yards; the slowing of work in progress on ships building or being modernized; the discharge of 4500 civilian workers and a cut in naval personnel of more than 10,000 men; and the placing out of commission of three battleships, two aircraft carriers, four heavy and two light cruisers, thirteen destroyers and six submarines. The strength left to the Navy would amount to 56 percent of Great Britain's and only 66 percent of Japan's. Arthur Robinson stated that the Bratton-Costigan Amendment, if passed, would reduce the United States Navy to a third rank status and would aggravate unemployment.⁴⁸ When the House passed the Senate bill, it struck out the amendment, and in conference it was agreed

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 3940.

that the amendment would be deleted.⁴⁹

The incident of the Bratton-Costigan Amendment, together with the other events told previously, produced the blackest depression among naval officers. They had already been forced to endure cuts in pay and allowances, while the reductions in operating funds for the ships of the fleet had forced the laying up of several of the smaller vessels, especially destroyers.⁵⁰ Certain groups in Congress seemed willing to sacrifice the Navy entirely in the interests of economy, while public opinion generally seemed to agree. The demand for drastic cuts in naval expenditures was heard outside the halls of Congress as well. The prestige of the Navy reached its nadir. The eminent historian, Charles A. Beard, expressed the increased disdain in a book which vehemently attacked the Navy in general and naval officers in particular.⁵¹ Altogether the prospects for the future of the Navy were not pleasant to contemplate. In retrospect, however, the dark period of early 1933 proved to be the prelude to a more favorable period which began to appear only a few months later.

⁴⁹House Report no. 2182, 72nd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1933), p. 15.

⁵⁰Diary of Adm. William D. Leahy, II, pp. 29 (16 July, 1932), 37 (20 Dec. 1932).

⁵¹Charles A. Beard, The Navy: Defense or Portent? (New York, 1932).

CHAPTER VII
THE GENEVA CONFERENCE OF 1932:
AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY.

One important reason for Hoover's refusal to support the Navy's requests for funds to expand the fleet to treaty strength was his hope that another disarmament conference scheduled to meet in 1932 would lead to further reductions in the naval strength of the world powers. It will be recalled that the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations had been holding sessions since 1926. After a long period of futile discussions the Commission was able to draw up a draft convention which could serve as a basis for discussion at the forthcoming disarmament conference to be held at Geneva in 1932. Partly because of the widely divergent views and the large number of delegations at the Commission and partly because of the desire to include land and air as well as naval armaments as subjects for limitation, the draft convention contained only general statements for the most part. The specific points involved proposals to establish a permanent Disarmament Commission to supervise general disarmament, to establish a system of classification for naval categories and for aircraft, to limit both volunteer and conscript military levies, and to restrict military budgets.¹

¹The full text of the draft convention may be found in

There was nothing in the draft convention to encourage those who wished to see a meaningful agreement for the limitation and reduction of armaments emerge from the next conference. In fact, several heads of delegations at the Preparatory Commission so far abandoned the usual platitudes on adjournment day as to indicate their dissatisfaction with the results of the long years of endeavor by the Commission. In his closing speech on December 4, the day on which the Commission officially ended its labors, Hugh Gibson stated that the completed draft convention fell short of American hopes. "What we have achieved," he said, "does not hold out the promise of bringing about that immediate reduction of armaments we would like to see." At best there was hope for a possible stabilization of armaments at existing levels.² Later, in his report on the likely course of the conference, he traced the probable role and objectives of the United States. He believed "our role in coming to the Conference will be that of a Power limited in its one formidable arm, and with land and air armaments at such levels that they

Report of the Prep. Comm. For a contemporary analysis of the draft convention see Lord Cecil of Chelwood, "Facing the World Disarmament Conference," Foreign Affairs, X (Oct. 1931), pp. 18-19.

²Gibson to Stimson, Dec. 4 1930, FRUS. 1930, I, 202.

will not be affected."³ We might exercise a helpful influence, but the role of the American delegation was not likely to be glorious or dominating, and whatever solutions were reached would probably affect the United States but little.

PRELIMINARY AGREEMENTS AND DISAGREEMENTS.

Gibson's statements proved prophetic. The United States did not play a dramatic part at the conference, except on one occasion. The really important factors governing the outcome of the conference grew out of the increasing hostility among nations which was part of the general international climate of the early thirties or which had their origin earlier. Stimson, in a message to Dawes, accurately stated the main areas of difficulty: the Franco-Italian naval question, the Franco-German armaments question and the problems of the relationship of the U.S.S.R. with the neighboring countries of eastern Europe.⁴ These were difficult problems to solve. The Franco-Italian dispute, having its roots in the agreement on parity in capital ships at the Washington

³Gibson to Stimson, Dec. 6 1930, *ibid.*, pp. 473-474. See also Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston, 1960), p. 405.

⁴Stimson to Dawes, Feb. 28 1931, FRUS, 1931, I, 491.

Conference and concerning primarily the Italian insistence on naval parity in all categories with France, has been mentioned previously. The Franco-German problem was of more recent origin and involved Germany's battleship replacement program under the Versailles Treaty. During the late 1920's the economic recovery of Germany had permitted that country to begin a building program to replace its obsolete and overage cruiser and battleship tonnages. Article 190 of the treaty allowed the construction of a maximum of 60,000 tons of battleships and 36,000 tons of cruisers and limited their maximum gun size to 11 inches and 6 inches respectively. When the Germans had decided to put half of their battleship tonnage allowance into a new type of ship superior to any "treaty cruiser", the French had been aroused to a feverish concern for the state of their naval power--a concern which, as had been seen, was a major cause of their incomplete support of the London Treaty. Ironically, the French had to some extent brought the problem upon themselves, for at Versailles they had been in the forefront of those who insisted that only old predreadnought battleships should be retained by the postwar German Navy, thus insuring that Germany's main battle force would that much sooner reach an age when it would have to be replaced with newer vessels.⁵

⁵"Memorandum on the Question of Replacing Battleships," enclosure in Atherton to Stimson, Aug. 5 1931, ibid., pp. 518-519.

But the Franco-German problem involved more than simply a question of replacement of German battleships. Also at stake was the fundamental question of French security, since the Germans, from their recently acquired position in the halls of the League of Nations, were demanding that the forthcoming disarmament conference consider the long deferred Allied promise to institute steps toward disarmament of land forces--a step which the French were most reluctant to take. The problem of the U.S.S.R. in eastern Europe involved French security to an extent, since part of the Soviet objection to the existing situation concerned the French support of several eastern European nations, particularly Poland. The problem also was concerned with the reaction of these smaller countries to the U.S.S.R., and beyond this with the general distrust of the Soviets by the western world. The smaller countries represented at the Preparatory Commission had made it clear that any treaty to emerge from the conference must bind the U.S.S.R., otherwise it would not be possible to arrive at a meaningful limitation of land armaments.⁶ Many delegates suspected that the Soviets, for their part, would attempt to disrupt the work of the conference and would try to use it to further their schemes of world revolution. In the fifth session of the Preparatory Commission the Soviet delegate, Maxim Litvinov, had presented a Soviet

⁶Gibson to Stimson, Dec. 6 1930, ibid., p. 472.

proposal on February 15, 1928, calling for complete dis-
 abandment of all naval forces within one year, and land and
 air forces within four years. Spirited discussion of the scheme
 which occupied most of rest of the session.⁷ Later Litvinov
 proposed a system of partial disarmament which would eli-
 mate all "offensive" armaments--i.e., aircraft carriers,
 battleships, heavy artillery and aircraft. Strangely, his
 proposal did not contemplate the abolition of the submarine,
 which many other governments held to be the ultimate in
 offensive weapons.⁸ The refusal of the major countries to
 consider seriously the Soviet proposals reflected primarily
 their suspicion of Soviet motives.

The difficulties in the way of a successful conclusion
 of the 1932 Geneva Conference were so many that it seemed
 wise to hold exploratory conversations with a view to
 working out some basis upon which the major powers could
 agree as a preliminary to and insurance of the success of the
 conference itself. Exploratory talks had been successful in
 narrowing the areas of disagreement to manageable dimensions
 prior to the London Conference, and the general view seemed

⁷League of Nations, Documents of the Preparatory Com-
 mission, etc., Series VI, Minutes of the Fifth Session of the
 Preparatory Commission (Geneva, 1928), pp. 324-349.

⁸League of Nations, Documents of the Preparatory Com-
 mission, etc., Series VIII, Minutes of the Sixth Session
 (First Part) of the Preparatory Commission (Geneva, 1929),
 pp. 19-21.

to be that a similar procedure might enjoy a like success. The British took the initiative in suggesting that preliminary discussions be held.⁹ They were especially concerned with the Franco-Italian naval question, and had actually been holding discussions with the two governments on the matter since shortly after the adjournment of the London Conference. If the tension between the two countries should explode into a naval building competition, the British might find it necessary to invoke the escalator clause of the London Treaty with disastrous effects upon the whole delicate structure erected by that treaty. Such a development was to be prevented at all costs, preferably by some kind of Franco-Italian accord. The closer approach of the Geneva Conference added another reason. If the French and Italians could not compromise their differences on the naval question, it could hardly be expected that the conference could develop a general disarmament agreement to which all the countries--including France and Italy--could give their assent.

The French-British-Italian talks were long and arduous, but by the end of the winter of 1931 a tentative agreement was in sight. On March 1, 1931, a series of proposals, called the Bases of Agreement, were approved by the representatives

⁹ Dawes to Stimson, Feb. 20 1931, FRUS., 1931, I, 490.

of the three countries. The major provisions of the Bases of Agreement were:

- (1) French and Italian battleship tonnages were to be increased from 175,000 tons to 181,000 tons.
- (2) France and Italy could each complete 34,000 tons of aircraft carriers.
- (3) Neither country would lay down any more heavy cruisers after completion of their 1930 programs.
- (4) New light cruisers and destroyers would not exceed tonnages replaceable before December 31, 1936.
- (5) Neither country would construct any more ships after completion of its 1930 program and replacement of vessels becoming overage after 1936.
- (6) French submarine tonnage would not exceed 81,989 tons.¹⁰

The British hoped that the Bases of Agreement would lead to a more definite accord which would bring to a final end the naval rivalry between France and Italy, but it was a practically impossible hope. Even the Bases of Agreement did not mention the heart of the problem--Italy's demand for parity in auxiliary vessels and France's refusal to concede it. With the growth of what the French considered a German threat they were even less likely to agree to parity with Italy. By agreeing to accept something less than theoretical

¹⁰Enclosure in Atherton to Stimson, March 14 1931, ibid., pp. 38-382.

equality with the French fleet the Italians could have made some kind of understanding possible. However, this was not done. The French soon made it evident that the Bases of Agreement were not to be interpreted as opening the way toward parity, for in later talks to secure more definite commitments they asked that both countries should build 25 percent less tonnage during the years 1931-36 than they built in the years 1922-30.¹¹ The Italians quickly saw through the French proposal and pointed out that Italy had built much less tonnage than France had built during the years 1922-30; the French program had been especially large in the years 1922-24. What the Italians preferred was to take the years 1924-30 as the base, which would allow them nearly the same tonnage as the French.¹² By the fall of 1931 the inability of these two countries to come to an agreement prior to the convening of the General Disarmament Conference was apparent.

In the case of the other two areas of difficulty--the Franco-German problem and the question of the U.S.S.R. -- no progress toward solutions was made. The problem of Germany received some attention, but in this case there was

¹¹Enclosure in Marriner (chargé Paris) to Cotton, Aug. 27 1931, ibid., pp. 424-428.

¹²Enclosure in Kirk (Ambassador in Rome) to Stimson, Aug. 31 1931, ibid., pp. 432-435.

a general recognition that no agreement was possible until one country or the other drew back to some extent from its stated position. In Great Britain the general attitude was that Germany had a good case and that some way would have to be found to allay French fears over a revival of German militarism, perhaps by means of certain assurances from the British.¹³ It was believed that the conference would be the best possible place where Germany could voice her grievances and where the other nations could be made more fully aware of the French attitude. In the United States there was a belief that 'the French were being unreasonable and that a solution of the problem might very well be tied to compromise on other questions, such as reparations and war debts. Hoover received one viewpoint early in June, when Walter Edge, the Ambassador to France, suggested that we could consider a reduction in France's war debts in return for acceptance by that country of a plan of real disarmament. A possible plan might consider several points: a one-year suspension of naval construction, a reduction of 25 percent or more in army and national defense budgets, and a moratorium on and possible revision of German reparations.¹⁴ All such statements were simply straws in the wind, however;

¹³Memorandum of Conversation Between Stimson and MacDonald, Aug. 7 1931, ibid., pp. 515-517.

¹⁴Edge to Hoover, June 9 1931, ibid., pp. 501-505.

nothing concrete was settled upon prior to the conference.

In purely naval matters relating to possible alteration of the status quo established at Washington and London there was considerable discussion prior to the conference. The assumption among American naval officers was that those previous conferences had produced about as much reduction and limitation of navies as was practicable or desirable, and that the Geneva Conference would be concerned more with land and air armaments and with questions pertaining to European rivalries of which the United States could not be considered a part. It was also assumed that the British and the Japanese thought the same. The Americans were astonished, therefore, to learn that the British had secured, as a supplement to the Bases of Agreement of March 1, 1931, a statement from the French and Italians supporting a British proposal which pledged the three countries not to build in the future any battleships larger than 23,000 tons or carrying guns heavier than 12 inches. Recognizing the possibility that the British might seek at Geneva to extend the restriction to the American and Japanese navies--indeed, it was not possible for the British to actually execute the idea unless American and Japanese battleships were likewise restricted--Stimson actually encouraged the Navy League and other pro-Navy groups to arouse public opinion against the British proposal.¹⁵ Apprized of the situation, the General

¹⁵Rappaport, The Navy League, pp. 138-140.

Board restated the Navy's view that the Battleship was the foundation of naval power and that large battleships were necessary to meet American naval needs. "Under no consideration," it said, "should we permit our national security to be threatened by a whittling away of our battleship strength unless and until it becomes evident that the battleship has ceased to be the backbone of our naval power."¹⁶

In a discussion of the battleship question shortly afterward, Admiral Pratt, now Chief of Naval Operations, and Navy Secretary Adams both thought that naval opinion would insist that present limitations on battleship size should not be reduced. They themselves had no objections to battleships of smaller size, if all the other powers were similarly restricted. They also believed that if the British could be persuaded to allow modernization of the three American battleships armed with 16 inch guns, the Americans could favorably entertain proposals to lengthen the life of battleships to 30 years.¹⁷ While the British were persuaded to drop their proposal temporarily, it was evident that at the conference they might seek to reopen the question. It was also evident there was some division of opinion within American naval circles regarding the minimum size battleship

¹⁶Ser. 1527/G.B.438-2, 6 May 1931.

¹⁷Memorandum of Discussion between Naval and State Department Representatives, May 25 1931, FRUS, 1931, I, 496-498.

acceptable for the Navy.¹⁸

In the fall of 1931 an event occurred which held naval armaments in a static position pending the outcome of the Geneva Conference. On September 8, the Italian Foreign Minister, Dino Grandi, proposed in a speech to the League Assembly that the naval Powers agree not to construct any armaments while the conference met. Later he amplified his suggestion by proposing that no new naval vessels should be laid down for one year, and that for a similar time there should be no increases in expenditures or budgets for land forces, and no new aircraft should be built.¹⁹ Reaction in the United States was mixed. There was some disposition to regard the proposed truce as being to some extent detrimental to the United States. A truce could halt construction of several destroyers--the first destroyer construction since 1922--and would further delay the laying down of several heavy cruisers which were felt to be sorely needed.²⁰ The General Board indicated that the Navy could both gain and lose by an arms truce. The British and Japanese, it pointed

¹⁸It should be pointed out however, that men like Pratt and Yarnell were not representative of a large body of naval opinion. The division was extremely one-sided.

¹⁹Hugh Wilson (Ambassador in Bern) to Stimson, Sept. 8 1931, Sept. 16 1931, FRUS., 1931, I, 440-445.

²⁰Stimson to Wilson, Sept. 18 1931, Sept. 20 1931, ibid., pp. 446-451.

out, had appropriated for larger tonnages than had the Americans, and this would not be laid down if a truce were approved. On the other hand, all navies would age even further during the truce period, and a higher proportion of American vessels would be overage at its end--Japan would actually have more underage tonnage than the United States at the end of the truce.²¹ The political gain seemed well worth any risk, and Stimson decided to approve the Grandi proposal.

Before a final form for a truce could be worked out, however, French objections had to be met. The French were suspicious of the proposal, especially since the Italians had first voiced it and the Germans were supporting it.²² The French were particularly concerned over the proposal to limit military budgets and insisted as a condition of their approval of the truce that that part of the Grandi proposal relating to military budgets be eliminated. An amended text to this effect was adopted by the League on September 30. After further talks in which the United States government stipulated that it would begin work on the destroyers for which contracts had already been let, Stimson agreed to the terms of the truce, which went into effect on November

²¹Ser. 1580/G.B. 438, 19 Oct. 1931.

²²Edge to Stimson, Sept. 11 1931, FRUS., 1931, I, 443.

1.²³ The truce, which brought to a halt practically all naval construction in the United States, went into effect precisely at the time when the Manchurian Crisis was reaching serious proportions and caused further anxiety among naval officers. It was but one of many problems with which naval planners had to contend.

The truce caused anxiety in other quarters as well. Both the British and the Japanese felt too much restricted by the truce, and when in August of 1932 it was proposed that the truce be extended for another four months they stated that acceptance on their part was conditional upon the understanding that ships already appropriated for could be laid down. Since most of the tonnage necessary to bring the navies of these countries to treaty strength had been appropriated for, the truce extension under the conditions insisted upon would have had no practical effect upon any major navy. The General Board warned that the United States should not agree to an extension of the truce without insisting upon the same conditions expressed by the British and the Japanese.²⁴ Eventually the extension was agreed upon, but it was for such a short time as to have no real effect upon naval developments in any of the countries

²³Stimson to Greene (Charge Bern), Oct. 29 1931, ibid., p. 470.

²⁴Ser. 1580/G.B.438, 16 Aug. 1932.

concerned.²⁵

As the time for the opening of the Geneva conference drew nearer, efforts were continued to arrive at preliminary understandings. The British were especially perturbed that the conference, unlike the previous one at London, would be started without any real understanding of any nation's position by any of the others. In fact there did not yet appear to be any general agreement as to what particular problems would be discussed at Geneva. Late in 1931 the British, in an attempt to clear away the fog, gave their opinion as to what matters the Conference should not discuss. They indicated it did not seem wise to attempt to conclude any agreements at Geneva which did not conform to previous treaties.²⁶ Later, they indicated that Part III of the London Treaty should be maintained, and that if the Big Three Naval Powers could come to a preliminary agreement "they will be in a strong position to influence the other Powers to reduce their armaments in turn."²⁷ In view of Japanese dissatisfaction with the terms of Part III of the London Treaty it is difficult to see how the British hoped for even as much unanimity of opinion as they did.

²⁵Stimson, in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy on October 19, noted that the extension would delay the laying of the keels of two heavy cruisers by only two months, which was not "of much consequence," Annex to ibid.

²⁶British Embassy to State Dept., Dec. 5 1931, FRUS., 1931, I, 532-533.

²⁷Memorandum, enclosure in Lindsay (British Ambassador) to Stimson, Jan. 22 1932, ibid., pp. 15-16.

Naval officers were not at all reluctant to voice their views as to what naval proposals the United States delegation should oppose or sponsor at the conference. Their general opinion in regard to the forces likely to dominate the conference was summarized by the General Board, which commented upon the necessity for building up American naval strength to treaty limits by referring to a Naval War College statement that the surest way to bring about further reductions at Geneva of a kind desired by the United States was to secure authorizations from Congress for a major building program and go to the conference in a position to demand reduction lest we build to the full strength authorized, or even beyond.²⁸ As to specific attitudes, the Board strongly asserted its opposition to any further reduction in the total aircraft carrier tonnage allowed the United States under the treaties. At least six carriers were necessary for the fleet, it said, and Saratoga and Lexington together took up nearly half the allowable tonnage.²⁹ The Board also recommended that the United States support possible British proposals for the abolition of submarines.

²⁸Naval War College Study XTYG (1931-107), 23 Oct. 1931, Annex to G.B.438-2, 8 Oct. 1931.

²⁹Ser. 1521-J/G.B.438-2, 11 Jan. 1932. All material relating to serial 1521 is conveniently bound in a volume entitled "Secretary of the Navy, Disarmament Conference 1932, General Board Report," Series XI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records. Ser. 1521 contains all the General Board studies pertaining to the 1932 Conference.

This startling reversal of attitude was based partly upon further experience with large fleet submarines which indicated that the submarine's value as a fleet adjunct was relatively slight, but the main consideration was financial. Since submarines were by far the most expensive vessels to build, ton for ton, relatively the most expensive to maintain and wore out more quickly in actual service, it seemed their abolition would help bring about a more than proportionate reduction in expenditures, especially since their abolition would mean that each navy might be able to reduce its destroyer forces considerably.³⁰ Should it not be possible to abolish submarines, destroyer tonnages could not be substantially reduced below existing levels.³¹ Finally, the Board was willing to consider reductions of maximum gun size on battleships from 16 to 14 inches. If this concession seems even more remarkable than the one on submarines, it should be noted that no change was contemplated in battleship size. Also, the concession was hedged about with conditions which would almost certainly be unacceptable to the other treaty powers, for the Board insisted that as conditions of American acceptance of the 14 inch gun the United States would have to be allowed to fortify the Philippines, the French and British would have to demilitarize their naval bases in the western Atlantic, and nations of "potential

³⁰Ser. 1521-L/G.B. 438-2, 23 Jan. 1932.

³¹Ser. 1521-L:2/G.B. 438-2, 2 Feb. 1932.

greatness"--reference to Germany and the U.S.S.R.--would have to agree to be so bound in their battleship construction.³² Commenting upon the Board's battleship proposal, Admiral Pratt noted, "This is an interesting study, but too highly theoretical to be of practical value."³³ Altogether it appeared the Navy did not consider it practicable to secure much more limitation than had already been achieved.

Public comment, as reflected in the press of the various countries, tended to sustain a general belief that the conference was not likely to accomplish much. In the United States there was nowhere near the editorial comment which had been aroused by previous disarmament conferences. Informed opinion stressed the idea that the American delegation should seek to maintain the status quo.³⁴ In France, where the most volatile opinion about the chances of the conference was generated, the overwhelming majority of French newspapers condemned the Grandi Arms Truce as useless and pointed to the attitude of Germany in support of their view that the time for further arms limitation was inopportune.³⁵ In Great Britain most opinion held to a moderate optimism. It

³²Ser. 1521-L:1/G.B.438-2, 28 Jan. 1932.

³³Pratt to Adams, 3 Feb. 1932, annex to ibid.

³⁴Allen W. Dulles, "The Disarmament Puzzle", Foreign Affairs, IX (July, 1931), pp. 605-616.

³⁵Edge to Stimson, Sept. 18 1931, SD500.A15A4 Press/14.

was widely believed that whatever hostilities might be generated at the conference would not be because of Anglo-American differences, which were felt to be nearly non-existent.³⁶ The Italians said little. In Japan there was practically no newspaper comment in the month preceding the conference. One Japanese periodical, the Gaiko Jiho, voiced what may well have been the best description of the chances of success of the forthcoming conference when it said that the conference was "like an attempt to sail a frail boat on a turbulent sea against contrary winds."³⁷

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE: FIRST PHASE

There has been no extensive study of the 1932 General Disarmament Conference at Geneva. It is possible but unlikely that scholars have simply overlooked it. There have been few international conferences which have produced as large a collection of documents, minutes, reports, correspondence and resolutions as did this one, and to less purpose. The repetition, the timeworn arguments, the irrelevant and trivial speeches practically benumb the researcher--what effect they must have had upon the participants may well be

³⁶ Atherton to Stimson, Feb. 10 1932, SD500.A15A4 Press/14.

³⁷ Forbes (chargé Tokyo) to Stimson, Jan. 30 1932, SD500.A15A4 Press/44.

imagined. Add to this the complicated interplay of forces, as great and small nations alike advanced their positions with regard to air, land and sea armaments, together with the inescapable fact that all the speechmaking, discussing and negotiating were barren of any practical result, and it is understandable that there has been no thorough investigation of the subject. Actually, the general outlines of the conference are not difficult to trace, and if reference is made primarily to the naval questions which arose rather than to the whole broad subject of armaments as it was discussed at the conference, the task becomes even simpler.

The Conference opened on February 2, 1932. It was a bad time for a disarmament conference. The great crisis of the day was of course the Japanese march into Manchuria, which had been nearly completed by the time the conference convened. Then there was Shanghai, where another Japanese attack had begun only a few days before and was then raging in unimaginable fury, with air and naval bombardment laying waste large sections of the teeming port as the Chinese defenders doggedly contested every foot of ground. On the opening day of the conference there was a brief adjournment so that the League Council could consider this latest threat to the peace of nations. In addition to the Far East, other areas were stirring uneasily, as the ground shakes underfoot before an eruption. In France, an election campaign was under way which indicated that yet another brief French

government would be toppled. In Germany an election had recently taken place in which the Nazi Party of Adolf Hitler had made impressive gains. Yet with a seeming refusal to recognize realities which was to become a marked characteristic of the deliberations, the opening speeches consumed practically the entire time from opening day until February 25, and more time afterward was spent in setting up committees. By March 19, when a recess was declared for the Easter holiday, no substantive work had been done.³⁸

The American delegation acquitted itself well during this opening phase of discussions. On February 9, Gibson, as chief of the delegation, presented a series of American proposals which, he said, represented the position of the American government. Stating that it must be assumed each nation would have to maintain sufficient increments of military strength to insure internal order and defend against aggression, he asserted: "Beyond this reasonable supplement to the police force we have taken an implicit obligation to restrict ourselves."³⁹ Meaningful agreements would have to involve restrictions, and the American proposals would involve such restrictions. The proposals consisted of nine major points:

³⁸ Denna F. Fleming, The United States and World Organization, 1920-1933 (New York: 1938), p. 376.

³⁹ Gibson to Stimson, Feb. 9 1932, FRUS., 1932, I, 28.

1. The Preparatory Commission's draft convention was a convenient basis for discussion, but further proposals should be considered.
2. The Washington and London treaties could be prolonged and France and Italy persuaded to subscribe to them.
3. The figures of total tonnages in the naval treaties might well be lowered by further negotiation.
4. Submarines should be abolished.
5. Rules should be formulated to protect civilians against aerial bombardment.
6. The use of gas and bacteriological warfare should be abolished.
7. Reserves should be counted in the determination of military strength.
8. Tanks and heavy artillery should be especially restricted, because of their "peculiarly offensive character."
9. Limitation of expenditures should be considered as a supplement to direct limitation of armed forces.⁴⁰

The far-ranging scope of the Gibson proposals well illustrates the complexity of the problem with which the general conference was attempting to deal. Any one of the proposals would have been sufficient problem for an arms

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 29-30.

limitation conference to try to solve, yet at Geneva it was proposed to try to solve all at once. While remembering that all these subjects were discussed at the same time by various committees of the conference, it would be well at this point to restrict further attention mainly to the problems which bore on the limitation of naval armaments. As far as the Gibson proposals were concerned, those calling for the abolition of the submarine, revision of the Washington and London Treaties, and the limitation of expenditures bore directly upon naval limitation.

The reaction to the Gibson proposals was generally favorable. While not all the proposals could be accepted, the important point was that specific proposals were offered at a relatively early stage of the proceedings. Other countries were led by the American example to offer counter proposals of their own, which tended to clarify the attitudes of at least those countries. Grandi voiced his government's desire to reach an understanding which would allow Italy to subscribe to the London Treaty. He stated his government was willing specifically to approve the abolition of capital ships, aircraft carriers and submarines, the abolition of tanks and heavy artillery, the abolition of bombing aircraft, and the abolition of gas and bacteriological warfare.⁴¹ Matsudaira said his government favored restrictions on bomb-

⁴¹Gibson to Stimson, Feb. 10 1932, ibid., p. 31.

ing operations and the abolition of aircraft carriers.⁴²

Several other countries introduced proposals which generally stood somewhere between the two extremes of the Italian and Japanese positions.

If each proposal had been considered on its own merits and had been free of objectionable assumptions some measure of agreement might have been reached. Unfortunately the entire question of armaments limitation was complicated by the introduction of an issue upon which it proved impossible to reach any agreement--the question of "offensive" versus "defensive" instruments of warfare. The idea that certain weapons are essentially offensive in nature while others are essentially defensive has an intrinsic appeal, since it seemingly offers a solution to the problem of limitation by lessening anxiety over the consequences of really substantial limitation measures. By singling out certain weapons as "offensive" and therefore bad, measures of drastic limitation or even abolition can be directed against them, while "defensive"--i.e., desirable--armaments would be permitted. Thus the drastic cutting of armaments and the enhancing of national security can both be achieved at the same time. Each country could rest secure in the feeling that it had retained armaments which adequately provided for its security, and the destruction of offensive weapons would promote se-

⁴²Ibid., p. 32.

curity by relieving the anxiety over the possibility of attack. Such a concept, appealing though it may be, had certain flaws. Aside from the logical fallacy which is at once apparent, it is evident that the concept is politically rather than militarily motivated and sustained. When the concept was first formally proposed in 1929 it was obvious to military experts that it had little merit. Weapons could not generally be classified into offensive and defensive categories. To use a naval example, the battleship was seized upon at Geneva as an outstanding offensive weapon, and, as will be seen, several efforts were made further to limit their size or to abolish them entirely. Yet from a military point of view there was no reason for assuming battleships to be offensive weapons. A battleship was just as effective in defending a coastline or an island possession as it was in assaulting the same, or an opposing fleet. Similar considerations applied to any other category of warship, except possibly the submarine.

Much the same reasoning applied to instruments of land warfare. The tank was looked upon at Geneva as "peculiarly offensive"--witness Gibson's proposal number eight--yet in practice it was to prove as effective a weapon of defense as of attack. Since it was impossible to differentiate between offensive and defensive weapons in any meaningful military sense, the differentiation was actually made on a political basis. The representatives of each nation conceived of the

weapons they most feared as offensive, while those weapons which were best suited to their own needs were considered to be defensive. Thus the French were willing to abolish battleships as offensive but clung to submarines as defensive. To the British the submarine was an offensive weapon, while cruisers were defensive, and so on. It was obvious that deadlock would develop over the question, and since so many of the proposals advanced at Geneva were based upon the concept it was certain that they would therefore fail.

The credit--if it may be called such--of formally introducing the concept of "offensive" weapons as prime subjects for limitation on a large scale belongs to the U.S.S.R. As pointed out earlier, the Soviet delegation at the sixth session of the Preparatory Commission in 1929 announced a proposal for partial disarmament which involved particularly drastic limitations on weapons which they considered to be offensive--long range warships, artillery and aircraft. Their proposals viewed aircraft carriers as fit subjects for abolition and ships larger than 10,000 tons as essentially offensive. The Soviets did not propose to abolish the submarine.⁴³ Earlier, at Geneva in 1927, the Japanese had sought to exempt from restriction submarines displacing less than 600 tons on the ground that they were defensive weapons

⁴³Minutes of the Sixth Session of the Preparatory Commission, Series VIII, pp. 19-21.

suited only to coastal protection, but this proposal was limited compared to the Soviet view. These were but preliminaries to the wide range of proposals offered at Geneva and designed to limit or abolish offensive weapons. The American proposals contained the offensive weapons concept to some extent; those of the Italians involved the idea even more. Perhaps the ultimate proposal along these lines was reached when the Soviets suggested that tanks, heavy artillery, dirigibles, bombing aircraft, aircraft carriers, all naval guns above 12 inches and all naval vessels displacing more than 10,000 tons be abolished.⁴⁴ Whether the Soviets were sincere or were simply seeking a deeper obfuscation of the issues can only be surmised.

Once the various proposals had been made the different committees of the conference settled themselves into the task of separating, clarifying, summarizing and modifying them so as to produce a basis for final agreement, while delegations hastened to seek instruction from their governments as to which proposals should be supported and which rejected. General Simonds and Admiral Hepburn, the chief American Army and Navy advisers at the conference, requested studies by the War and Navy Departments concerning the effect upon national defense of the abolition of bombers and pro-

⁴⁴Gibson to Stimson, Feb. 11 1932, FRUS., 1932, I, 32-33. A good study of the offensive-defensive weapons problem is Marion W. Boggs, Attempts to Define and Limit "Agressive Armament in Diplomacy and Strategy" (Columbia, Mo., 1941).

hibition of bombing. The Navy Department replied abolition of bombers was impracticable because of the difficulty of definition--practically any military airplane could carry bombs. Prohibition of bombing "would be detrimental to national defense."⁴⁵

It should be pointed out that the American delegation was not dominated by the Admirals. Gibson, as chairman of the delegation, was in close touch with the State Department at all stages of the proceedings. Few decisions were reached without direct approval from Washington. Even in the Naval Commission, where technical details were discussed, Admiral Hepburn, who represented the Navy's interests directly, was subjected to civilian control in the person of Senator Claude Swanson, who was chairman of the delegation to the Commission. Naval members agreed that Swanson, while keenly aware of the Navy's desires, also knew what the Senate would approve and was by no means dominated by the admirals.⁴⁶ If there was substantial agreement between the civilian and naval groups at Geneva, it was not because the admirals dominated the discussions but because increasing international tensions made the Navy's contentions more likely to be heard.

If there was any anxiety among military and naval circles

⁴⁵Gibson to Stimson, Feb. 16 1932; Stimson to Gibson, March 11 1932, ibid., pp. 40, 52.

⁴⁶Capt. A.H. VanKeuren's statement to General Board, 18 July 1932, folder, misc. letters 1932, Series XI, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

in the United States that the Geneva Conference might arrive at agreements which would dangerously limit any particular weapon believed to be especially suited to the requirements of American strategy, it was soon dispelled by the activities of the Naval Commission, which had no more success in overcoming mutual national hostilities and translating the many conflicting attitudes and proposals into workable agreements than did any of the other commissions. In spite of the fact that the existing naval agreements provided a basis upon which a more wide-ranging accord might have been constructed, the Commission spent a fruitless period in arguing every conceivable proposal without arriving at any conclusions.

One reason for the futility was provided by the form the conference possessed. As in 1927, the structure of a conference where several countries discussed a wide range of propositions on disarmament created a situation in which the proceedings were fragmented and permeated with such irrelevancy that the achievement of any degree of success would be nearly a miracle. In the fourth meeting of the Naval Commission on March 15, the disruptive effects of the situation were noticeable and serve as an example of the kind of discussion which characterized most of the conference. In discussing the definitions of different kinds of warships in the draft convention, each delegation felt free to advance ideas which had the effect of completely nullifying what agreements had been arranged with such difficulty by

the Preparatory Commission. The Germans, for example, introduced a resolution which defined cruisers as vessels displacing from 800 to 6,000 tons with guns no larger than 4.1 inches⁴⁷--a definition which had no relevance whatever to views prevailing for decades and which would have required the re-definition of practically every kind of warship then in existence. In argument over rules for replacement, amendments were offered by no fewer than fifteen countries to one paragraph establishing the effective life of certain vessels.⁴⁸ The likelihood of success under such conditions was remote indeed.

Negotiations dragged on in this fashion for several months. Proposals were offered so extreme that it was unlikely that any major country would accept them, and their introduction seems to have been mainly for propaganda effect. Several countries proposed battleships should be abolished. These were nations having little strength in battleships or which, like Germany, had a particularly strong interest in limiting the strength of likely enemies. The Germans were quite candid in showing their motivation when the German delegate stated that the basis for Germany's proposal was

⁴⁷League of Nations, Records of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, Geneva, 1932. Series D, vol. III: Minutes of the Naval Commission, February 27-July 30, 1932 (Geneva, 1937), pp. 11-12. Hereafter cited as Minutes of the Naval Commission, 1932 Conference.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 14-17.

that the Versailles Treaty had prohibited that country from possessing battleships, so that German aggression would be made impossible in the future. The entire German attitude toward the naval aspect of armaments limitation at the conference was overtly one of seeking to reduce the naval strength of the great powers to a level approaching Germany's, although their real desire may have been to gain acceptance of the idea that the Versailles Treaty should be revised so as to allow Germany to expand her naval power. The Germans also pointed out that the Versailles Treaty's prohibition of certain kinds of weapons implied that those weapons were offensive and therefore more dangerous than others.⁴⁹ There was little question that the French-German problem was at the heart of much of the difficulty in which the conference found itself. A solution which secured the objectives of both sides would have gone a long way toward insuring a good chance that some concrete agreements could be reached which would allow the conference to be considered a success, but unfortunately the positions of the two countries did not appear to admit of any compromise. The Germans flatly insisted on "equality of treatment," by which they particularly meant a re-negotiation of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty and a reduction of the overwhelming land power of the French; the French would not consider granting the German

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 25.

demand unless a security arrangement could be worked out which would relieve French anxiety by giving them solid guarantees of aid, particularly from Great Britain and the United States. The British, who held the key, compounded the difficulty by showing more sympathy to the German position than to the French, thus rendering the French more intractable than ever.

The French-German problem did not pose any direct threat to the settlement of naval questions at the conference, since a possible revival of German naval power was more a matter of concern for the British than for the French; however, the French did evince considerable concern over the new German long range armored cruisers, which were well advanced in construction by 1932 and which were clearly intended as commerce raiders. In line with the general attempt to classify weapons as offensive or defensive, which occupied so large a proportion of the attention of the conference, the French tried to persuade the delegates that the German raiders were offensive vessels, while the Germans vigorously dissented, contending that the stipulations of the Versailles Treaty were responsible for the characteristics of the vessels.⁵⁰

⁵⁰The German defense, while essentially correct, was not able effectively to answer the French claim that several characteristics of the ships which made them especially suitable for commerce raiding--an extremely long range capability in particular--were not required under the treaty. If there was any naval vessel which might have been considered to be an almost purely offensive weapon, it was probably the German pocket battleship. Minutes of the Naval Commission, 1932 Conference, pp. 35-43.

The Americans were not directly concerned with the French-German problem and saw the American role--and that of the British as well --as being mainly that of a mediator. Gibson believed it would be best if the two countries stood in the position of "being present in a friendly capacity and facilitating the approach to these difficult problems, . . ." ⁵¹ The problems were not to be solved. The French remained immovable, determined to accept no limitations on their armed forces unless their demands for security were met; yet they feared that the conference would end in failure, for which they might receive a large share of the blame. ⁵² The Germans, on their part, insisted that the immense continental superiority of France be reduced or the Reichswehr be increased, or both. It was, they said, a matter of simple justice and in the interest of peace. ⁵³ The impasse was complete. Gibson reported "that the atmosphere of the conference at the present moment is very pessimistic. There is a definite feeling of discouragement and confusion." ⁵⁴

Discussions concerning naval limitations did not meet

⁵¹Gibson to Castle, May 10 1932. FRUS, 1932, I, 119-120.

⁵²Gibson to Castle, Apr. 25 1932, ibid., p. 108.

⁵³Memorandum of Conversation Among Members of United States, British and German Delegations, undated, ibid., pp. 109-111.

⁵⁴Gibson to Castle, Apr. 21 1932, ibid., p. 106.

with as much success as those concerning land and air armaments. The main reason was that the great naval powers had already substantially limited their fleets by 1932, while nothing had been done in the matter of limitation of land and air forces. In other words, the naval powers had already advanced a way along the road to disarmament, while the land powers had not. The Americans in particular thought it unfair to ask the naval powers for further sacrifices until the land powers showed themselves willing to make similar sacrifices.⁵⁵ The United States Government reflected the Navy's view when it said that the Geneva Conference was primarily to be viewed as a conference to limit land and air armaments.

In spite of the American wish to prevent discussion of naval questions, further limitations on naval power were much discussed at the conference, and even the Americans felt it necessary to offer proposals of their own. Three major proposals on naval limitation were offered to the conference during 1932--one each by the United States, Great Britain and Japan. The first of these was a British plan, suggested by Stanley Baldwin, the substance of which was given to the Americans in private discussion on May 13. The Baldwin Plan involved proposals relating to land and air as well as naval armaments, and consisted of four main points:

- (1) Total abolition of military aircraft and aircraft

⁵⁵Gibson to Castle, Apr. 9 1932, Castle to Gibson, Apr. 11 1932, ibid., pp. 75-76.

carriers.

- (2) Abolition of battleships.
- (3) Drastic reduction of army effectives (standing forces and reserves).
- (4) Abolition of certain offensive weapons, such as tanks and heavy mobile artillery.⁵⁶

The American reaction to the plan was spirited. Upon being informed of the British proposals, Stimson consulted the Navy Department, and upon its advice he sent an unequivocal rejection. The American fleet, he said, was already greatly weakened by limitations, and the British plan, particularly in regard to battleships, was "an impossible one."⁵⁷ In connection with the rejection, however, Stimson did offer Gibson some ideas as to what proposals regarding naval limitation would be acceptable. These primarily involved reductions in overall tonnage of the various categories on a percentage basis. Battleship tonnages, he suggested, might be reduced about one-third, giving the United States and Great Britain ten vessels to six for Japan. Under no conditions could we consider the abolition of aircraft carriers, but we would accept reductions in total tonnage of 20 percent. Light cruiser and destroyer tonnages might be cut 20 percent

⁵⁶Gibson to Castle, May 13 1932, FRUS., 1932, I, 124.

⁵⁷Stimson to Gibson, June 7 1932, ibid., p. 154.

below the limits set in the London Treaty, but no reductions could be considered on heavy cruisers. Submarine tonnages might be reduced one-third below London levels. He reiterated strongly American objections to further limitations upon the naval powers without a corresponding sacrifice by the land powers.⁵⁸ Alarmed at the adverse American reaction, the British hastened to assure the Americans that Baldwin had been speaking privately and that there had been no intention of putting forward the abolition of battleships as an official proposal by the British government.⁵⁹ The British did not formulate any new naval proposals until the following year.

The American proposals on naval limitation, like those of the British, were coupled with proposed restrictions on land and air forces, but were placed directly before the conference in as dramatic a manner as possible. The idea seems to have originated with Hoover himself, who was extremely disappointed by the lack of progress of the conference. In a Cabinet meeting on May 24, he stated his concern over the high cost of armaments while national economies were collapsing. He specifically voiced his anxiety over the fact that ultimately the United States would have to construct a billion dollars worth of naval vessels in order to reach treaty strength. If armaments were reduced, he said, this vast

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 156-158.

⁵⁹ Mellon (Ambassador in London) to Stimson, June 8 1932, ibid., p. 159.

construction program would be unnecessary. He then laid before the Cabinet some specific proposals which he thought the United States should offer at the conference. He suggested that:

1. Battleship strength should be reduced one-third.
2. Aircraft carriers should be abolished.
3. Cruiser and destroyer strength of the London Treaty Powers should be cut one-third, with France and Italy to build no more.
4. Submarines, military aircraft other than scouting craft, mobile guns of a caliber greater than 6 inches, tanks and gas should all be abolished.
5. Army effective strengths should be reduced one-third.⁶⁰

Stimson immediately noted that Hoover's plan went well beyond the reductions which the Navy Department considered acceptable. Stimson was especially concerned over the proposal to abolish aircraft carriers, in which American potential superiority was greatest and in which the Navy placed increasing confidence.⁶¹ He succeeded in persuading Hoover to modify his plan to the extent that carriers should be cut 25 percent rather than abolished, that cruisers and destroyers should be re-

⁶⁰Memorandum of Statement to Cabinet, May 24 1932, enclosure in Hoover to Stimson, May 24 1932, ibid., pp. 180-182.

⁶¹Memorandum by Stimson, May 25 1932, ibid., p. 184.

duced 25 percent rather than one-third, and that submarines should be reduced one-third rather than abolished, with no nation to retain more than 35,000 tons of submarines.⁶²

The Hoover Plan, as it came to be called, was offered to the conference on June 22. Reaction was immediate, most of it highly favorable. Even the French did not directly oppose it, while the Germans asserted that the plan, if adopted, would go a long way toward satisfying Germany's demand for equality. The Italians accepted the plan absolutely and without reservation.⁶³ Later, however, as emotions cooled, more guarded comments began to appear. Herriot, the new French Premier, announced that certain parts of the Hoover Plan might not be applicable in the existing world situation, and he restated the French view that disarmament was not possible without adequate guarantees of security for France.⁶⁴ The British seemed reluctant to discuss the plan, and there were indications they were exploring with the Japanese the possibility of blocking the naval proposals.⁶⁵ By the beginning of July strong efforts were being made to sidetrack the

⁶²Stimson to Gibson, June 20, June 21 1932, ibid., pp. 195, 213-214.

⁶³Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, June 22 1932, ibid., pp. 215-216.

⁶⁴Armour (chargé Paris) to Stimson, June 25 1932, ibid., p. 223.

⁶⁵Gibson to Stimson, July 1 1932, ibid., p. 252.

plan in the various technical committees.⁶⁶ Eventually the Hoover Plan suffered the same fate as all the other proposals presented at the conference--oblivion.

The Geneva Conference reached a climactic point and then adjourned abruptly shortly after the presentation of the Hoover Plan. The Technical commissions had been meeting periodically since March, and to judge by the discussions in the Naval Commission, none of these meetings would bear much fruit. After several months of argument, the Naval Commission submitted a report on May 28 which showed the wide divergence of opinion on practically every aspect of naval limitation.⁶⁷ The question of just which weapons were offensive and which defensive was especially vexing and, judging by the report, insoluble. The United States, Great Britain and Japan agreed that battleships were not offensive weapons, while the French, Germans and Soviets insisted they were.⁶⁸ The Italians, Germans and Soviets, who did not possess aircraft carriers, considered them to be offensive weapons, while the French, Americans and British, who did have carriers, believed that they were not.⁶⁹ Neither could agreements be reached on

⁶⁶Gibson to Stimson, July 2 1932, ibid., pp. 253-254.

⁶⁷The report is in Minutes of the Naval Commission, 1932 Conference, pp. 126-137.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 128-129.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 129-131.

questions of qualitative limitation. The British and the Japanese, who seemed most interested in securing limitations on battleships, offered a number of proposals pertaining to increasing the effective age of battleships or reducing their tonnage. Referred to Washington for decision,⁷⁰ the proposals were invariably rejected, except those which allowed age limits to be increased to 26 years.⁷¹ Obviously, it would be impossible to secure agreements of any kind on naval limitations.

The work of the technical commissions on land and air forces was more fruitful, and produced various agreements, their efforts and those of the Naval Commission being summarized in a resolution adopted by the conference on July 23.⁷² While the resolution represented the only solid achievement of the conference, it was also the occasion for the withdrawal of the Germans. They, along with the Soviets, voted against the adoption of the resolution, denouncing it as containing no guarantee of changes corresponding to German desires for equality. From then until the end of the year, the conference was adjourned, as the British, French and

⁷⁰Adm. Hepburn to Navy Dept., Apr. 23, June 9 1932, SD500.A15A4 Naval Arm./31, 89.

⁷¹Ser. 1521-P&Q/G.B.438-2, 3 May 1932; Ser. 1521-V/G.B.438-2, 16 June 1932.

⁷²The full text of the July 23 resolution is in FRUS., 1932, I, 318-322.

Americans took the lead in attempts to persuade the Germans to return.

During this interval, the Japanese offered for consideration the third major proposal regarding naval limitations. In late October, Matsudaira informed Davis that the Japanese had a comprehensive naval plan to offer, which he had just received. He intimated that the plan was something of a compromise combining the most acceptable features of the earlier American and British proposals.⁷³ The Japanese plan was not officially presented for another month, but when it was, it was clear that it stood even less chance of acceptance than the others. It provided for limitation of vessels of "great offensive power"--classified according to Japanese standards. It urged qualitative limitations as follows: reduction of battleship unit tonnages to 25,000 tons and reduction of maximum gun size to 14 inches; for heavy cruisers, reduction of tonnage to 8,000 tons; for light cruisers, establishment of a maximum unit tonnage of 6,000 tons. Destroyers and submarines were to remain the same as under the London Treaty. The plan also proposed quantitative limitations to reduce total tonnages well below the London Treaty stipulations.

⁷³Davis to Stimson, Oct. 28 1932, SD500.A15A4 Naval Arm./153.

TABLE 8

TONNAGES OF CATEGORIES AS PROPOSED
BY JAPAN, DECEMBER 5, 1932.

	United States	Great Britain	Japan	France	Italy
Battleships	275,000 (11 ships)	275,000 (11 ships)	200,000 (8 ships)	150,000	150,000
Heavy Cruisers	96,000 (12 ships)	96,000 (12 ships)	80,000 (10 ships)	56,000 (7 ships)	56,000 (7 ships)
Light Cruisers	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Destroyers	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Submarines	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000

Source: Enclosure in Davis to Stimson, Dec. 8 1932, FRUS., 1932, 415.

Three features of the Japanese proposal are readily apparent. First, the tonnages for battleships and heavy cruisers gave the Japanese much better than a 10:7 ratio, which had earlier been considered satisfactory for Japan's needs.⁷⁴ Second, the reductions in unit tonnages proposed by the Japanese would have required the scrapping within a relatively short time of every battleship and heavy cruiser in existence and their replacement at enormous cost. Finally, under the proposals the Japanese would have parity with the United States in light cruisers and destroyers as well as submarines. The plan was obviously unacceptable. The General Board commented: "By presenting these proposals Japan really proposes world approval of Japanese naval supremacy in the Western Pacific. As far as the United States is concerned the proposals are wholly unacceptable."⁷⁵ As far as public opinion was concerned, there seemed to be a general feeling that Japan's attitude at the conference was arrogant and that the Japanese were not really interested in limitation. Yet there was no strong belief that the United States should build its Navy to treaty strength; many felt that existing

⁷⁴The Japanese Naval Staff, in developing its plans for possible war with the United States, considered Japan's chances for victory excellent with the ratios established under the naval treaties, provided the war was fought in the western Pacific. Thaddeus V. Tuleja, Statesmen and Admirals: Quest for a Far Eastern Naval Policy, 1931-1941. (New York, 1963), p. 88.

⁷⁵Ser. 1521-AA(1584)/G.B.438-2, 18 Jan. 1933.

naval strength was adequate.⁷⁶

With the rejection of the Japanese plan no further naval proposals of significance were offered by any major power until March, 1933. The main diplomatic effort was directed toward attempts to find a French-German agreement in principle sufficient to persuade the Germans to return to the Conference. Talks were held during the fall of 1932, with delegates of the United States, Great Britain and Italy diligently seeking a formula acceptable to all. Actually, the problem was not simply a French-German question. Whatever solution might be reached between those countries would inevitably involve Italy and Great Britain directly and the United States indirectly. Davis thought that an Anglo-American understanding was a necessary first step toward agreement among all the countries involved.⁷⁷ It was clear however, that France's attitude lay at the heart of much of the difficulty. In an attempt to reach agreement, the French presented on November 15 a comprehensive proposal which called for the security guarantees long demanded by the French. It proposed that whenever aggression or a threat of aggression took form, the powers signatory to the Kellogg-Briand Pact "shall concert together as promptly as possible with a view

⁷⁶Tupper and McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion, pp. 266-267.

⁷⁷Davis to Stimson, Oct. 19 1932, SD500.A15A4 Naval Arm./144.

to appealing to public opinion and agreeing upon the steps to be taken."⁷⁸ In addition, the French urged a series of reductions or prohibitions of certain land weapons, none of these being much different from points already raised at Geneva. The Germans found nothing in the French plan to satisfy their aspirations,⁷⁹ so the matter was quietly dropped. Ultimately, after a series of conversations among the five powers at Geneva during the period between December 2 and 12, the French agreed to accept equality of rights for Germany as a principle, with the conference itself to decide how the principle was to be practically applied. Thereupon the Germans agreed to return to the conference.⁸⁰

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE:
SECOND PHASE.

The first phase of the Geneva Conference was now over, and preparations were made to convene once more early in 1933. The Germans' decision to resume their places at the conference table made a continuation of discussions possible, but the agreement which had prompted their decision actually

⁷⁸Enclosure in Wilson to Stimson, Nov. 15 1932, FRUS., 1932, I, 380.

⁷⁹Gordon (Chargé Berlin) to Stimson, Nov. 18 1932, ibid., 397-398.

⁸⁰Memorandum of Five-Power Conversations at Geneva, Dec. 2-12, 1932, ibid., pp. 489-528.

did nothing more than return the situation to what it had been before. French acceptance of equality of rights for Germany as a principle was a slight advance but had little practical significance, since the conference might well argue fruitlessly over how the principle was to be applied. In fact this is what happened. Hitler's accession to power at the end of January and his subsequent actions during the rest of the year did nothing to allay French suspicions of German intentions, and by the fall of 1933, when Hitler took Germany out of both the conference and the League, no way had been found to give practical expression to the principle of equality in such a way as to satisfy both German claims and French insistence on security.

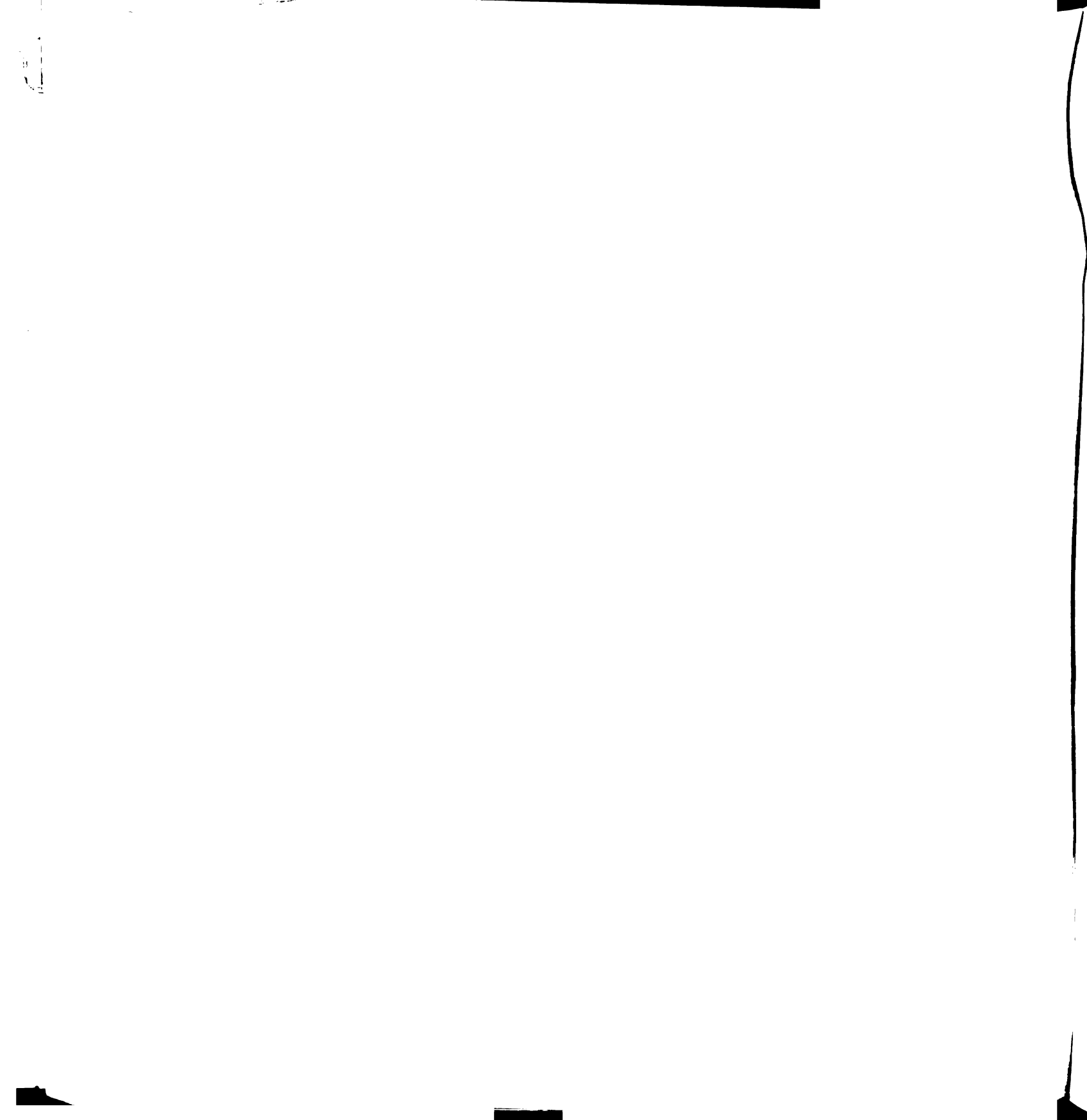
Attitudes on all sides were hardening. Each nation seemed convinced that others were bent upon securing agreements to their own advantage alone. The General Board in its report on the 1932 phase of the conference realistically summed up the situation:

At Geneva in 1932, Soviet Russia stood for complete disarmament, which would enhance her hopes of world revolution. Germany proposed sweeping reductions in armaments to bring other powers down to her own status under the Versailles Treaty. France, supported by Poland and other interested powers, stood for consolidation of the status quo, . . . which would tend to maintain France's hegemony over the Continent. Italy's proposals and her support of measures of reduction of armaments were in accord with her policy of 'armaments equality with the strongest armed nation on the continent' . . . to be attained by the scaling down of French armaments and not at disastrous cost to herself. Japan indicated her dissatisfaction with the present naval ratios and favored only such reductions as would enhance her strong position in the

Far East. She rejected all proposals that were not in harmony with this policy. . . . Generally speaking, the large number of small powers represented at the Conference favored limitation of armaments to low levels, causing reductions not directly affecting them but indirectly increasing their relative strength. The Hoover proposals were criticized on the ground that they permitted the United States to attain relative treaty strength without the expense of building, while Great Britain and Japan would have to scrap existing ships."⁸¹

The Board did not say it, but it was clear that the various national views were incompatible. The inescapable conclusion was that the Geneva Conference was doomed to failure, no matter how long it might continue its deliberations. Under the circumstances, it seemed to the naval officers that the Americans need not make any further concessions, since there was nothing they could do, short of abject surrender to every demand made upon them, to pull the floundering conference out of the mire into which it had fallen. The general feeling, outside naval circles as well as within, was that the problems of the conference were essentially European problems, to be solved by the Europeans. As if to assume that no further progress could be hoped for from the present conference, the Board asserted that at future conferences the United States should insist upon: (1) agreements based upon simple and direct means of limitation; (2) maintenance of the 5:5:3 ratio and the present characteristics of vessels, "both of which are vitally important to the interests of this

⁸¹Ser. 1521-AA(1584)/G.B. 438-2, 18 Jan. 1933.



country"; (3) agreements in which our proper position is assured at the beginning of the term of agreement, rather than at its end. "Present preparedness must not be sacrificed to an illusory future readiness."⁸²

The second phase of the conference began when the General Commission convened on January 16, with the Germans once more taking their places at the conference table. When the conference had first met in February, 1932, many officials had not considered the prospects hopeful, but by 1933 there was an even more widespread conviction of pessimism. The international situation was no better--perhaps even worse--than it had been in 1932. In the Far East another crisis was breaking, this time in connection with Japanese inroads into Jehol, the Chinese province bordering Manchuria. In Europe Hitler's accession to power had been followed by a revival in Germany of an intense nationalistic spirit, and the possibility of drastic attempts by that country to escape the restrictions of Versailles was rapidly turning into probability. Under the circumstances, it was apparent that there would be a hardening of attitude and consequently less likelihood that any of the major powers would approve a disarmament plan which would really disarm.

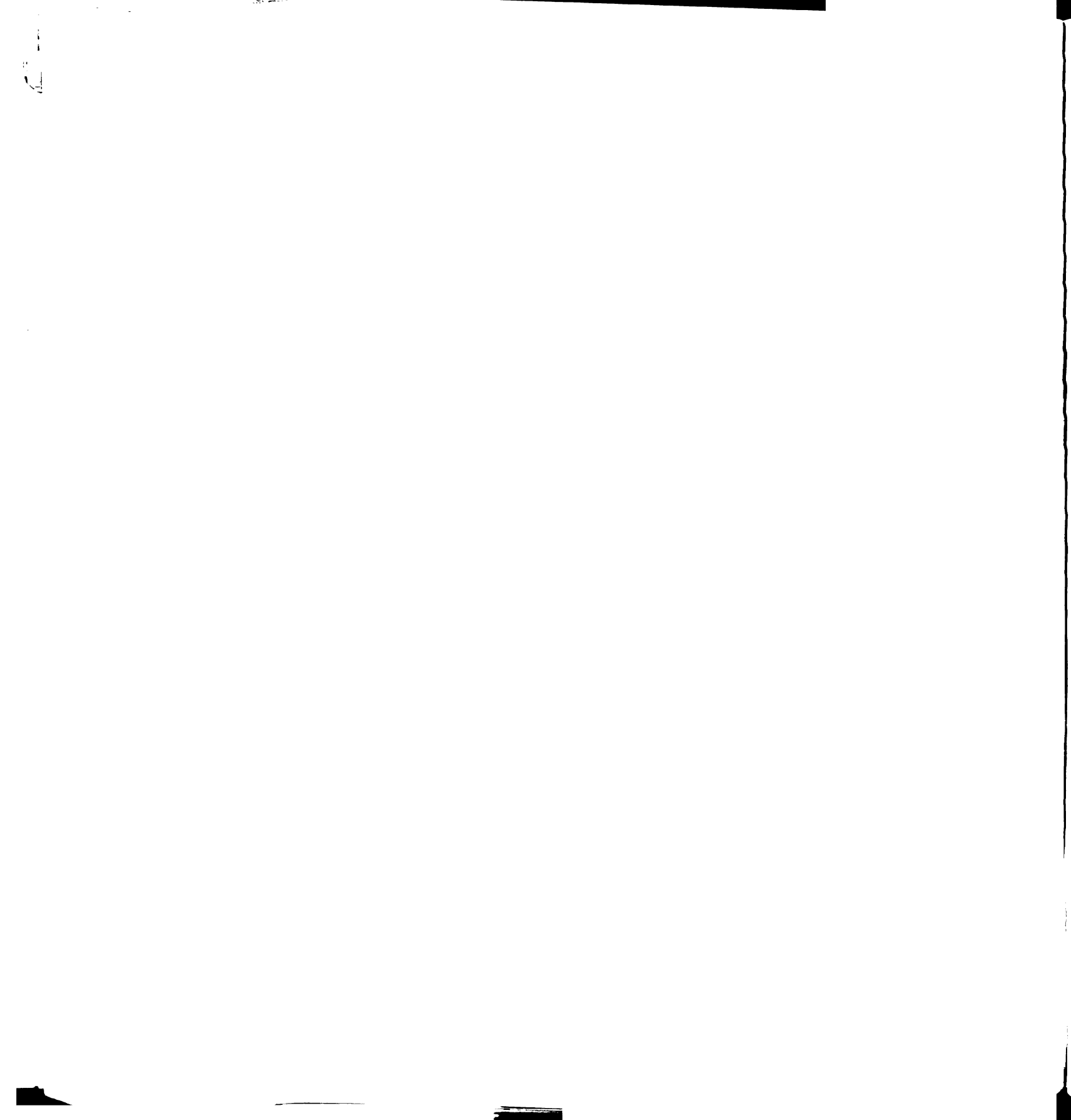
Only the British seemed optimistic. After some preliminary discussion, MacDonald introduced a draft treaty of

⁸²Ibid.

disarmament, the most comprehensive proposal made at the conference. Divided into five parts, the MacDonald plan provided mainly for security, in the form of a consultative pact among the Kellogg-Briand Pact signatories, and limitation of land, naval and air armaments. The limitations would involve tanks, heavy mobile artillery and aircraft, and an attempt to limit the French and Italian building programs and to postpone the replacement of battleships until after December, 1936.⁸³ The entire plan represented an attempt to incorporate some of the features of previous proposals which had received a large degree of support. As far as the naval provisions were concerned, the plan tried to provide for stabilization of the French and Italian fleets while the provisions of the London and Washington treaties were essentially maintained. While making several comments regarding the land and air provisions, Gibson refrained from taking any position on the naval provisions and referred them to Washington.⁸⁴ There was nothing in the naval proposals which could not meet with the Navy's approval, since, unlike the Japanese plan, they did not attempt to alter the ratios established by the naval treaties; and the General Board voiced its

⁸³ The text of the MacDonald treaty plan is in Gibson to Hull, March 17 1933, FRUS., 1933, I, 43-54.

⁸⁴ Gibson to Hull, March 17 1933, ibid., pp. 56-57.



approval of the plan.³⁵ The main provisions with which the Americans could find fault were those of Part I providing for consultation in case of aggression.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, the same feature of the naval proposals which made them acceptable to the Americans made them unacceptable to the Japanese, who were by now intent upon revision of the naval treaty ratios.⁸⁷ The whole Japanese position toward disarmament had stiffened noticeably since they had quit the League in February, and although they remained in the conference it was evident they were interested in disarmament only to the extent that others disarmed. Their determination to keep the mandated islands was further evidence of their desire to strengthen their position in the Far East;⁸⁸ under such conditions Japanese support for a real disarmament plan was not likely.

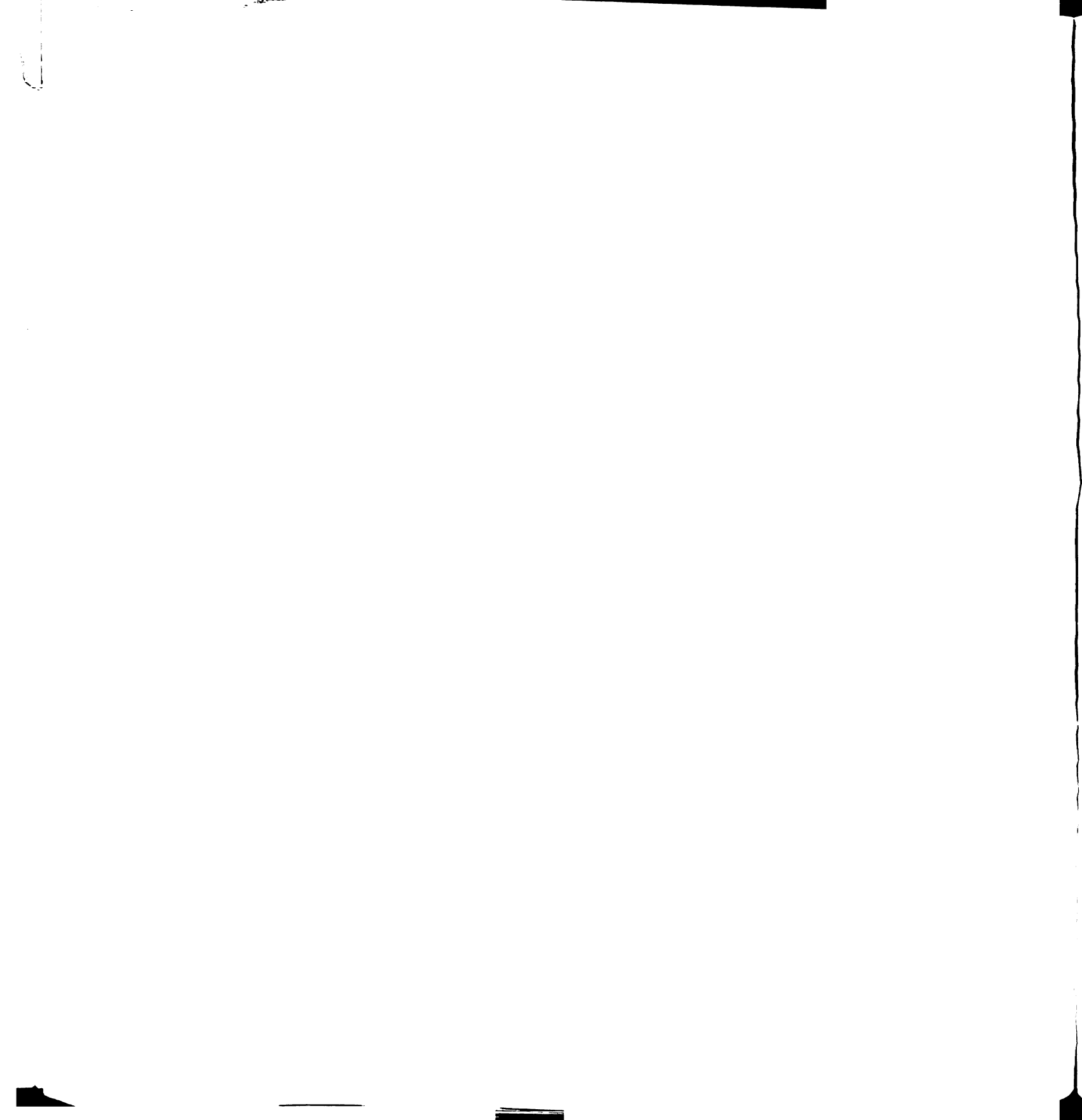
The MacDonald Plan was the main subject of discussion at the general session and in the technical commissions dur-

³⁵ Ser. 1521-II/G.B.438-2, 21 March 1933; Ser. 1521-MM/G.B. 438-2, 22 June 1933.

⁸⁶ Memorandum of a conversation between Roosevelt and MacDonald, April 23 1933, FRUS, 1933, I, 102-105, 106-107. Both the Navy and Army also were concerned over the aerial provision limiting the total number of aircraft possessed by any nation to 500 planes. The Navy said the number was too small, and the principle of parity in aircraft for all nations was not acceptable. Hull to Gibson, March 23 1933, FRUS., 1933, I, 74.

⁸⁷ Grew (Ambassador in Tokyo) to Hull, March 22 1933, ibid., p. 68.

⁸⁸ Grew to Hull, Feb. 10 1933. FRUS., 1933, III, 749-750.



ing most of the rest of the year, but there was little question that it stood no more chance of general acceptance than had the plans offered earlier. Besides the Japanese hostility, the steadily worsening French-German relationship made agreement impossible. By May, the Germans, who had been unable to obtain American support for a re-negotiation of the armaments restrictions of the Versailles Treaty,⁸⁹ were showing increasing signs of hostility, raising the question of whether they might not once again walk out of the conference. Anxiety increased when it was learned that Hitler would deliver a major speech before the Reichstag on May 17, and Roosevelt decided to make a public appeal for a continuation of the conference. Addressed to all the chiefs of state but directed particularly to Hitler, his appeal was given on May 16. He stated that national governments could best allay people's fears by taking concrete steps toward disarmament. Specifically, he proposed that the nations agree to the MacDonald Plan, that they not increase their armaments as long as the conference met, and that they enter into a mutual pledge of non-aggression.⁹⁰ The Germans generally approved of the statement and Hitler's speech to the Reichstag was surprisingly mild, one observer characterizing

⁸⁹Hull to Gibson, May 8 1933, FRUS, 1933, I, 130-131.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 143-145.

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it as "entirely different in tone from all others I have heard the Chancellor deliver."⁹¹ The Japanese were all smiles, but were not sure that the Roosevelt speech was directed to conditions in the Far East. In any case, they said, there would be a delay in the giving of an official answer since, "in view of the situation in China, there would be some embarrassment in answering the President's communication."⁹² Only the French voiced misgivings, and reiterated their position that security for France must precede disarmament.⁹³

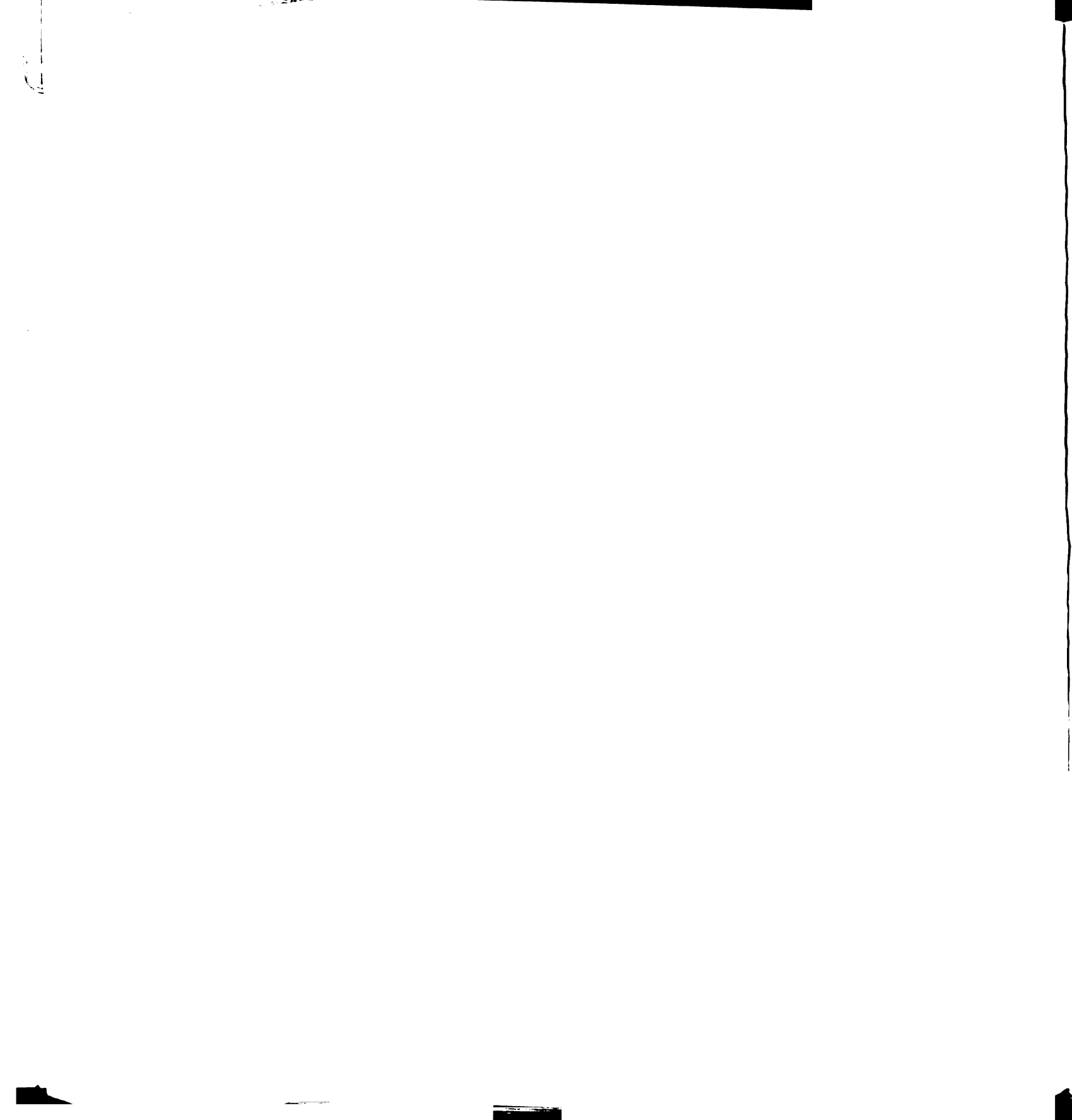
In spite of the generally favorable reaction to the President's appeal, it soon became evident that the Germans and the Japanese had not changed their positions. In further discussions of the naval provisions of the MacDonald Plan the Japanese attempted to delay and to confuse further progress by making their agreement to prohibit bombing conditional upon the abolition of aircraft carriers, a situation which, Davis believed, "would prejudice the entire procedure to which we are committed inasmuch as it would open an endless debate on the naval chapter; . . ."⁹⁴ The General Board agreed that

⁹¹Gordon to Hull, May 17 1933, ibid., p. 150.

⁹²Memorandum by Undersecretary of State Phillips, May 16 1933, ibid., p. 147.

⁹³Marriner (chargé Paris) to Hull, May 17 1933, ibid., pp. 147-148.

⁹⁴Davis to Hull, May 30 1933, SD500.A15A4 Naval Arm./175.



acceptance of the Japanese-proposal would vastly complicate the proceedings and restated the Navy's view that while a reduction in the treaty tonnages for carriers was acceptable, their total abolition was not. Since the Navy lacked bases in the western Pacific it needed carriers.⁹⁵

By the end of the summer the conference had once again entered a situation of stagnation. Finally, on October 14, after several last-minute attempts to work out compromises, the German Foreign Minister, von Neurath, stated the conference could not achieve its purpose--a general disarmament treaty--solely because of "the unwillingness on the part of the highly armed states to carry out their contractual obligation to disarm." Hence, Neurath announced, Germany was withdrawing from the conference.⁹⁶ While the German withdrawal did relate to the stagnation of the conference and to the belief in official circles in Germany that direct negotiations with France might result in greater success, other reasons for their action had to do with internal political considerations and perhaps with Hitler's emotional reaction to what he considered slighting remarks by Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary, in a conversation with Goebbels.⁹⁷

⁹⁵Ser. 1521-LL:3/G.B. 438-2. 20 July 1933.

⁹⁶Davis to Hull, Oct. 14 1933, FRUS., 1933, I, 265.

⁹⁷Dodd (Ambassador in Berlin) to Hull, Oct. 17, Oct. 18, Oct. 20 1933, FRUS., 1933, I, 285-289, 291-292. Also Messersmith (Consul general Berlin) to Hull, Nov. 3 1933, ibid., pp. 302-304.

In spite of the German action, the general feeling in the conference was that negotiations should continue.⁹³ It was wishful thinking, for after October 14 the conference was practically at an end, although some discussions continued for a time thereafter. It would be easy to place the blame for the collapse of the conference on Germany's withdrawal, but in fact it is not possible to assign responsibility to any one nation. French insistence upon a strong preponderance of armed might over Germany had much to do with the failure to achieve limitations upon land armaments, while Japan's attitude did much to prevent the adoption of the naval proposal of the MacDonald Plan. In fact, the failure of the conference is primarily attributable to the developments in the general international situation after 1931--a situation wherein it was becoming increasingly evident that relations among nations were not improving, that for the most part the deterioration was not caused by the existence of an arms race, and that the world was moving in the direction of war rather than away from it.

⁹³Davis to Hull, Oct. 19 1933, ibid., pp. 289-290.

CHAPTER VIII
THE REVIVAL OF NAVAL EXPANSION.

The coming of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the White House proved to be the turning point for the fortunes of the Navy. Nowhere in the history of presidential administrations was there so complete a reversal of attitude toward the Navy and its problems than now took place. As has been seen, Hoover enjoyed the worst possible relationship with the Navy, but in Roosevelt's case the relationship was smoother and much more fruitful from the Navy's viewpoint. It was expected that Roosevelt would be more sympathetic toward the Navy's problems than Hoover had been, since Roosevelt's tenure as Assistant Secretary of the Navy during World War I had brought him into close contact with naval problems in general and with the naval officer's outlook in particular. As Assistant Secretary he had indicated his belief that the United States Navy should ultimately be equal to the largest navy in the world,¹ and nothing in his subsequent career had indicated that the ideal had been abandoned. On the other hand, his later career had not been connected with naval matters but had dealt more with matters of practical bread-and-butter politics arising out of the coming of the

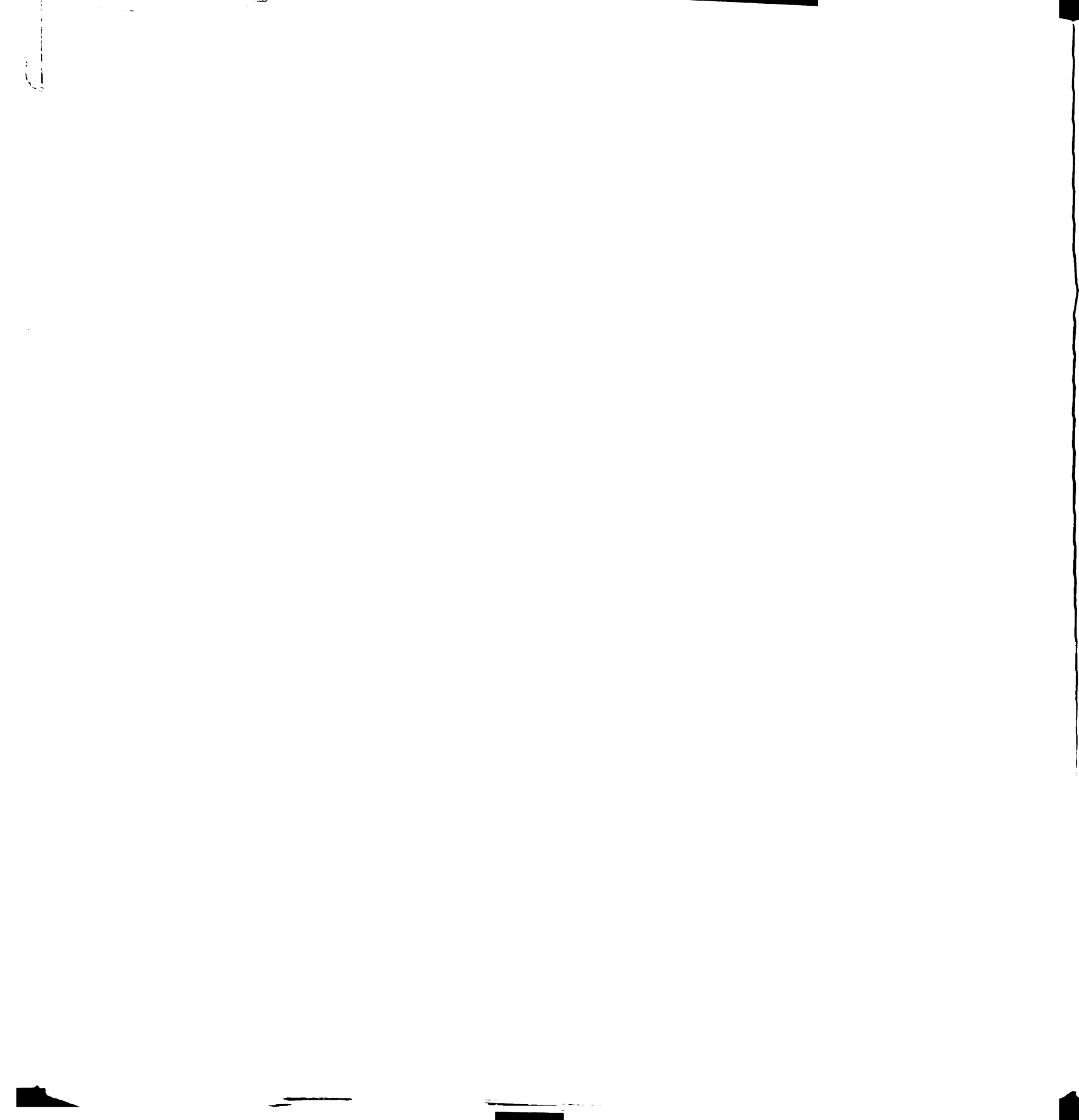
¹Davis, A Navy Second to None, p. 357.

Great Depression.

Thus as Roosevelt entered office on March 4, 1933, it was not certainly known whether his earlier sympathy toward the Navy would assert itself or whether he would see the economic disaster into which the nation had fallen as had his predecessor and would continue attempts to bring about recovery by measures of economy at the Navy's expense. It was generally assumed that Roosevelt would not attempt to emulate Hoover's policies, since these seemed to have done no good and since the often-voiced promise of a "New Deal" implied a new line of attack on the problems of the depression. Yet Roosevelt's initial statements and actions were strangely disquieting to naval men and their supporters, as they seemed to indicate a preoccupation with measures which sought to reduce expenses and to balance the budget--measures for which the Hoover administration had become notorious, and which had brought the Navy to the brink of complete disorganization.

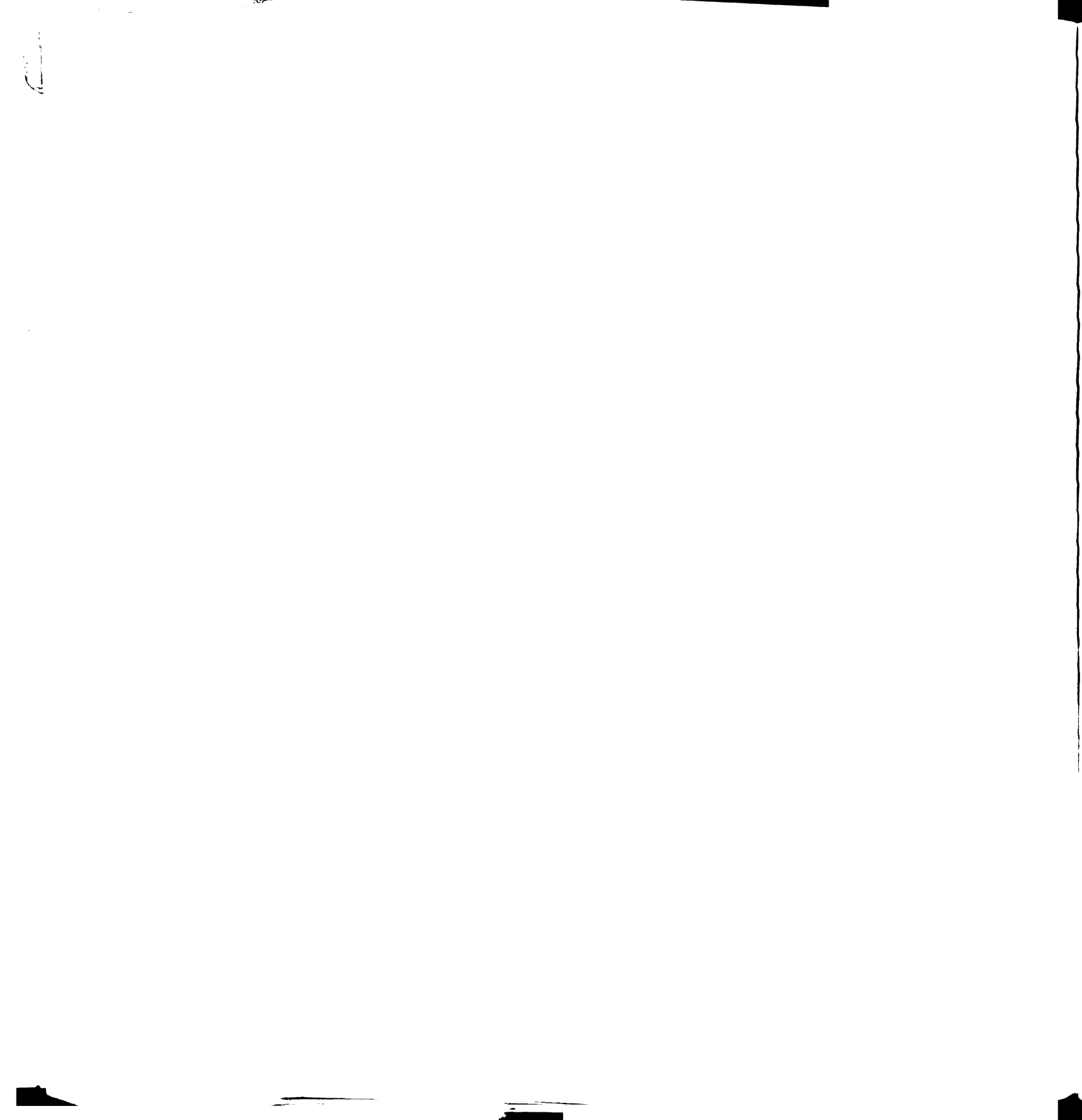
**WARSHIPS AS PUBLIC WORKS:
THE NAVY AND THE NEW DEAL.**

As it turned out, however, Roosevelt's concern with cost cutting and budget balancing was only temporary. Far less committed to budgetary conservatism as a principle than his predecessor, Roosevelt was soon persuaded of the necessity



for large scale programs of unemployment relief, public works and aid to business, which required deficit spending. Public works programs, which had been used to an extent by Hoover, were particularly favored as the best means of direct spending by governments to promote recovery, since they provided both unemployment relief and the construction of needed buildings, parks, roads and other benefits to the public at large. Public works spending also avoided the criticism of "subsidizing idleness", which was so much directed at programs for direct relief.

An important question, from the Navy's point of view, was: what constituted public works? That roads, playgrounds, courthouses and the like were public works had long been accepted. But why could not warship construction be so considered? To some there was not and could not be any connection between a destroyer and a municipal building, but to others there was no great difference. If the construction of a new city hall during a time of depression was valuable primarily as a means of putting money into the hands of contractors and construction workers, and secondarily as a sound means of increasing the efficiency of city government, then a new destroyer could be viewed as being valuable primarily as a means of aiding the shipbuilding industry and shipyard workers and secondarily as an addition to the Navy's means of protecting national security--which was after all an important public function.



As has been stated earlier, the Secretary of the Navy used the argument that warships were good public works in his testimony to the Senate Naval Affairs Committee on the occasion of their discussion of the 1932 bills for the increase of the Navy. At that time the idea had been brushed aside, but now with a Chief Executive dedicated to finding novel ways to stimulate employment the concept took root. The principle was first established in section 202 of the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16, 1933. By the terms of that law the Federal Emergency Administrator of Public Works was required to submit to the President a program of public works projects, including the construction of naval vessels and naval aircraft.² That same day President Roosevelt, in Executive Order 6174, authorized the Federal Emergency Administrator to allot \$238,000,000 "to the Department of the Navy for the construction of certain vessels," . . .³ Later additional funds were granted for the construction of aircraft and for public works projects at several naval bases, air stations and other shore facilities.⁴

After recovering from their surprise at this complete

²U.S. Statutes, XLVIII, pt. 1, p. 201.

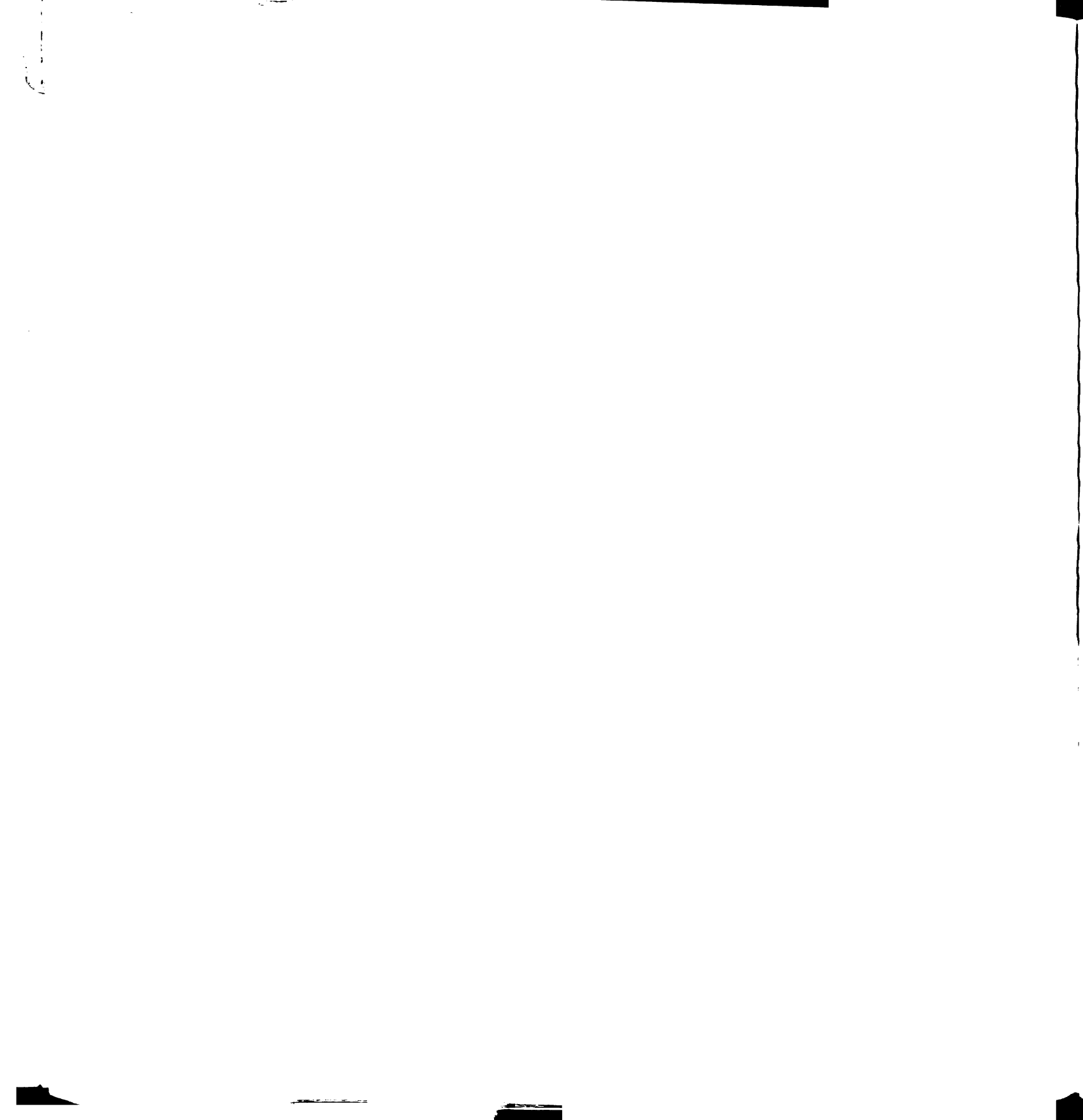
³Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Principal Acts and Executive Orders Pertaining to Public Works Administration (Washington, 1938), p. 63.

⁴U.S. Statutes, XLVIII, pt. 1, p. 1055.

reversal of the Navy's fortunes, the naval planners lost no time in developing a program. Earlier the General Board had recommended that Congress should immediately enact legislation to authorize the construction of 2 aircraft carriers, 7 light cruisers, 47 destroyers and 18 submarines.⁵ With the funds provided by the NRA program, both carriers, three of the cruisers, twenty destroyers and four submarines were promptly contracted for and most of them laid down by the end of the year. In addition, one of the heavy cruisers previously authorized was commenced with NRA funds.

Naval leaders were elated. There is no question that the NRA shipbuilding program marks the turning point in the Navy's fortunes and the end of the long period of general decline following the signing of the Washington Treaty. After mid-1933 the direction of naval building was toward an ever-greater expansion. The combination of the growing militancy of Japan in the Far East, the mounting suspicions about Hitler in Europe, the fruitless negotiations of the disarmament conference at Geneva, the acceptance of the idea that warship construction was an important part of economic recovery, and above all the accession of a chief executive who was interested in naval expansion, produced a remarkable naval renaissance which moved at such a pace as to make the

⁵Ser. 1619/G.B. 420-2, 10 May 1933.



"unreasonable" demands of big Navy advocates in 1931 look picayune ten years later.

The immediate results of the NRA program were dramatic. Less than a year after the allocation of funds by Roosevelt's order the General Board submitted recommendations for the 1936 building program which by comparison with the general pessimistic tone of previous recommendations positively glowed with enthusiasm. The NRA program, it said, was of inestimable value in strengthening the Navy. As a result of it "a material change in the naval situation. . .has been made and a substantial beginning of the attainment of treaty strength has been accomplished."⁶ The NRA program mightily influenced naval expansion for approximately four years, during which time it provided a large portion of the funds which were expended upon ship construction and upon improvement of shore facilities, actually rendering unnecessary increases of regular appropriations, which might have been much more difficult to push through successive Congresses.

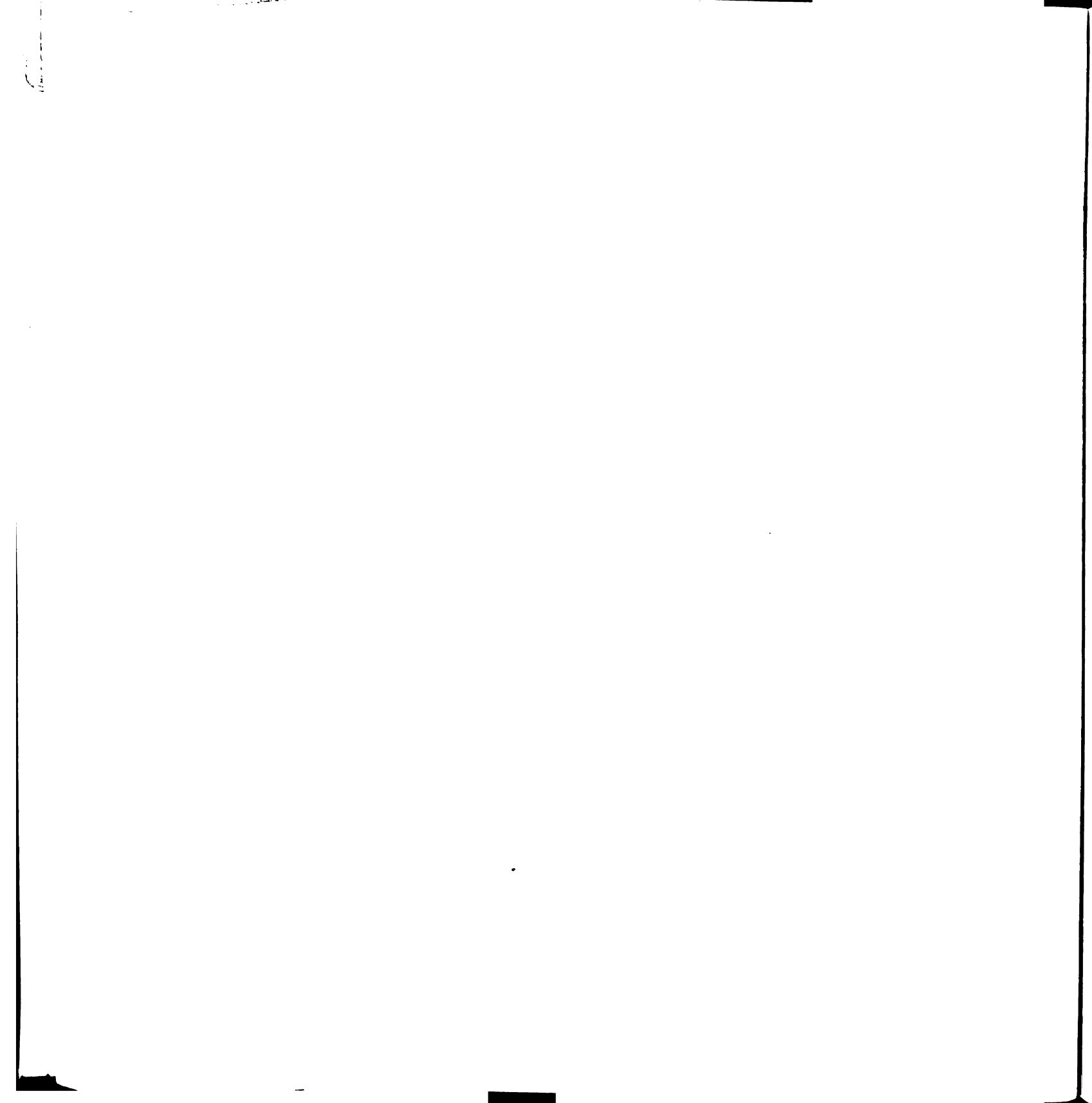
Not only was the program a success from the point of view of strengthening American naval power, it was also a success as a public works concept to alleviate unemployment. The House Committee on Appropriations reported that the funds allocated during the first six months of the program totalled \$274,765,900, of which \$238,000,000 was for ship construction

⁶ Ser. 1659/G.B. 429-2, 9 May 1934.

and the rest for procuring aircraft and improving shore facilities. This large sum, it stated, had had many beneficial effects on employment, since nearly ninety percent of the sum represented wages to labor. In fact, "it is questionable if any better way existed for complying with the spirit of the National Industrial Recovery Act of getting money into the hands of wage earners in return for valuable useful services rendered". . .⁷ No longer would Congress as a whole question the allegation that the Navy needed to be expanded, or that funds expended on warships was money wasted. It was a remarkable transformation.

The only dissonant notes came from abroad. In January, 1933, the Japanese had announced a new naval replenishment law to provide their fleet with an aircraft carrier, a light cruiser, seven destroyers and six submarines. As of that time there was every likelihood that the Japanese would enter the conference scheduled to be held in 1935 under the terms of the London and Washington treaties with substantial parity with the United States in underage tonnage in every category except battleships. In that case their position would be very strong, for experience in naval conferences indicated that tonnage in being was likely to be the basis of any agreements reached, and thus the Japanese might be able

⁷House Report no. 335, 73rd. Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934) pp. 4-5.

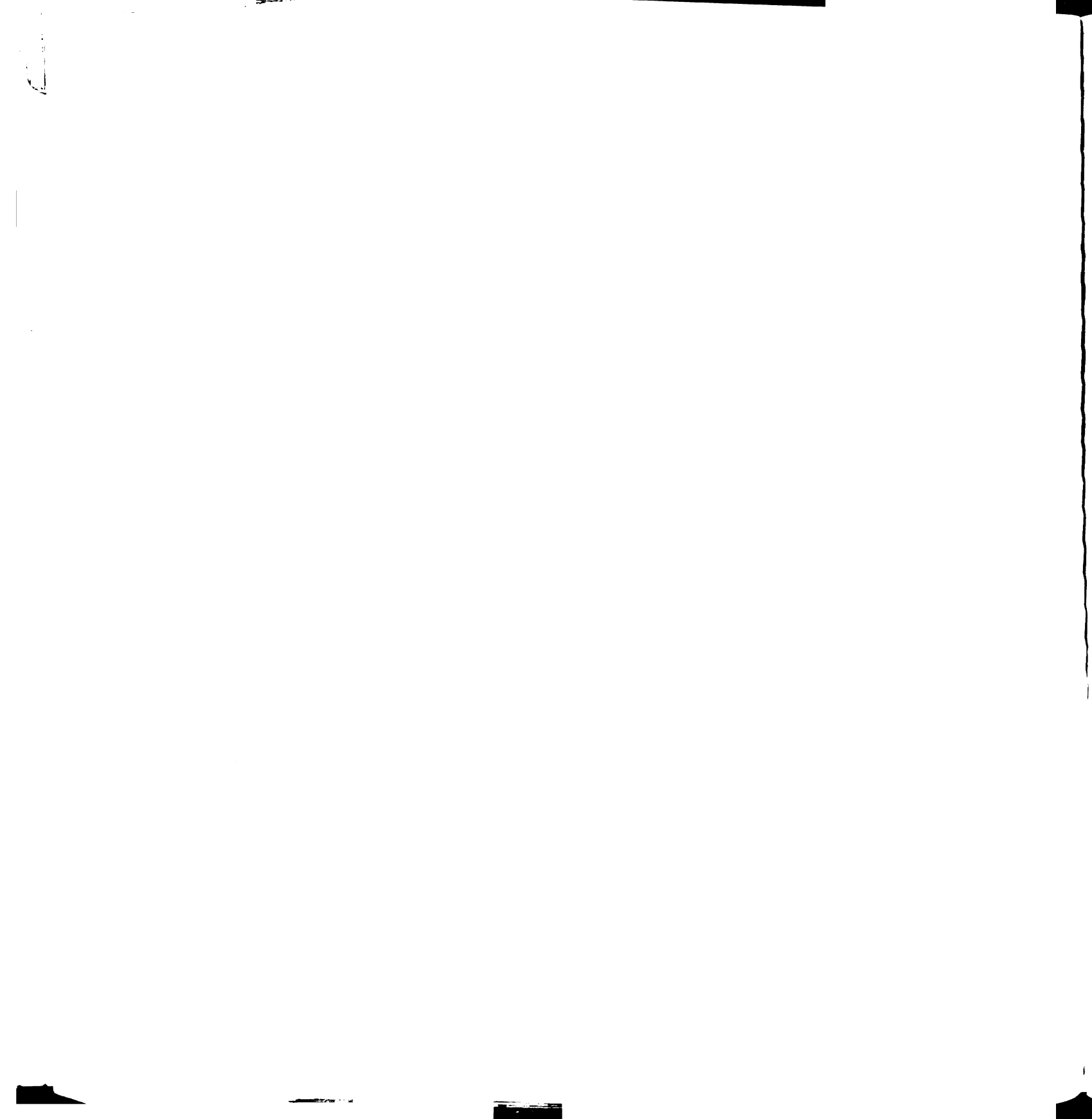


successfully to advance a claim for equality in ratios. Unfortunately for them, the NRA program seriously endangered their hopes. Spurred by the expansion of American building, the Japanese hastened to augment their naval construction with another program announced in July, 1933, which authorized the laying down of another carrier, another light cruiser, and seven destroyers.⁸ It was evident that Japanese-American naval relations were about to enter a critical phase. The Ambassador in Tokyo reported that it was futile to try to negotiate with the Japanese. "The necessity of self-defense, the conviction of the legitimacy of their action on the continent, the sting of naval inferiority, the determination to brook no interference in Asiatic affairs, are not susceptible to logical treatment nor to adjustment over conference tables."⁹ It was a prophetic remark.

The British were also concerned over the new American building program; however, they viewed it not so much a direct threat to them as a portent of a new naval armaments race. They warned the Americans that the situation could easily lead to another naval competition, this time in a new type of naval vessel--the 10,000 ton light cruiser. The British pointed out that they had no ships of this type and would be forced to build them if the United States persisted in its

⁸Grew to Hull, July 26 1933, FRUS, 1933, I, 380-382.

⁹Ibid. , p. 382.



course of action. They urged the Americans to suspend their cruiser program if the Japanese would agree to do the same.¹⁰ The American government replied that the Navy was simply trying to build to treaty strength in a type of ship which was better suited to American needs than was a smaller vessel. Furthermore, it was pointed out, the London treaty was not being violated in any way, and the British were reminded that the United States had never questioned the right of the British to build as they chose within treaty restrictions.¹¹ The Americans went ahead with their program; eventually nine 10,000 ton heavily armed light cruisers were built by 1940.¹² Their construction did provide an added impetus to the expansion programs of most of the naval powers after 1933. It is significant that the Japanese light cruisers laid down after that year were of the large type, while the British, as they had feared, felt themselves required to build a substantial portion of their cruiser tonnage between 1934 and 1939 in vessels which approached 10,000 tons displacement.

¹⁰ Aide-memoire of British Embassy to Department of State, Sept. 14 1933, ibid., pp. 382-383.

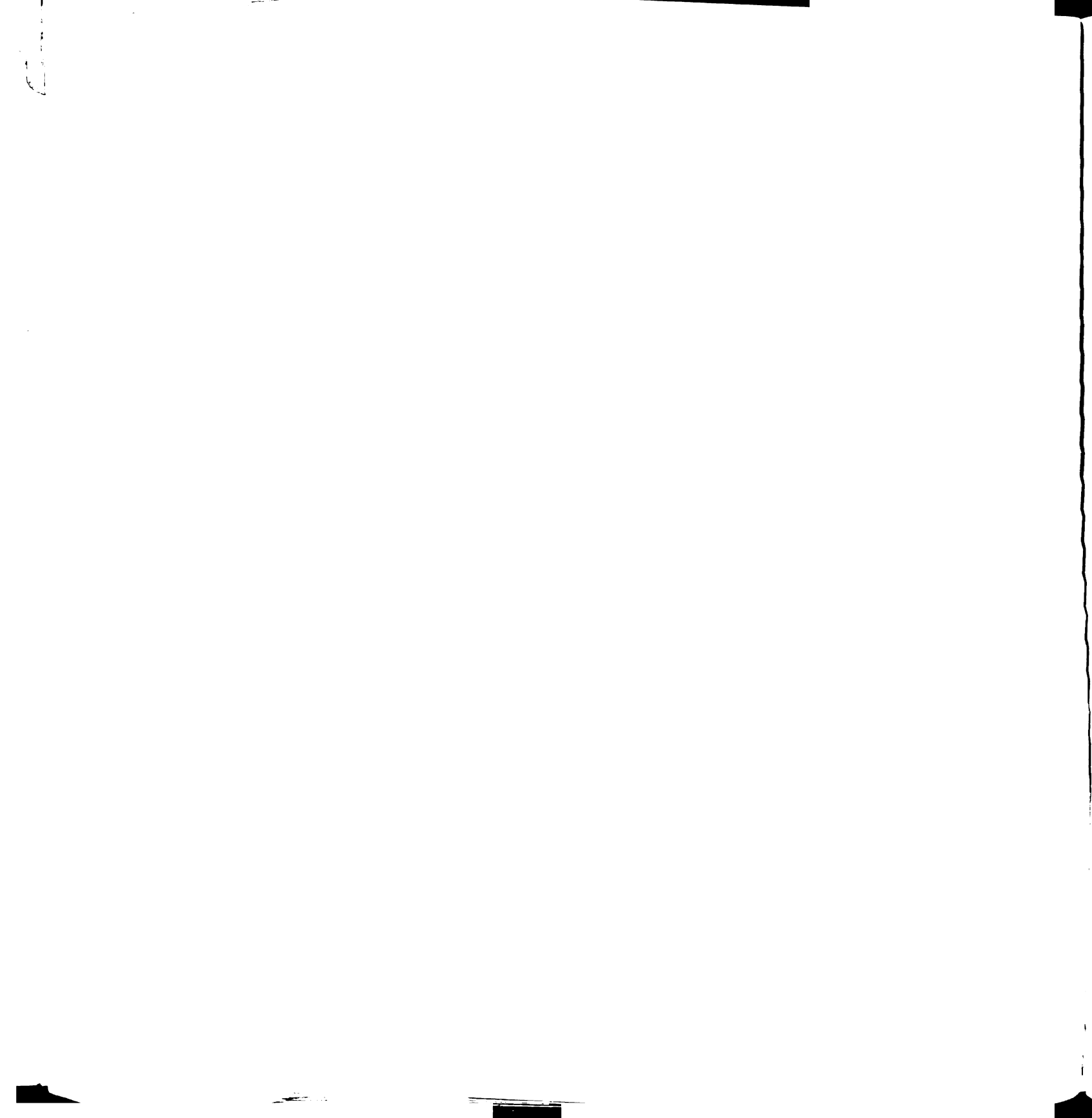
¹¹ Memorandum of Department of State to British Embassy, Sept. 22 1933, ibid., pp. 386-388. It is ironic that it was primarily the British insistence at London that the United States agree to subdivide the cruiser category into two types which was the cause of the creation of the new "heavy" light cruisers.

¹² Brooklyn and St. Louis classes, mounting fifteen 6 inch guns and capable of 32 knots.

TOWARD A TREATY NAVY:
THE VINSON-TRAMMELL ACT OF 1934.

The NRA program, important though it was as evidence of a new resurgence of naval expansion, was but the beginning of a series of laws to build the Navy up to--and after 1937, well beyond--the limits stipulated by the naval treaties. Under NRA the public works aspect of naval construction had been emphasized; now the big navy men believed that the time had come to develop a building program explicitly directed toward the objective of reaching treaty tonnage quotas. The impetus provided to ship construction by the NRA fund allocations was never lost. In March, 1934, the regular Naval Appropriations Act provided \$27,342,000 to commence the construction of a heavy cruiser and three light cruisers previously authorized by the 1929 Act.¹³ The Navy's recommendations for the 1936 program had already been presented to Congress in the form of Senate bill S1154, but when a number of the vessels requested were laid down under the NRA program, the revision of the recommendations made a new bill necessary. The new bill, S2493, authorized the construction of all remaining tonnage necessary to reach treaty strength in underage vessels by 1937--one carrier of 15,000 tons, 99,200 tons of destroyers, and 35,530 tons of submarines, this entire tonnage being for replacements. In addition, the bill provided for the increase of naval aviation to 2184 aircraft, more than doubling its

¹³U.S. Statutes, XLVIII, pt. 1, 421.



existing strength.¹⁴

Senate bill S2493 was not passed, however. On January 9, 1934, a practically identical bill had been introduced in the House by Carl Vinson, chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee.¹⁵ His previous attempts to persuade Congress to authorize a treaty navy had not been successful, but that had been two years before. Now the time seemed propitious and Vinson made the most of the opportunity. The bill was reported favorably on January 24 by his committee. The report stated it was time for a definite long range building policy to be inaugurated.

The adoption of a definite naval policy will permit an orderly building program in the future. Such a building program will not only be more economical but it will also contribute to better designs, better workmanship, less disruption of industry, and will keep the national defense on a higher level than is possible under the old wasteful methods of building a navy by alternate spasms of intense activity and practically complete idleness.¹⁶

The cost of the contemplated program was estimated at \$380,-329,000, beginning in fiscal 1935.¹⁷ The report expressed

¹⁴U.S. Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Hearing on S2493: Construction of Certain Naval Vessels at the Limits Prescribed by the Treaties Signed at Washington and London, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934), p. 1. Hereafter cited as Hearing on S2493.

¹⁵CR, LXXVIII, 295.

¹⁶House Report 338, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934), p. 2.

¹⁷H.L. Roosevelt (Asst. Sec. of Navy) to Vinson, Jan. 20 1934, Annex to ibid.

perfectly the arguments which the General Board had been advancing for years. It was assumed that the bill, although it did not prescribe any schedule for the laying of keels, would establish a program which could be substantially completed by 1942.¹⁸

The Vinson bill set off long and intense debate in the House. The supporters of the bill emphasized the threatening world situation and the relatively weak position of the United States Navy compared to the Japanese Navy, which was practically at treaty strength in underage vessels. Vinson himself argued persuasively of the necessity for building to treaty strength and of the importance of an orderly program.¹⁹ Others pointed to what they considered the failure of the naval treaties to limit armaments,²⁰ and to the fact that the bill did not appropriate a penny of funds, but merely authorized building.²¹ Several dissenters put up a spirited battle, stating that the Navy as then constituted was adequate for defense and that many of the vessels, though overage, would actually be effective for several more years.²² Others expressed con-

¹⁸Vinson's statement in CR, LXXVIII, 1622.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 1597-98.

²⁰Drewry (Va.), ibid., pp. 1601-02.

²¹Britten (Ill.), ibid., p. 1591.

²²Frear (Wis.), Collins (Miss.), ibid., pp. 1606-07, 1616.

cern that the United States spent more money on its Navy than any other country did, and they claimed large naval expenditures were quite wrong when so many in the country cried for relief.²³ One attempt by Hastings of Oklahoma to establish a limit for future spending under the bill was voted down.²⁴ One ingenious argument expressed was that a large building program would be disadvantageous to us at the next naval conference, since we might then be required to scrap large amounts of tonnage as we did after the Washington Conference.²⁵ The opposition spoke in vain. A large majority was determined upon naval expansion at that time, and on January 30 the bill was passed by voice vote.²⁶

In the House, although the opposition had been vocal, there had been little question that the bill would be passed, but in the Senate the situation was somewhat different. Though a large majority of senators favored the bill--or perhaps because of it--attempts were set afoot to prevent the Vinson bill from coming to a vote. For nearly a month efforts of Trammell, the chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, to bring the measure to the floor were unsuccessful, although his committee reported the bill favorably with some amend-

²³Biermann (Iowa), Shoemaker (Minn.), Sisson (N.Y.), ibid., pp. 1602-03, 1623, 1621.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 1593-94, 1626-27.

²⁵Ayres (Kan.), ibid., p. 1618.

²⁶Ibid., p. 1630.

ments.²⁷ Trammell feared a possible filibuster, but finally succeeded in getting the bill to the floor on March 5.²⁸ Frazier and Nye of North Dakota, and King of Utah led the opposition. All the old arguments heard in the House were heard again in the halls of the Senate,²⁹ and a few new ones were presented as well. Nye and Borah introduced the theme of the greedy munitions makers, claiming that passage of the bill would start another naval race which could only benefit the arms manufacturers.³⁰ Walsh of Massachusetts took the lead in defending the bill, pointing out that it was designed to remedy a bad situation. He noted that as of December 31, 1936, when the Washington and London treaties would expire, the United States would be 102 ships short of treaty strength in underage tonnage, Great Britain would be short but 64 ships, while Japan would be up to full treaty strength. The Vinson bill would authorize the 102 ship deficit to be built.³¹

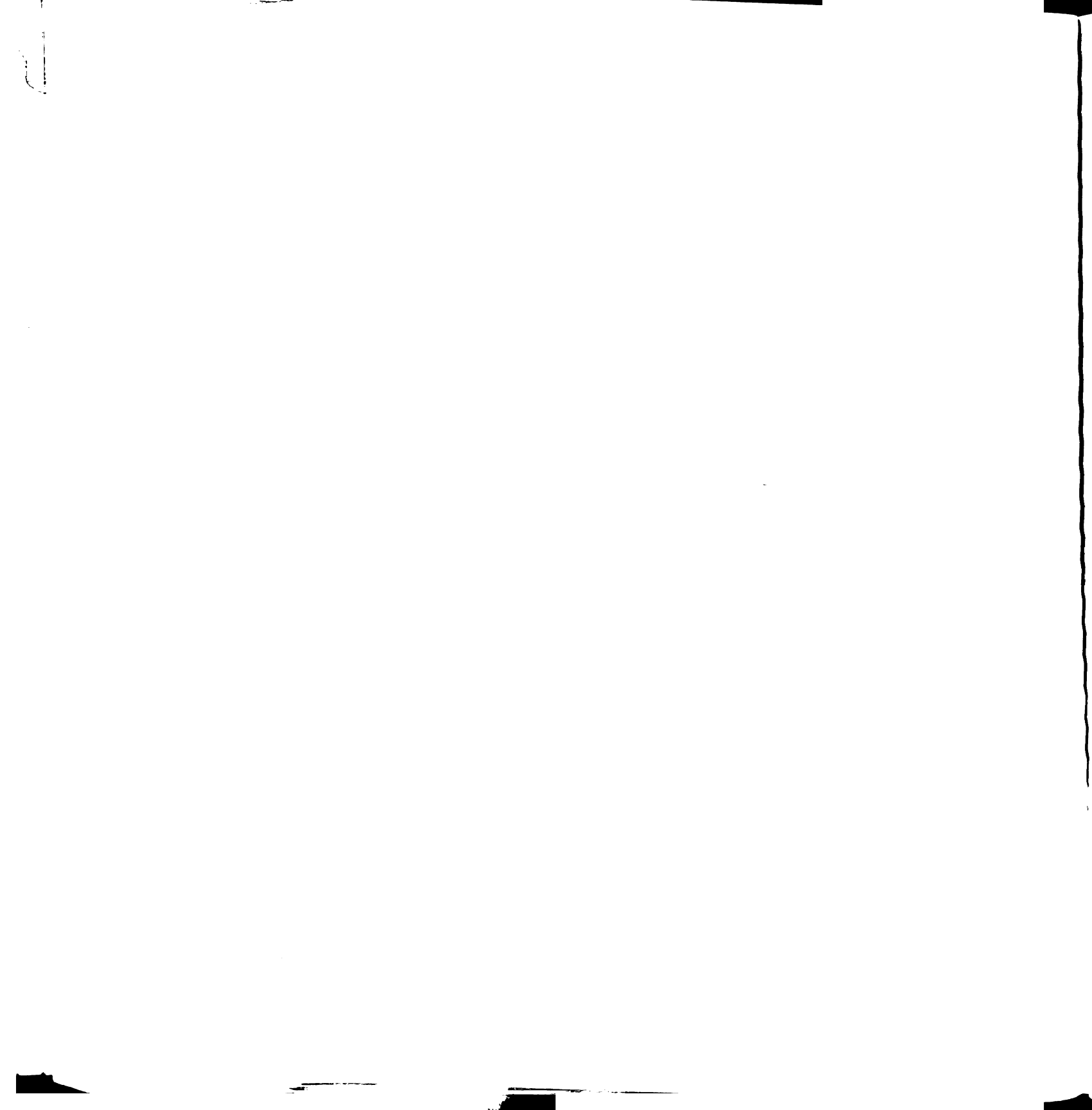
²⁷Ibid., pp. 2248, 2391, 2582, 2728, 2867; Senate Report 248, 73rd Cong. 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934).

²⁸CR, LXXVIII, 3409-3491.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 3494-95, 3681, 3682, 3686-87.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 3689-90, 3733-85.

³¹Ibid., p. 3807. An interesting point was made by Shipstead of Minnesota, who asserted that consistency would require those senators who voted for the London Treaty to vote also for the Vinson bill, since the latter was designed to carry out the terms of the former. Shipstead, at least, was consistent. His voice was against both treaty and bill. Ibid. p. 3808.



The next day, the Senate passed the Vinson bill by a vote of 65-18.³² With the passage of Vinson's measure, Trammell's original bill, S2493, was shelved.

Since the Senate had amended the Vinson measure, a conference of members of the two houses had to work out a compromise. The disagreements did not concern the basic principle of the bill--the authorization of tonnage necessary to reach treaty strength--but the questions of what proportion of the tonnage should be built in private shipyards and what measures should be taken to insure that private yards did not extract undue profits from their contracts. In the Senate hearing on Trammell's original bill, these questions had received far more attention than had the more fundamental question of the sanction of large scale naval expansion; only three witnesses, members of the National Council for the Prevention of War, had voiced concern over the big Navy implications of the bill.³³ After considerable discussion a compromise bill was agreed upon by both houses³⁴ and was signed into law by President Roosevelt on March 27, 1934.

³² Ibid., pp. 3813-14. The opposition was concentrated among senators from the Plains and Mountain States. Both Senators from North Dakota, Idaho, Utah, and Iowa voted against the bill.

³³ These were Frederick J. Libby, executive secretary of the organization, Jeanette Rankin, associate secretary and Laura P. Morgan, a prominent member. Hearings on S2493, passim.

³⁴ Senate Doc. 157, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934); CR, LXXVIII, 5116, 5174.

As finally passed, the Vinson-Trammell Act consisted of several parts. Its main provision authorized the President to begin construction of one aircraft carrier of 15,000 tons to replace the obsolete Langley, and an additional 99,200 tons of destroyers and 35,500 tons of submarines. It also gave the President authority to replace overage tonnage in all categories and to build all aircraft necessary for the expanded fleet. Other provisions included: a requirement that the first ship and every succeeding alternate vessel in each category--except the carrier--was to be built in a government shipyard; another requirement that private shipyards accepting contracts under the Act should allow their books to be inspected periodically and that their profit should not exceed 10 percent; and a final provision that in the event of an agreement to limit armaments, the President could suspend further construction, provided that ships laid down before the passage of the act could be completed.³⁵

The Vinson-Trammell Act was a momentous event in the history of American naval policy. Its main provision would, if fully carried out in construction, add 102 warships to the fleet, mostly replacement destroyers and submarines. The provision allowing the President to build replacement tonnage in all categories cleared the way for the replacement of all ten Omahas and all the battleships as soon as they became

³⁵U.S. Statutes, XLVII, pt. 1, 503-504.

overage beginning in 1935. But most important of all, for the first time Congress had approved the Navy's desire to build to treaty limits within a relatively short time, if not by the end of 1936, and had served notice to the other naval powers that the United States was committed to naval expansion as long as other nations were so committed and as long as no further effective limitation of naval armaments was agreed upon. The General Board was enthusiastic. The Vinson-Trammell Act, together with the funds provided by the NRA program and the Naval Appropriations Act of March 15, 1934, dramatically solved practically all the problems in developing an effective building program which naval planners had been struggling to overcome for a decade. The Board announced triumphantly that under such conditions "it therefore appears that the construction of a treaty Navy, including replacements for ships becoming overage, is fully authorized."³⁶

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VINSON-TRAMMELL ACT.

The new act had immediate effects. For one thing, the rapid expansion in numbers of ships and aircraft which the act portended meant that shortages of personnel, especially officer personnel, would soon appear unless dealt with promptly. Aviation officers, in chronically short supply, caused

³⁶Ser. 1659/G.B. 420-2, 9 May 1934.

the most immediate concern. A special board of the Bureau of Navigation investigated the situation and reported that some kind of organization supplementing the Naval Academy would probably be necessary in order to provide enough flying personnel.³⁷ Eventually a naval aviation cadet corps was established, whose members were university graduates who went directly into a one-year program of flight training, followed by three years active duty. Upon completion of his tour of duty, each cadet was eligible for a lieutenant's commission in the Naval Reserve.³⁸ It was a stopgap, but an effective one.³⁹

Taking full advantage of its new-found initiative, the Navy forged ahead. For fiscal 1936 the General Board recommended that funds to begin the construction of two cruisers authorized in 1929 should be appropriated, as well as funds for a carrier, fifteen destroyers and six submarines under the Vinson-Trammell Act.⁴⁰ Their recommendation was enacted into law in the Naval Appropriation Act of June 24, 1935, which also provided \$94,310,000 for the continuation of work on fourteen destroyers and six submarines begun a year

³⁷Turnbull and Lord, History of U.S. Naval Aviation, p. 291.

³⁸Ibid., pp. 293-295.

³⁹"Hearings of the General Board", 1937, II, pp. 315-318.

⁴⁰Ser. 1659/G.B. 420-2, 9 May 1934.

earlier.⁴¹ From the Navy's point of view the situation was now well in hand. With no pressing needs for new warships to construct, the members of the General Board felt that the time was opportune to present Congress with a long deferred program to construct a number of naval auxiliaries. No minesweepers, oilers, storeships or transports had been added to the fleet for over a decade, and the shortage in vital service ships such as these was beginning to be felt keenly, especially since the number of warships in the fleet was rapidly increasing. In its recommendations for the 1937 building program the Board noted that if the bill then before Congress⁴² were passed, the Navy would be able to achieve treaty tonnages in underage aircraft carriers and cruisers, but needed more destroyers and submarines to replace overage tonnage. It also pointed out that the expiration of the naval treaties would soon allow replacement battleships to be built. Accordingly it recommended that a 35,000 ton battleship, twelve destroyers, six submarines, three minesweepers and a seaplane tender be authorized for fiscal 1937.⁴³ Actually, it was not until after the expiration of the treaties that the Board recommended a really extensive program of construction of naval auxiliaries,⁴⁴ but by 1935 the naval

⁴¹U.S. Statutes, XLIX, pt. 1, 417.

⁴²The Appropriation Act of June 24 1935, referred to above.

⁴³Ser. 1686/G.B. 420-2, 24 May 1935.

⁴⁴See below, p.

planners could at least feel free to consider the possibilities.

Feeling themselves in a considerably stronger position, both in a military sense and in a political sense, naval officers began to recommend a stronger international stance. Not as fearful of Japanese reaction as they had been in 1932 and early 1933, when the main battle fleet had been removed from the Pacific in order to calm Japan and to avoid a possible collision for which the Navy did not feel itself ready, naval strategists determined on a bold show for Japan's benefit. The fleet had returned to the Pacific in late 1933, and in early 1935 the Navy announced that the yearly fleet exercises, which had usually been held in the waters immediately around Hawaii or off the West Coast, would be held that year in the waters north and west of Hawaii and off the Aleutians.⁴⁵ An attacking fleet coming from the north and west would attempt to occupy the outlying islands of the Hawaiian chain as bases for a direct attack upon Pearl Harbor. The maneuvers would test the defenses of Pearl Harbor and the ability of the fleet to take the strategic offensive, as well as to provide training in joint landing operations.⁴⁶ The

⁴⁵Juiji Kasai, The United States and Japan in the Pacific: American Naval Maneuvers and Japan's Pacific Policy (Tokyo, 1935), pp. 14-15. This work reflected the growing Japanese concern over the revival of United States naval power in the Pacific.

⁴⁶No. A16-3/FPXVI/5179, Commander in Chief File, pp. 3-4.

Japanese could not fail to be thoroughly alarmed over these maneuvers, which in their final phase in mid-May ranged in the waters around Midway right up to the International Date Line. In addition, the Navy showed evidence of wishing to construct facilities at Midway, for President Roosevelt announced that several islands between Midway and Guam were being transferred from the jurisdiction of the Interior Department to that of the Navy,⁴⁷ and bills were introduced in Congress to appropriate funds for the construction of harbor facilities at Wake and Midway.⁴⁸ Japanese protests availed them nothing, however, and eventually they had to content themselves with staging their own maneuvers in the fall of 1935 much farther eastward than was customary.

The firm stand of the Navy with regard to Japan was not necessarily to be taken as evidence that a strong Far Eastern naval policy had been decided upon. On the contrary, 1935 was a year of indecision regarding the Philippines. The passage of the Tydings-MacDuffie Act pledging independence for the Philippines within ten years forced a re-examination of the problem of Philippines defense, especially after independence was granted. The General Board believed that the United States should maintain bases in the Philippines whether the islands became independent or not, for the up-

⁴⁷New York Times, Jan. 20 1935, p. 2.

⁴⁸CR, LXXIX, 3777.

holding of American rights in the Far East depended upon an American military presence there. Without Philippines bases our whole Far Eastern policy would collapse.⁴⁹

Another question related to the location of the bases. If the Filipinos would not allow bases in the Manila Bay area to be retained, as seemed likely, others would have to be provided. The Board recommended investigation and reservation of several likely areas in the central and southern Philippines,⁵⁰ in addition to development of others at Kiska, Samoa, and Guam.⁵¹ Later it appeared that Roosevelt, while approving of the inclusion in the Philippines Independence Act of provisions guaranteeing American base rights, was not at all certain of their value. Replying to the Navy's request to reserve base areas as desired by the General Board, Roosevelt stated that if Philippine independence were granted it would not be possible to maintain bases there. "From the point of view of naval strategy alone, I would consider such a base in an independent territory a military-naval liability instead of an asset."⁵²

A War Plans Division study indicated that Roosevelt's fears were well founded. A naval base in an independent

⁴⁹Ser. 1683/G.B. 404, 16 Apr. 1935.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ser. 1683-1/G.B. 404, 22 Apr. 1935.

⁵²Memorandum, Roosevelt to Swanson, May 3 1935, encl. in Ser. 1688/G.B. 404, 3 June 1935.

Philippines would force us to maintain a large fleet and army there at enormous cost and would be liable to capture soon after the outbreak of a war with Japan. It would be better to abandon the Philippines and develop the line Alaska-Oahu-Panama as our strategic peacetime frontier in the Pacific.⁵³ What such a move would mean in terms of American Far Eastern policy was not indicated. The General Board remained steadfast however, and the division within the Navy and in other branches of the government over the problem of the Philippines continued for some time thereafter.

The time was approaching when the conference to revise or to extend the London and Washington agreements was supposed to meet. It was evident that the Americans, not being in a position of superiority, as at Washington, nor in a substantially inferior position, as at London, would approach the forthcoming conference with a sizeable fleet under construction, most of it laid down in the years since 1932. In just slightly more than two years, between February 1932 and March 1934, the number of carriers under construction had risen from one to three, cruisers from seven to nine, destroyers from five to thirty-two, and submarines from three to five.⁵⁴

⁵³ Secret study dated 2 Dec. 1935 with two appendices, incl. in Ser. 1688/G.B. 404, 3 June 1935.

⁵⁴ Tables in U. S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Comparative Strength of Treaty Navies, 72nd Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1932); and same title, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1934).

The Americans it seemed, would not be intimidated and would not be persuaded to recede from principles which American naval experts, who were more likely to be heeded now than formerly, considered to be vital to the interests of the United States.

CHAPTER IX
THE FINAL EFFORT AT LIMITATION:
THE SECOND LONDON CONFERENCE.

History may not repeat itself but sometimes gives the appearance of doing so. In 1926 the obvious inability of the Preparatory Commission to prepare a basis for an international conference on naval armaments limitation had led to an attempt by the naval powers to come to agreement in negotiations strictly among themselves outside the auspices of the League of Nations. Although the Geneva Conference of 1927 had been barren of concrete results, its failure had been primarily because of the lack of preliminary agreement to serve as a basis for negotiation. The London Conference of 1930 had shown the value of such preliminary discussion as a means of helping to insure the success of negotiations at a regular conference. By 1933 the failure of the General Disarmament Conference at Geneva was manifest to all but confirmed optimists. Accordingly the naval powers began to plan for another conference to try to solve purely naval problems, and as a means of facilitating agreement they held a number of exploratory discussions--a situation which looks remarkably similar to that in the period preceding the Naval Conference at London in 1930. Appearances are often deceiving, however, and particularly so in this case. It must be remembered that whereas the 1926 sessions of the Prepara-

tory Commission were a direct cause of the 1927 Geneva Conference, the 1935 conference held at London was not directly the result of the failure at the 1932 Geneva Conference. The second London Conference would have been held in any case, since it was specifically related to the Washington and London treaties; those treaties would expire in 1936, and the London Treaty had provided that a conference to consider revision or extension of the treaties should be convened not later than one year previous to the expiration date.

There was another noticeable difference between the conditions leading to the Naval Conference of 1935 and those preceding the 1927 and 1930 conferences. In the latter cases relationships among the nations, while lacerated by occasional outbursts of annoyance and expressions of suspicion, were not fundamentally hostile. Unfortunately, such was not the case in 1935. The fundamental problem by that time was the marked deterioration of relations between Japan on one hand, and Great Britain and the United States on the other. The influence of the military groups in the Japanese government had grown to an alarming extent after September, 1931, as first the Army and later the Navy had come increasingly to favor an aggressive policy on the mainland of Asia. As early as mid-September 1931, even before the outbreak of trouble in Manchuria, there were signs that the Japanese would insist upon a favorable revision of the naval ratios and might even advance a claim for absolute equality with the American

and British fleets.¹ At the Geneva Conference the Japanese did not claim equality but did advance a demand for ratios approaching equality in their proposals in November, 1932. By the fall of 1933, after Germany's withdrawal from a conference already doomed, the indications were that the Japanese government would oppose vehemently any concessions unacceptable to the Japanese Navy and that their delegation at the forthcoming conference would yield very little.² Within the Navy itself, opinion against the maintenance of the treaty ratios was practically unanimous, since the officers who had approved of the London Treaty had been eased out of important positions or had resigned by 1934.³ The official Japanese attitude appeared not to consider that the conference would have much chance of success unless the naval ratios were altered in Japan's favor or eliminated completely. Foreign Minister Hirota's statement to the Diet at the end of January, 1934, indicated as much when he stated: "It is also very doubtful whether a disarmament agreement based on ratios will contribute to world peace."⁴ Japanese naval officers

¹Grew to Stimson, Sept. 15 1931, SD500.A15 A5/7.

²Grew to Hull, Oct. 30 1933, SD500.A15A5/11.

³Grew to Hull, Jan. 22 1934, FRUS , 1934, I, 218-219.

⁴As quoted in Grew to Hull, Feb. 1 1934, SD500.A15A5/21.

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spoke more bluntly. One of them, Vice Admiral Takahashi, told the assistant naval attaché in Tokyo, "We are going to the 1935 conference with a demand for parity. If our demand is rejected, we shall return home."⁵

THE DECISION TO HOLD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS.

In the face of Japan's increasing militancy and unwillingness any longer to tolerate restrictions which left the Japanese Navy in what it considered to be an inferior position, the Americans and the British found themselves drawing closer together and minimizing their differences in order to present a common front against Japanese demands. As soon as the Japanese attitude became generally known, both governments began to speak seriously of cooperation. As early as December 1933, American and British officials recognized the necessity of cooperation in the sense of resolving the differences over naval disarmament separating the two countries.⁶ By March, 1934, the British had taken the initiative in proposing that secret talks should be held. It was vitally important, MacDonald said, that Japan not be

⁵Grew to Hull, Jan. 22, 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 219.

⁶Memorandum by Moffatt (Asst. Sec. for European Affairs), Dec. 15 1933; Atherton to Hull, Jan. 29 1934, SD500.A15A5/16, 19.

allowed parity with the British and American navies. A spirit of cooperation had to be fostered between the Americans and the British, and this could best be done by the reconciliation of points of difference. As far as MacDonald was concerned, the most important difference was that involving the size and gun power of battleships.⁷ Believing that American refusal to hold exploratory talks with the British might lead to an Anglo-Japanese rapprochement, Hull approved the idea that preliminary talks should be held first with the British, after which the Japanese could be brought into the discussions.⁸ Others within the State Department thought the opportunity for U. S.- British cooperation particularly good at that time, and that the British were not at all likely to seek an understanding with the Japanese. Stanley K. Hornbeck, Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs, believed that the time for concessions to Japan was past, and the only chance for American policy in the Far East lay in a strong policy, backed by an extensive program of naval construction. He stated:

The maximum of insurance which we can take out against injury to ourselves by and from Japan lies along the line of naval construction. . . The soundest course for us to take lies on the line of possessing naval strength such that Japan will not

⁷Davis to F. D. Roosevelt, March 6 1934, FRUS, 1934, I, 226-229.

⁸Hull to Davis, May 24 1934, SD500.A15A5/59.

dare to take the risk of resort to force against us.⁹

Since our naval strength was not yet strong enough to enable us to defy Japan, cooperation with the British was a necessity. We must refuse Japan's demand for parity, even if it means no conference. In fact, "we should welcome non-convening of the conference. We should welcome lapsing of the existing agreements."¹⁰ Hornbeck's view was not the official attitude of the State Department, but it did indicate the growing belief in American official circles outside the Navy that Japan was an increasing threat which could best be countered by a bold naval policy.

On the same day Hornbeck wrote his memorandum, President Roosevelt was developing the basic principles which should be advanced by the American delegation at the preliminary discussions. He thought that simplicity was the key to success; rather than bogging down in the technicalities of qualitative limitation, it would be best to concentrate on quantitative limitations. He suggested reductions of 25 percent from existing tonnages, or if that was not acceptable then perhaps an extension of existing tonnages should be proposed.¹¹

⁹Memorandum by Hornbeck, May 24 1934, SD500.A15A5/159.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Memorandum by Phillips, May 24 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 237-238.

Once it had been decided to hold preliminary conversations, a problem immediately arose. How could the British and Americans hold bilateral talks in such a way as to avoid arousing Japanese suspicions of a secret understanding? If they kept the talks secret, as the British originally desired, they could hardly avoid an affront to Japan. On the other hand, too much publicity would make it more difficult for an Anglo-American understanding to be reached. Some officials on both sides of the Atlantic probably considered the promise of cooperation to be worth the risk of Japanese displeasure, but Hull was not so inclined. He questioned the advisability of secret talks and persuaded the British to go along with a strategy in which the talks would be announced as dealing with procedural matters; once under way they would not be kept secret, but neither would they be unduly publicized.¹² When the Japanese were asked to approve the holding of bilateral talks between the Americans and the British they replied that the procedure was acceptable as long as only procedural matters were discussed.¹³ The Japanese would not be in a position to discuss technical questions until their naval delegates arrived in London, which would not be possible before July.¹⁴ The Japanese press was in-

¹²Hull to Bingham (Ambassador in London), May 24 1934, SD500.A15A5/61/

¹³Grew to Hull, May 31 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 242-243.

¹⁴Bingham to Hull, June 8 1934, ibid., pp. 246-247. Actually, the Japanese did not arrive until October.

clined to suspect British and American motives, but among many Japanese it did not really make much difference whether the western powers adopted a common front against Japan or not. Japan would not be overawed. The Osaka Asahi of May 26 said: "There was once a time when Japan bowed before force, but the United States and other Powers are grossly mistaken if they think Japan can still be intimidated."¹⁵

Meanwhile, it was evident that officials in Great Britain were divided over the question of the advisability of bilateral talks. While MacDonald expressed the official viewpoint, a number of important personages in government, headed by Neville Chamberlain, believed that a show of solidarity by the British and Americans would simply antagonize the Japanese and jeopardize the chances of success of the conference. They did not believe that the Japanese would press their claim for naval equality when they realized the enormous cost of the construction program necessary to achieve parity.¹⁶ At the preliminary discussions, however, the reins were in MacDonald's hands, and British policy became even more clearly directed toward a closer Anglo-American tie by the removal of as many points of difference as possible.

¹⁵Grew to Hull, June 12 1934, SD500.A15A5/146.

¹⁶Bingham to Hull, May 2 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 232-233.

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ANGLO-AMERICAN PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS.

The Anglo-American preliminary conversations began on June 18, 1934, in London. MacDonald led the British delegation, whose other important members were Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell, First Lord of the Admiralty, Vice Admiral C. J. C. Little, the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, and R. L. Craigie, Counsellor of the Foreign Office. The American delegation was headed by Norman Davis--by now an old hand at naval disarmament talks--supported by Robert Bingham, the American Ambassador, Rear Admiral R. H. Leigh, the Chairman of the General Board, and Raymond Atherton, Secretary of the American Embassy. The first meeting succeeded in establishing a basis of understanding between the delegations. It was agreed that both nations stood for the maintenance of the principles of the Washington Treaty, that neither nation believed Japan should be granted an increase in ratios beyond present limits, and that conversations would be kept secret from all other nations save Japan. Information given Japan would first be agreed upon by both governments.¹⁷

At the second meeting on June 20, the delegates came to grips with the real problem. An Anglo-American understanding depended upon settling outstanding naval differences between

¹⁷"Corrected Minutes of Naval Conversations", June 18 1934, SD500.A15A5/145. Hereafter cited as "Corr. Min." with date.

the two countries, chief among which was the disagreement over the permissible maximum size and gun power of battleships. The American position ever since 1922 had been that the probable wartime role of the Navy in the Pacific required large battleships of maximum power, and that the Washington limitations on the size of battleships represented the minimum to which they could agree. The British had favored smaller battleships with guns as small in size as 12 inches. At the meeting on June 20 the issue was faced squarely when the British presented their general proposals which they wished to see considered at the conference. First, they said they wished to see the tonnage and maximum size of main battery guns of battleships reduced. Second, they proposed that no more heavy cruisers should be built; and third, they suggested that the total number of 10,000 ton light cruisers should not exceed ten each for the United States and Great Britain and six for Japan, with smaller cruisers limited to a maximum displacement of 7,000 tons and no nation's total cruiser tonnage exceeding 491,800 tons.¹⁸ To follow up their general proposals, a meeting of naval delegates was held the next day, at which time the British elaborated and expanded their proposals, as follows:

Battleships.

Maximum tonnage should be 25,000, with guns no larger than 12 inches.

¹⁸"Corr. Min.", June 20 1934.

Aircraft Carriers.

A total tonnage limit of 110,000 tons, 25,000 tons less than prescribed under the Washington Treaty. No carrier would exceed 22,000 tons or mount guns larger than 4.7 inches.

Cruisers.

British needs called for more cruisers than the Royal Navy presently possessed. Rather than build more new tonnage, the British proposed that ten cruisers which would reach retirement age by 1937 should be retained rather than scrapped.

Destroyers.

If submarines were abolished, total destroyer tonnage for Britain and the United States would be reduced to 100,000 tons--65,000 tons less than the London Treaty--with proportionate reductions for Japan. If submarines were not abolished but could be held to a maximum for any one country of 40,000 tons, destroyer tonnages could be reduced by 15,000 tons. If no further total tonnage limitations on submarines were adopted, destroyer tonnage should be raised to 200,000 tons. Qualitative limitations on destroyers would remain the same.

Submarines.

Abolition or reduction of total tonnage to 40,000 tons was desirable. Maximum size of submarines

should be 250 tons surface displacement.¹⁹

The British proposals, while comprehensive, offered little that stood much chance of acceptance at the future conference. The battleship proposals could not be accepted by the United States, and in view of the continuing demonstration of the value of the aircraft carrier, it was not likely that the Americans would accept further reduction of the total tonnage for carriers. In fact, the Americans already had more than 110,000 tons of carriers built or building. Neither the Japanese nor the French were likely to accept further quantitative or qualitative limitations on submarines, and further restrictions on destroyers depended upon reduction of submarine tonnage. In some respects the British proposals involved increases rather than reductions in tonnage, especially in cruisers and destroyers. The Americans questioned the British at some length on this point. Admiral Little significantly replied that the world situation was not primarily responsible for the British desire for more cruisers and destroyers, but rather that naval opinion in Britain had always considered large numbers of these vessels to be necessary, but had been overridden in 1930 by political considerations. Craigie pointed out that tonnages of individual cruisers and destroyers were increasing, thus making necessary larger total tonnages for the same number

¹⁹Ibid., June 21 1934.

of vessels in a given category.²⁰

The American reaction to the British proposals of June 21 was one of astonishment. Davis indicated he thought the proposals completely unacceptable. The British, he said, seemed to be intent upon doing away with the London Treaty restrictions.²¹ Hull agreed with Davis. The proposals, he asserted, were unacceptable "even as a basis for discussion." He repeated that the Americans favored only one of two possible solutions--proportionate reduction of tonnages in all categories, or extension of the existing ratios.²² President Roosevelt himself sent a message to MacDonald, reminding him that the purpose of the coming conference was to reduce naval armaments, not increase them. He suggested that the treaties should be extended for ten years, with a 20 percent reduction in all categories to be achieved by the end of that time.²³ In reply MacDonald hastened to point out that if all the British proposals were adopted there would be an excess of reductions over increases in tonnage.²⁴ In a detailed memo-

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Davis to Hull, June 25 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 272-273.

²²Hull to Davis, June 26 1934, ibid., pp. 276-277.

²³Roosevelt to Davis, June 26 1934, ibid., pp. 277-278.

²⁴Bingham to Hull, June 26 1934, SD 500.A15A5/120.

random the British explained that abolition of submarines and cuts in destroyer tonnages and sizes of battleships, carriers and cruisers would result in substantial overall reductions, even though cruiser total tonnages were increased. The British needed more cruisers, mainly because the world situation had changed considerably since 1930.²⁵

The British proposals and their hostile reception by the Americans certainly retarded the growth of the spirit of cooperation which had earlier been stated as a major goal of the preliminary discussions, and the situation remained tense for some time afterward. By early July Hull noted despondently that there had not been much progress.²⁶ What conciliation there was was attempted by the naval delegates. The Americans, anxious to try to work out a compromise at least on battleships, were able to admit reductions in battleship size below their minimum 35,000 tons. In a conversation with Admiral Little, Admiral Leigh showed an American design for a battleship of 32,500 tons, which he said was the absolute minimum displacement to allow for the degree of gun power, speed and protection considered necessary by the Navy. Little, for his part, candidly admitted that the British did not expect agreement on the British battleship proposals,

²⁵Craigie to Atherton, July 26 1934, FRUS., 1934, I, 299-303.

²⁶Hull to Grew, July 2 1934, SD500.A15A5/127a.

but that perhaps a compromise figure of around 30,000 tons might be agreed upon.²⁷ That conversation represented practically the extent of efforts to reconcile opposing points of view, and the Anglo-American conversations ended on July 19, with only one agreement--the British, after desiring to issue a joint public statement about the conversations, were persuaded by the Americans that to do so would give an undesirable impression.²⁸

CONVERSATIONS WITH THE JAPANESE.

It was fortunate that no public statement was issued about the progress of Anglo-American talks. If it had been, the Japanese would have been presented with a diplomatic opportunity almost too good to be missed. As it was, the British and Americans managed to conceal their profound disagreement from the Japanese, thus keeping the latter from attempts to drive the wedge deeper by making concessions to one side or the other. The British in particular might have been amenable to some kind of understanding with the Japanese in return for Japanese support of the British naval proposals

²⁷"Admiral Leigh's Report on London Conversations, June 18-July 19, 1934", entry of July 13, 1934, Series XIII, "Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records."

²⁸Davis to Hull, July 17, 1934, Hull to Davis, July 17, 1934, Davis to Hull, July 19, 1934, FRUS, 1934, I, 295-296, 296-297, 298.

of June 21. Had the Japanese been willing to negotiate on the basis of the principles to which they had subscribed at the 1930 London Conference, they would have been able to accept most of the British proposals and would have been in a position to ask for substantial concessions from the British in return. However, such speculation serves no practical purpose, for the Japanese were not in a mood to negotiate, but were bent single-mindedly upon securing the principle of parity with the greatest naval powers. It was a good illustration of how adherence to a principle at all costs could lose everything, for the Japanese stand served only to unify the British and Americans in their opposition to the Japanese demands while gaining the Japanese nothing. Of course, given the trend of Japanese foreign policy and the state of public agitation over the ratio system as applied to navies, there was little likelihood that the Japanese retained enough flexibility to use the opportunity presented by the Anglo-American discord even if they had been aware of it.

By the time Anglo-American conversations were drawing to a close it was more evident than ever that the Japanese would come to the preliminary conversations determined upon one principle only. There was some anxiety that the Japanese might even go so far as to abrogate the naval treaties and to refuse to attend the 1935 conference if their parity demand was not met.²⁹ They might not in fact build their naval strength

²⁹Grew to Hull, July 2, 1934, SD500.A15A5/163.

to parity--partly because of the high cost involved--but there was little question that they would insist upon the elimination of the assumption of inferiority inherent in the present naval ratios.³⁰ Shortly before the Japanese delegates left Tokyo for London, the American Embassy reported that Japanese policy had been officially decided upon and approved by the Cabinet. The Japanese, it stated, would advance four ideas at the preliminary conversations:

1. The present naval ratios must be abolished.
2. The Washington Naval Treaty will be abrogated.
3. Japan is willing to negotiate a new naval treaty which establishes the principle of equality of armaments.
4. Japan favors the global tonnage system of limitation and will insist upon its adoption.³¹

The final twist was added when the Embassy reported that while the Japanese would discuss the question of abrogation of the Washington Treaty, they would probably take abrogation action regardless of the outcome of the talks.³²

The fourth point in the Japanese policy--demanding the

³⁰Naval Attache Report no. 161, July 3, 1934, SD500.-A15A5/163.

³¹Naval Attache Report no. 219, Sept. 7, 1934, FRUS, 1934, I, 303. The few moderates left in high positions in the Japanese Navy and those moderates who were in the Foreign Office did not agree with such harsh demands, but there was little that they could do. Grew to Hull, Sept. 11, 1934, SD500.-A15A5/184.

³²Grew to Hull, Sept. 18 1934, SD500.A15A5/191.

adoption of the global system of tonnage--was directed particularly toward securing a sympathetic response from the French, who were known to be dissatisfied with the battleship ratios of the Washington Treaty. Although they hastened to deny reports that they desired to serve notice of abrogation of the treaty by the end of the year, there was little question that the French would not be unhappy should the treaty be allowed to expire.³³ Later the Japanese did make an overt attempt to secure French support for abrogation by asking the French and also the Italians to join Japan in supporting proposals at the next conference for an equitable treaty based on a single or global tonnage for defensive purposes. Both the French and Italians declined the suggestion,³⁴ although numerous elements of the French press expressed sympathy with the idea of negotiating a new accord based upon equality of armaments.³⁵

In late September, the General Board drew up an estimate of the situation and stated the position which they believed would be the best for the American delegation to take, both in the discussions with the Japanese and at the Conference.

³³Atherton to Hull, Aug. 7 1934, SD500.A15A5/166.

³⁴Grew to Hull, Dec. 3 1934, Moffatt to Hull, Dec. 3 1934, Grew to Hull, Dec. 5 1934, FRUS, 1934, I, 406-407, 407-408.

³⁵Straus to Hull, Dec. 4 1934, SD500.A15A5/331.

The Board pointed out first of all that Japan would probably oppose an extension of the naval treaties, both because of her publicly stated position and because of the fact that the Japanese Navy, since it was already nearly at treaty strength, would be unable to build any more ships if the treaties were simply extended, while the British and particularly the Americans could still build substantially. Reduction of existing fleets would probably be accepted by all the delegations at the conference except the Japanese. The British would undoubtedly propose a larger cruiser tonnage for themselves and a reduction in the size of battleships; the French and Italians would want a better ratio in battleships. The French and Japanese would oppose the abolition of submarines. "All nations will favor agreement on a naval limitation treaty in a form acceptable to themselves, respectively. . . . No single item upon which general agreement will be readily forthcoming can confidently be predicted."³⁶ It was a pessimistic estimate, but under the existing conditions a clearly realistic one as well.

As to the American position, the Board considered that there were some principles on which the United States should make no concession whatever. The size of battleships must not be reduced, cruiser displacements in either category must not be reduced below the present 2,000 tons. The probable

³⁶Ser. 1640/G.B. 438-1, 1 Oct. 1934.

Japanese proposal to abolish battleships, carriers and heavy cruisers must not be accepted, and above all the Japanese demand for parity in naval strength must be resisted. In the interests of securing agreement, however, the Americans would be willing to lower the maximum size of the battleship gun from 16 inches to 14 inches. Aircraft carrier displacement might be reduced to 22,000 tons, flight deck cruisers may be abolished, the proportion of larger destroyers in the total destroyer tonnage may be increased somewhat, and total tonnage of submarines may be reduced. Finally, the American delegation might agree that no more than half of the total light cruiser tonnage would consist of vessels displacing more than 7,000 tons, and submarines might be abolished.³⁷

With the exception of the concession on the reduction of battleship guns and that committing the United States to accept a certain number of 7,000 ton cruisers, there was nothing in the Board's list of possible concessions which represented anything which had not already been proposed by the Americans or which was of vital importance to the Navy. The Board predicted with remarkable accuracy the position which would be taken by the Japanese and the general attitude which would be shown by the British, especially in reaction to the Japanese demands.

With the arrival of the Japanese naval delegation in

³⁷ Ibid.

London in the middle of October the talks entered the second stage. The first conversations were held between the American delegation and the Japanese delegation on October 24, 29, and 31. Matsudaira came squarely to the point at the first discussion. He said that while Japan desired limitation of armaments she did not believe the existing ratios could properly accomplish this objective. Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto,³⁸ the chief Japanese naval delegate, then presented Japan's proposals: first, a "common upper limit" of total tonnage, within which each nation may build as it sees fit; second, this limit should be fixed as low as possible; and finally, offensive arms should be strictly limited or abolished.³⁹ In answer to American questions, Yamamoto said the common upper limit meant parity in tonnage for all nations, and that offensive naval weapons included mainly aircraft carriers, battleships and heavy cruisers--the very weapons, it may be noted, in which the Japanese inferiority or potential inferiority was greatest. Yamamoto repeated Japan's absolute opposition to the present ratio system which he said was "causing a certain country to look upon Japan with more or less of contempt."⁴⁰ He stated Japan's reasons for insisting

³⁸The same Yamamoto who later achieved notoriety in World War II.

³⁹"Copies of Conversations", entry of Oct. 24 1934, SD500. A15A5/257. Hereafter cited as "Conversations" with date.

⁴⁰"Conversations", Oct. 24 1934. In later conversations, it was clear that the "certain country" was not China. ibid., Oct. 29 1934.

upon a common upper limit were based upon the fact that naval technology had so changed since 1922 that Japan could no longer feel secure with anything less than equality in fleet tonnages, or at least the right to build to equality.⁴¹

The Japanese attitude at that first meeting was unbending and indicated little chance for agreement. It had only one beneficial effect, from the American point of view--it at least showed both the British and the Americans that previous reports as to Japanese policy were correct, and that an Anglo-American understanding was more imperative than ever. A common front presented to the Japanese offered the only chance of persuading them to modify their position.⁴² Davis quickly indicated to Craigie that if the two countries could agree on a common position in regard to Japan's claims the Americans would be willing to consider the approval of increases in cruiser tonnage, provided that there were proportionate decreases in other categories.⁴³ On the other hand, the American attitude at the meeting seems to have been instrumental in convincing the Japanese that there was no hope that their demands would be met;⁴⁴ accordingly, they definitely decided

⁴¹Phillips to Grew, Oct. 25 1934, FRUS , 1934, I, 314-315.

⁴²Phillips to Davis, Oct. 26 1934, ibid., p. 315.

⁴³Davis to Hull, Oct. 27 1934, ibid., p. 317.

⁴⁴Captain Shimomura, chief of the American Section of the Japanese Naval Staff, told the American naval attaché as much. Grew to Hull, Nov. 1 1934, ibid., p. 322.



to give notice of the abrogation of the Washington Treaty. Their decision became known in Washington and London by October 29.⁴⁵

From that time on the Americans and British moved steadily from talking about cooperation to actually achieving it. Cooperation did not manifest itself in the achievement of agreement over such details as the tonnages of destroyers or the size of battleships but rather in the common rejection of the Japanese demands.

The Americans held further talks with the Japanese, ending finally in a dramatic meeting on October 31 in which the Americans rejected the reasoning behind the Japanese proposals. There was some discussion about the problem of distinguishing offensive from defensive weapons, which ended as usual in stalemate, but most of the discussion revolved around the claim for parity. Davis pointed out to the Japanese that there was no reason for them to feel inferior to the United States just because the American Navy was larger. It was just as illogical, he said, for Americans to feel inferior to the Japanese because Japan's Army was far larger.⁴⁶ His Argument may have been sensible from a Western point of view, but may have seemed condescending to the Oriental mind. Most

⁴⁵Davis to Hull, Oct. 29 1934, ibid., pp. 317-318.

⁴⁶Davis to Hull, Nov. 1 1934, ibid., pp. 323-324.

of the rest of the discussion was taken up by Yamamoto and Admiral William F. Standley,⁴⁷ who argued the Japanese contention that the development of naval technology made the ratio system untenable. Standley said that naval developments favored the defense as much or more than the offense, and that the Japanese had been just as alive to new developments as had the Americans. Their navy contained a larger proportion of modern vessels than did the American fleet.⁴⁸ The Japanese arguments were thoroughly demolished by the Americans. It was readily apparent to any careful observer of naval developments that the Japanese argument was at best tenuous, yet the Japanese continued to cling to it.⁴⁹ In fact, the Japanese Navy had long been quick to utilize the latest developments in naval technology. Japan was the first country to place the main battery guns on destroyers in enclosed twin mounts, and Japanese torpedoes were far superior in design and performance to American torpedoes. Before the advent of radar, Japanese development of the use of superior starshell and

⁴⁷Standley replaced Leigh as chief naval delegate upon the latter's retirement from the General Board.

⁴⁸"Conversations", Oct. 31 1934. Standley and Yamamoto later held a conversation during which Standley reportedly said: "If you were to take the American fleet and give me the Japanese fleet you would have a difficult time getting across the Pacific." Davis to Hull, Nov. 3 1934, SD500.A15 A5/235.

⁴⁹See statements of Adm. Kichisaburo Nomura in his "Japan's Demand for Naval Equality", Foreign Affairs, XIII (Jan. 1935), p. 203.

parachute flares gave their fleet a great advantage in night action.⁵⁰ At the end of the discussion the Japanese indicated they did not wish to pursue the subject and that there was no point in holding further discussions. Shortly thereafter the Japanese delegates left London for Tokyo. Japanese participation in the preliminary conversations was at an end.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE.

The period from early November, 1934 to early December, 1935, was taken up by lengthy preparations for the conference. During that time three major developments occurred. First, on December 24, 1934, the Japanese gave the required two years notice of the abrogation of the Washington Treaty, leaving her legally free after December 31, 1936, to pursue a naval building program without restrictions. Second, the British offered a "middle course" proposal in a final effort to overcome Japanese intransigence; and third the British signed an agreement with the Germans which in effect repudiated the naval restrictions of the Versailles Treaty and gave the Germans authorization to create a new navy.

The Japanese abrogation announcement came as no surprise, as has been stated. Having been anticipated for some time and

⁵⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April, 1942, vol. III of History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, (Boston, 1948), pp. 21-23.

taken into account in the plans of both the Americans and the British, the Japanese action caused but little comment and forced no shifts in policy. It simply provided one more indication that the coming conference was not likely to prove successful in limiting armaments on the old basis of ratios.

The British "middle course" proposals came out of the preliminary discussions with Japan in late October, 1934. When, at a meeting between the British and Americans on October 29, Davis made clear the American attitude toward the problem of cruiser tonnage, he stated that American willingness to reach agreement with the British proposals of July 21 depended primarily upon whether an understanding with Japan could be formulated.⁵¹ MacDonald realized that if Japan were free to build without restrictions the British might have to consider a two fleet policy--one fleet for the Pacific and one for the Mediterranean and home waters. Yet there was no question that Japan's demand for parity could not be met, for to do so would create a precedent to grant equality to Germany and Soviet Russia, in which case "there would be no end to the difficulties which would arise."⁵²

On November 14, at another meeting after the departure of the Japanese from London, both Davis and MacDonald discussed the situation frankly. The British for the first time

⁵¹"Conversations", Oct. 29 1934.

⁵²Ibid.

indicated they saw little hope for quantitative limitations; therefore they thought the conference might better concentrate upon qualitative limitations. The British were anxious that there should be some agreement to limit the size of ships in each category. Otherwise, they said, the Japanese might seek to overcome their inferiority in certain categories by building a new type which would render obsolete other ships in its category. They cited the case of their own Dreadnought in 1906 and the more recent case of the German pocket battleships.⁵³ They then advanced a set of proposals which they said was a "middle course." If no other agreement were possible, perhaps there could at least be an understanding at the conference on building programs, an extension of the non-fortification provisions of the Washington Treaty, an accord on qualitative limitations, and an agreement on mutual notification of the laying down of new ships.⁵⁴ The American reaction was not favorable. Further talks with the Japanese prior to the conference would be new talks on a new basis, in view of Japan's denunciation action, and could easily give the impression that the British and Americans had conceded the abolition of the ratio principle.⁵⁵ The British

⁵³Minutes of Meeting Between the British and American Delegations, Nov. 14 1934, FRUS , 1934, I, 342-343.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 348-349.

⁵⁵Hull to Davis, Nov. 22, 1934, ibid., pp. 364-365.

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then decided to postpone the delivery of their proposals until some opportune time during the conference itself. It should also be noted that since the "middle course" proposals contained no endorsement of parity for Japan, the Japanese would not have accepted it.

While the governments concerned continued their attempts to smooth the pathway to the conference, newspapers and periodicals discussed the problems of naval disarmament. The advocates of disarmament on a large scale were having a more difficult time than formerly in securing widespread support for their views; the general attitude appeared to be one of disbelief that the concept of naval limitations could enjoy any more success. In Great Britain opinion among many naval officers was summarized in an editorial which appeared in the British naval journal The Naval and Military Record and Royal Dockyard Gazette. Entitled "The Next Naval Conference," it pointed out that Japan had clearly entered upon a new phase of naval expansion which was not to be halted. The preliminary discussions had shown that the conference was destined to fail. "The realities today are that Japan is going her own way and the United States means to follow her; that France and Italy have been going their own ways throughout the term of the London Treaty, and that we alone are standing on a patch of 'cleared ground' . . ."⁵⁶ In the United States, the

⁵⁶Enclosure in Standley to Hull, Apr. 27 1935, SD500. A15A5/402. Eyres-Monsell, the First Lord, had stated to Parliament that the preliminary discussions had cleared the ground for the conference.

periodical Foreign Affairs devoted the lead space in several issues to a discussion of the naval problems facing the conference, presented by spokesmen from the major countries involved. For Great Britain, Admiral Sir Herbert W. Richmond presented a statement which, though ingenious, offered little contribution to what had already been said by the British many times before. Smaller battleships and cruisers, he claimed, were practical and should be agreed to at the conference. American naval opinion which held that large battleships and heavy guns were essential to victory in sea actions was exactly contrary to the truth; in fact, tactics at sea historically have been accommodated to the weapons available. The weapons in turn were decided upon at the naval conferences and could be altered.⁵⁷ Speaking for the Americans, Admiral Pratt maintained that Japan's denunciation of the Washington treaty made a conference more rather than less necessary. The ratio concept, he held, should be the proper basis for future naval limitations. As for qualitative limitation, he contended the Americans could not abandon their insistence on large vessels, especially battleships.⁵⁸ Admiral Nomura presented the Japanese view, arguing that while Japan looked favorably upon the non-fortification provisions of the Washington treaty, the ratio

⁵⁷"Naval Problems of 1935: A British View", Foreign Affairs, XIII, (Oct. 1934), pp. 45-54.

⁵⁸"Pending Naval Questions", ibid., XIII (Apr. 1935), pp. 409-419.

principle, which the Japanese people considered a mark of inferiority, could not any longer be accepted. Having once gained a position of legal equality, he intimated, Japan might be content with "the minimum of armaments adequate to guarantee her national security in the light of domestic and external circumstances."⁵⁹ While the views expressed by these naval officers were not officially sponsored, they nevertheless represented the official views of the naval agencies concerned, and there was no indication in the articles that any important change in the respective positions had taken place.

The Japanese found it difficult to develop a real interest in the forthcoming conference. Shortly after the end of the preliminary conversations Hirota told Grew an early conference was desirable. Further developments at home and in China might make the success of a conference more remote the longer it was postponed.⁶⁰ Later, it appeared that Japanese naval officers were pressing for a postponement of the conference to late 1935 or even late 1936. Both moderates and radicals in the Navy Department favored postponement, but for different reasons. The moderates--also the liberals in the Foreign Office--hoped that postponement would give time to

⁵⁹"Japan's Demand for Naval Equality," *ibid.* XIII (Jan. 1935), 196-203. Nomura's view is significant, since he was looked upon by American naval officers as a leader of the moderate group within the Japanese Navy.

⁶⁰Grew to Hull, March 27 1935, FRUS , 1935, I, 69.

allow a more sober understanding of the cost of abandoning the treaties, while the radicals believed that delay would further strengthen their hand and discredit the United States.⁶¹ In attempts to strengthen their position further the Japanese sought to gain support from Germany by indicating support for Germany's demand for freedom from the armaments restrictions of the Versailles Treaty,⁶² but for the time being the Nazi racial attitude and discriminatory legislation made sympathy between the two nations most difficult. The Japanese found cause for considerable protest against Nazi racial policies, while several German officials recognized the unfortunate effects of those policies on Japanese-German relations.⁶³

The superstructure of relationships involving several countries with Nazi Germany was dealt a severe blow by the conclusion of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 18, 1935, which also had significant effects upon the major naval powers and their attitude toward the coming conference. The agreement had its basic cause in German determination to be rid of the naval restrictions under which the German Navy was no more than a coastal defense force. As early as February 1933, Hitler reportedly told Admiral Erich Raeder, the German naval commander, that he would seek a naval agreement with

⁶¹Grew to Hull, June 27 1935, SD500.A15A5/440.

⁶²Dodd to Hull, March 22, 1935, SD500.A15A5/394.

⁶³Memorandum by Foreign Office, Aug. 29 1934, U.S. State Department, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series C, III (Washington, 1959), 367-369. Hereafter cited as German Documents, with series letter and volume number.

Great Britain at an opportune time.⁶⁴ Later Hitler told Raeder he desired an agreement with Great Britain fixing the strength of the German Navy at somewhere near one-third that of the Royal Navy.⁶⁵ On the other side, the British reached the conclusion by early 1935 that a definite agreement with Germany would be a move in the direction of stability in naval armaments. The British seem to have been motivated primarily by fear that the Germans might simply declare they would no longer obey the naval restrictions of Versailles, as they were already doing with regard to the air and land armaments restrictions. The British may also have been seeking to prevent an armaments race brought about by the creation of new types of vessels. It is significant that the British, who by early 1935 realized there was little hope of reaching agreement at the conference on quantitative limitations, were at first primarily interested in developing an understanding with the Germans on qualitative limitations, and it was only after the unequivocal insistence of the Germans upon a 35 percent ratio for Germany that the negotiations resulted in an agreement concerning both qualitative

⁶⁴D.C. Watt, "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935: An Interim Judgment", Journal of Modern History, XXVIII (June, 1956), 160. Hereafter cited as Watt, "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement." This is perhaps the most thorough study of the agreement made to date, but it leaves many important questions unanswered, particularly in regard to the sources of the British initiative.

⁶⁵Memorandum of the Naval Command, Nov. 5 1934, German Documents, C, III, 573.

and quantitative limitations.⁶⁶ A final motivation may have been the desire of the National Government of MacDonald to strengthen its weakened political position at home.⁶⁷

The details of the motivations behind the negotiations and the course of the negotiations themselves need not concern us here, since they did not directly affect Americans or American naval policy. It is sufficient to state briefly the results of these negotiations. The Germans were able to extract from the British all the concessions they demanded, while giving none of vital concern to themselves. The final agreement, negotiated in London by the newly appointed Nazi Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, stated that in each category of surface warship the Germans were to have the right to build up to 35 percent of the actual strength of the navies of the British Commonwealth, or to their strength as determined by treaty. The ratio would not be affected by the naval construction of other powers--i.e., there was no escape clause. While the Germans agreed to build no more than 35 percent of the British submarine strength, they were given the right to build 45 percent, and under critical conditions--as determined by the Germans themselves--they could

⁶⁶Watt, "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement", pp. 165-168.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 162-163.

build to equality with the British submarine force.⁶⁸ These provisions involved quantitative restrictions. In return for these concessions the Germans agreed to observe the qualitative limitations already in effect under the naval treaties and to subscribe to the submarine warfare provisions of Part IV of the London Treaty. The Germans stated their navy was expected to reach the strength stipulated in the Agreement by the end of 1942.⁶⁹ The British may have viewed the Agreement as beneficial in that it set limits upon Germany's naval construction, but the fact is the main result was to give Germany full authorization to build as rapidly as possible a Navy which would be four times larger by 1942. From the German point of view this was hardly limitation.

The effect upon the French of the news of the Anglo-German Naval agreement was easily predictable. They were astounded by what they considered to be a British-sponsored move to upset the balance of naval power in European waters. The French Navy hastened to secure authorization for building two 35,000 ton battleships, and Anglo-French relations sank correspondingly. When the British approached the French with

⁶⁸The Germans never seriously considered the 35 percent limitation in submarines. The German Navy's estimate of the construction program necessary to implement the agreement provided for a submarine tonnage equivalent to 45 percent of Great Britain's. Vice-Admiral Friedrich Ruge, Sea Warfare, 1939-1945: A German Viewpoint (trans. M. G. Saunders, London, 1957), p. 22.

⁶⁹The full text of the Agreement is in German Documents, C, IV, 323-325.

a request for their approval of a British suggestion that the conference concern itself mainly with qualitative limitations which should be fixed at 25,000 tons for battleships, 10,000 tons for heavy cruisers, 22,000 tons for aircraft carriers, 7,600 tons for cruisers and destroyers and 2,000 tons for submarines,⁷⁰ the French replied that while they agreed the main purpose of the conference should be to establish qualitative limitations they were not yet ready to make commitments on definite figures until the nature of the German building program was more fully known.⁷¹

In the last months before the convening of the second London Conference final positions were stated by several governments. The Japanese, in their reply to the same British statement which was so summarily rejected by the French, said that they could not agree that the conference should deal only with qualitative limitations. It should also consider quantitative limitations which would be fair to all nations.⁷² The French stated that under no circumstances would they agree to any proposal to abolish submarines.⁷³ In Great Britain the new Baldwin Government emphasized its

⁷⁰Atherton to Hull, Aug. 9 1935, FRUS , 1935, I, 87-90.

⁷¹French Memorandum dated Aug. 14 1935, enclosed in Marriner to Hull, Aug. 20 1935, ibid., pp. 95-96.

⁷²Aide-Mémoire (undated), ibid., p. 102.

⁷³Atherton to Hull, Sept. 30 1935, SD500.A15A5/509.

attitude toward the Japanese demands was not different from that of the MacDonald Government; it had become more important than ever that Great Britain not admit Japan's claim to parity in any form.⁷⁴ The British "middle course" proposal had already indicated the British would press mainly for qualitative limitations, and private statements subsequently showed that they had abandoned their quest for quantitative limitations.⁷⁵ The American official position remained unchanged also. In early October the General Board submitted a final report on the naval situation for the benefit of the American delegation. It stated that the Japanese attitude was not likely to be modified by any developments which might take place at the conference, and since the American position was not likely to change there seemed little chance of any agreement at all on quantitative limitations. While not certain the British would continue unequivocal support of the American stand against Japan, the Board thought it likely. The French opposition would also make the securing of an accord on quantitative limitations practically impossible. "As matters stand, there is no basis for belief that a conference in 1935 will accept a treaty along the broad lines of the Washington and London

⁷⁴British Embassy to Phillips, Nov. 7 1935, SD500.A15A5/539.

⁷⁵Cmdr. R.E. Schuirmann Memorandum to CNO, 30 Apr. 1935, "Miscellaneous Correspondence Relating to Naval Limitation and Naval Conversations, 1934-1935", Ser. XIII, "General Board Materials Relating to Disarmament, 1921-1936." Commander Schuirmann was one of the American naval delegates at the preliminary discussions.

Treaties."⁷⁶ If one thing about the conference was certain, it was that the path to agreement would be long and difficult, with perhaps nothing at the end of the road but disappointment of hopes for further limitation.

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE CONFERENCE.

The second London Naval Conference convened on December 7, 1935. Since the fundamental positions of the powers concerned had already been worked out during the preliminary conversations a year previously or had been developed in the months following those talks, the conference itself was something of an anticlimax, at least in its early stages. The outcome of this conference was much easier to predict than was the case with the previous naval conferences. Anyone offering to bet that the Japanese would leave the conference and that the four powers remaining would work out an agreement based on qualitative limitations, but containing enough escape clauses to render the whole agreement meaningless, would have had few takers.

The proceedings of the conference divide themselves neatly into two phases. During the first phase stalemate was the rule, as the Japanese delegation single-mindedly advanced their proposals for parity, while the Americans and British just as

⁷⁶Ser. 1696/G.B. 438-1, 4 Oct. 1935.

stubbornly stood their ground and refused to admit any of Japan's claims. The result was a foregone conclusion--the Japanese walked out of the conference a little more than a month later. The second phase of the conference was more fruitful as well as more amicable, and resulted in an agreement on qualitative limitations which represented perhaps the most that could be expected from a disarmament conference during those troubled times.

The Japanese wasted no time in presenting their proposals. At the first plenary meeting on December 9, Admiral Osami Nagano, the chief Japanese naval delegate, stated that his government desired a treaty which

should be based upon the fundamental idea of setting up a common limit of naval armaments to be fixed as low as possible, which they shall not be allowed to exceed; simultaneously, offensive forces must be drastically reduced and ample defensive forces provided, so as to bring about a substantial measure of disarmament, thus securing a state of non-menace and non-aggression among the Powers.⁷⁷

During the next several days the Japanese delegation was kept busy answering questions about the meaning of their proposal, particularly in regard to the term "common upper limit." At the first meeting of the First Committee on December 10, Davis,

⁷⁷U. S. State Department, The London Naval Conference, 1935. Report of the Delegates of the United States of America, Text of the London Naval Treaty of 1936 and Other Documents, Conf. series no. 24 (Washington, 1936), p. 63. Hereafter cited as Conference, 1935.

the chief American delegate,⁷⁸ asked the Japanese to indicate to which nations the common upper limit would apply.⁷⁹ In his reply Nagano stated that the three leading naval powers, because of their "specially intimate relationship", should have a common limit.⁸⁰ Later, in reply to questions as to what was specifically meant by a common upper limit, Nagano said that it did not necessarily mean absolutely equal tonnages, but that they should be nearly equal enough so that attack would be made difficult and defense easier. Adjustments could be made to allow for differences in vulnerability. Davis indicated that this could be taken to imply some kind of ratio, but Nagano believed that it really meant "parity plus alpha"-- a kind of supplement over and above parity.⁸¹ What the Japanese meant by this statement was never made clear, for later

⁷⁸The other important American delegates were William Phillips, Under Secretary of State, and Admiral William H. Standley, Chief of Naval Operations. The most important advisers were: for the State Department, Ray Atherton of the Embassy in London and Eugene Dooman of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs; for the Navy, Captains Walter S. Anderson, Royal E. Ingersoll, and Julius A. Furer, and Commander R.E. Schuirmann. For the complete list of delegates, see Conference, 1935, p. 23.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 100.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 107.

⁸¹Great Britain, Foreign Office, Documents of the London Naval Conference, 1935 (London, 1936), pp. 395-399. Hereafter cited as Documents, 1935. This British record of the conference, while not as complete as the American record cited above, does contain some minutes of meetings not included in the American record of the proceedings. The two should be consulted together.

they returned to their insistence upon mathematical parity. It is conceivable that in their own way they were attempting to jockey the other delegations into an acceptance of the parity principle.

Discussions over the Japanese proposals continued for several days. Both the British and the Americans repeated their belief that because of geographical and other factors absolute equality in tonnages was not a true measure of equality at all, but that the ratios established under the naval treaties were better. Because of her position as a power with interests both in Europe and the Pacific, Great Britain needed a larger fleet than Japan.⁸² It was impossible for Britain to muster in Far Eastern waters a fleet even equal to Japan's let alone superior enough to insure victory in a naval engagement. Davis asserted that under the existing ratio system there was no chance whatever that the fleet of any one of the three great powers could make a successful attack upon any other.⁸³ The discussions became highly technical, as fruitless arguments developed over questions extremely difficult to answer with any degree of certainty-- as for example the question of how large a superiority of one fleet over another was needed to ensure victory in a naval engagement.⁸⁴ Nothing positive emerged from these discussions.

⁸²Conference, 1935, pp. 126-127, 140.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 139-140.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 164-163.

On December 17, at a private meeting between the American and Japanese delegates, the Americans indicated that the ratios could not be abandoned and hinted that if no agreement were reached a naval race would ensue in which Japan would be outbuilt. The Japanese replied that they could accept no agreement which did not provide for parity.⁸⁵

As the discussions dragged on with no hint of an eventual break in the deadlock of ideas, several delegates began to submit compromise proposals in the hope something might be advanced which would enable progress to be made. On December 17 the British offered a plan they claimed would allow for quantitative limitation and at the same time avoid the ratio system to which Japan was so hostile. It would involve the voluntary limitation of naval construction over a period of years so as to maintain each nation's naval strength at a level "required for the national security of the respective Powers, and these limits necessarily vary according to circumstances."⁸⁶ Such a vague proposal would have involved no limitations at all, particularly if each nation was allowed to determine what it needed for its own security, and it came as no surprise that in discussions of the proposal on the 19th and 20th of December each of the other delegations voiced practical objections to the proposal, with the French and the Japanese expressing the most criticism. The American

⁸⁵Davis to Hull, Dec. 17 1935, SD500A15A5/588.

⁸⁶Conference, 1935, p. 148.

delegation, probably perceiving that the British plan stood no chance of acceptance, took little part in the discussions beyond indicating that the plan was acceptable as a basis for discussion.⁸⁷ Finally it was decided to shelve the British proposal in favor of other plans which were submitted on January 6, 1936, when deliberations resumed after the Christmas recess. On January 8 discussions were held concerning French, Italian and British proposals, which sought to secure limitations by requiring advance notice of laying of keels and of the characteristics of vessels laid down.⁸⁸ The Japanese, sensing that the conference could easily become bogged down in endless discussion or, worse still, might sidetrack the Japanese proposal for parity with other agreements, objected to discussion of the three plans before questions involving quantitative limitations had been settled.⁸⁹ Accordingly, it was decided to reintroduce and discuss the Japanese proposal for a common upper limit.

A dramatic high point of the conference occurred on January 15, when the Japanese proposal once more was introduced for discussion. Nagano presented a long plea for acceptance of the common upper limit, and afterwards each

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 151, 160.

⁸⁸ The text of the British, Italian and French proposals may be found in ibid., pp. 432, 433-434, 435-436 respectively.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 200, 207-208.

delegation voiced its reaction. Not one of the delegations voiced sympathy with the plan. This was predictable, because of the Anglo-American agreement much earlier and because the French and the Italians had been persuaded to oppose the Japanese plan.⁹⁰ Davis summarized the objections of all when he said;

The principle of the common upper limit rests in fact on the assumption, which it has not been possible to substantiate, that equality of security. . . could be achieved by equality of naval armament. We believe it has been sufficiently shown in the course of our discussions that equality of naval armaments not only is not the same as equality of security, but that the two are incompatible and contradictory. Equal armaments do not ensure equal security.⁹¹

Eyres-Monsell, the chairman, then closed further discussion of the Japanese proposal and adjourned the meeting with the announcement that the British, French and Italian proposals would again be considered. That evening Nagano notified Eyres-Monsell that since there was no chance the conference would further consider the Japanese proposal, "our Delegation have now come to the conclusion that we can no longer usefully continue our participation in the deliberations of the present Conference."⁹² Leaving a team of observers behind, the Japanese delegation thereupon left for Tokyo.

The Japanese withdrawal caused little excitement since

⁹⁰Davis to Hull, Jan. 10 1936, FRUS , 1936, I, 28.

⁹¹Conference, 1935, p. 223.

⁹²Ibid., p. 437.

it had been so long expected. At the meeting of the First Committee on January 16 the Japanese statement was read, a resolution of regret was passed, and the discussion proceeded immediately to the consideration of the French, British and Italian proposals. There was little comment from abroad. In the United States there was some realization that the Japanese action made a positive limitations agreement more difficult to achieve. The Washington Star commented that "all concerned are conscious that for practical purposes naval limitation is at an end." The New York Sun stated: "A naval agreement to which Japan is not a party being obviously of little value, the withdrawal of the Japanese delegation from the London Naval Conference makes the subsequent history of this gathering of slight interest."⁹³ Although not so pessimistic, Hull noted that the interest of the United States in the Conference was much lessened now that Japan was no longer involved, and that the main interests would henceforth be European.⁹⁴

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE CONFERENCE

The Japanese withdrawal from the conference both complicated and simplified the subsequent proceedings. They were

⁹³Enclosures in Hull to Davis, Jan. 17 1936, SD500.A14A5/621.

⁹⁴Hull to Davis, Jan. 18 1936, FRUS , 1936, I, 38.

complicated in that the delegates realized that no accord could be reached which did not take into account the fact Japan would be completely free of any restrictions on her fleet beginning in 1937; therefore, any agreement reached could not be unduly restrictive of the navies of the signatory powers, lest Japan gain an advantage. On the other hand the removal of the Japanese delegation made it less likely the conference would bog down without reaching some kind of an agreement. Yet it must be admitted that the Japanese action in effect marked the end of the era of naval limitations, even though a treaty did result from the labors of the second London Conference; for under the circumstances whatever limitations were adopted could be only qualitative, and even these would be endangered unless Japan continued to build only the types of ships already established by the naval treaties. Thus the shadow of future Japanese naval programs clouded the further deliberations of the conference.

It was indeed remarkable that the conference was continued at all after mid-January, but the determination of the British to effect some kind of naval limitations agreement met all objections and carried all before it. While the withdrawal of the Japanese did simplify matters, it also brought out into the open problems which hitherto had been submerged by the need to present a common front to the Japanese threat. Chief among these were the Anglo-American disagreement over battleships and 10,000 ton cruisers, the question of Germany's

participation in the conference, and the Italo-Ethiopian war.

The first of these problems had occupied some of the time of the Anglo-American preliminary discussions and now took up much of the remaining time of the conference. In the course of negotiations over this question, the Americans found themselves to some extent supplanting the Japanese in the role of dissenters, for the British position favoring smaller battleships and cruisers had been generally supported by the French and the Italians. The first serious discussion at the conference on the question of battleship and cruiser limitations came shortly after mid-January, when the Japanese withdrawal cleared the way for discussion of qualitative limitations. On January 23 the chief American and British Naval delegates, Admiral Standley and Admiral Sir Ernle Chatfield, the First Sea Lord, met to discuss a British proposal which called for a reduction of the size of the main battery guns on battleships from 16 inches to 14 inches; a building holiday, during which no 6 inch gun cruisers displacing more than 8,000 tons or 8 inch gun cruisers would be built for a period of six years; and the establishment of a new category of "light surface vessels" to take the place of the former cruiser (b) and destroyer categories.⁹⁵ The Americans were reluctant to adopt any of the proposals without considerable modification,

⁹⁵Davis to Hull, Jan. 24 1936, ibid., pp. 46-47.

but subsequent conversations showed that there was no American objection in principle to any of the ideas.

In the matter of cruisers the primary American objection was that a building holiday would amount to a quantitative limitation which would apply to a type particularly important to the American Navy while not applying to other categories. The General Board commented; "The definite restriction of 10,000-ton 8-inch and 6-inch types seems inconsistent in a treaty in which all other types will be unrestricted."⁹⁶ However, Standley's view was that the number of 10,000 ton cruisers already built or on the stocks was large enough to provide for the Navy's needs and would allow the United States to accept such a holiday in the interests of true limitation.⁹⁷ After some deliberation his view was accepted, along with his contention that the proposal should include an escape clause to allow further construction if Japan built beyond her present strength in those categories. In explaining the State and Navy Departments' approval of the British cruiser proposal to Roosevelt, Phillips emphasized the importance of agreement on this point by quoting Davis' comment made earlier: "The question at issue is whether or not a treaty for qualitative limitation is of sufficient value to the United States for it to accept a building holiday in category A and 10,000

⁹⁶General Board memorandum, enclosure in Hull to Davis, Jan. 31 1936, ibid., p. 53.

⁹⁷Davis to Hull, Jan. 26 1936, ibid., p. 48.

ton category B cruisers for a period of years."⁹⁸ After further clarification of the light surface vessels category so as not to exclude 10,000 ton light cruisers the British proposals were given final approval on February 6, even though by so doing we were committing ourselves to build cruisers of no more than 8,000 tons for the next six years.⁹⁹ Since the British had long sought some kind of limitation on the heavier cruisers and would not be likely to approve any treaty which did not provide for such limitation, it was left to the Americans to make the concession necessary to reach an accord.

In the case of battleships the discussions revolved primarily around the question of whether the treaty should provide for a limitation of gun size to 14 inches with the provision that they could be restored to 16 inches if Japan did not agree to so limit her battleship construction, or whether the gun size should remain at 16 inches with the stipulation that it could be lowered to 14 inches if Japan so agreed. The British favored the former position and the United States the latter, primarily because it was unlikely that Japan would agree in either case, and it would be a weak psychological move to reduce the size and then be forced to restore it

⁹⁸Phillips to Roosevelt, Feb. 5 1936, SD500.A15A5/659a.

⁹⁹Hull to Davis, Feb. 6 1936, FRUS , 1936, I, 57-58.

later.¹⁰⁰ The naval delegates, while officially committed to the 14 inches limitation, believed that it should not be permitted unless Japan accepted it. Accordingly, they fought hard for their view. Ingersoll and Schuirmann, the naval spokesmen for this part of the negotiations, argued both with the British and with Davis,¹⁰¹ while in the meetings of the technical committee which was set up to discuss qualitative limitations Standley stood his ground against a Franco-British attempt to lower the gun size to 12 inches and the unit tonnage to 25,000 tons.¹⁰² The pressure for the 14 inch limitation was such that the Americans found it embarrassing to hold out against it, and agreed that with suitable safeguards it could be adopted.

With this second American concession the work of formulating a treaty for qualitative limitation was practically completed. The only major question remaining was whether Germany should be invited to join the conference and to sign the completed treaty. As might have been expected, the French were at first most reluctant to admit Germany, primarily because they believed that it would mark approval by the powers at the conference of Germany's violation of the armaments

¹⁰⁰This was the official view as stated by Hull. Hull to Davis, Jan. 29 1936, *ibid.*, pp. 49-50. Davis preferred the British view, since it involved reduction of armaments in treaty form. Davis to Hull, Jan. 24 1936, SD500.A15A5/636.

¹⁰¹Ingersoll to Hustveldt, 21 Jan. 1936, "Miscellaneous Correspondence Relating to the London Naval Conference of 1935", Series XIV, Gen. Bd. Disarmament Records.

¹⁰²Conference, 1935, pp. 322-323, 339.

restrictions of the Versailles Treaty. The French would consider German participation only on condition that the Germans simultaneously enter into discussions of limitation of land and air armaments--an unlikely prospect.¹⁰³ Somewhat later the French suggested that after the treaty was concluded the British might secure German adherence to its provisions through bilateral negotiations.¹⁰⁴ Further attempts along these lines were abruptly ended, however, when on March 7 Hitler sent his troops into the Rhineland.

The final problem for the conference manifested itself late in February, although it had been recognized from the time the conference began. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the reaction in the League of Nations culminating in the voting of sanctions against Italy--a development in which Great Britain had played a leading role--had created an embarrassing situation. Mussolini's annoyance at the League and at Great Britain in particular resulted in the Italian delegation's announcement that Italy would not agree to the naval treaty at that time.¹⁰⁵ Thus, although the Italians had played an active role in the negotiations up to that

¹⁰³Davis to Hull, Jan. 23 1936, FRUS , 1936, I, pp. 40-41.

¹⁰⁴Davis to Hull, Feb. 25 1936, ibid., p. 73.

¹⁰⁵Hull to Davis, Feb. 28 1936, ibid., p. 78.

point and continued to do so thereafter and approved of the treaty as finally formulated, they did not participate in the signing of the completed treaty on March 25, 1936. Therefore the treaty was a three-power document.

THE TREATY: PROVISIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The London Naval Treaty of 1936 was designed to take effect on January 1, 1937, promptly upon the expiration of the Washington and London treaties, and to remain in force until December 31, 1942. It consisted of four main parts: definitions, qualitative limitations, exchange of building information, and safeguarding clauses.¹⁰⁶

The first part defined the various warship categories. In general the definitions did not depart from those established in previous naval treaties, except in one respect. The former heavy cruiser, light cruiser and destroyer categories were set aside and replaced by a new category called light surface vessels, including surface craft ranging from 100 to 10,000 tons. This category was divided into three subcategories which were similar to the cruiser and destroyer categories except that the lowest subcategory--corresponding to destroyers--included warships between 100 tons and 3,000 tons. This definition, which altered considerably the definition of

¹⁰⁶The full text of the treaty is in Conference, 1935, pp. 27-43.

the destroyer category as developed in the Geneva discussions in 1927 and established in the London Treaty of 1930, was made necessary by the French desire for very large destroyers. The French already had several destroyers exceeding 2,200 tons, and they later built destroyers (contretorpilleurs) approaching 3,000 tons displacement.

The second part of the treaty was the most important. It provided for limitations on the size of battleships, carriers and submarines, and on the construction of light surface vessels. Capital ships could not exceed 35,000 tons nor carry guns larger than 14 inches. If Japan or Italy failed to adhere to the treaty by April 1, 1937, the maximum size of gun could be raised to 16 inches. Aircraft carriers could not exceed 23,000 tons nor carry guns larger than 6.1 inches. Submarines could not exceed 2,000 tons surface displacement nor carry a gun larger than 5.1 inches. Light surface vessels displacing between 8,000 and 10,000 tons (i.e., cruisers) could not be constructed or acquired for six years; if, however, a power not party to the treaty built enough vessels of this category to constitute a menace to one of the signatory powers, the latter would be free to build such vessels upon notifying the other signatories.

The third part of the treaty stated that each signatory power would provide the others with advance information concerning building programs. The information would include dates of laying of keels, launching and commissioning of vessels,

and specifications such as tonnage, main and secondary battery characteristics and designed speed.

The fourth part of the treaty established safeguards in addition to those already provided in the limitation clauses of Part II. The most important of these safeguards were: Article 24, which stated if any nation not party to the treaty built a warship exceeding the limitations specified in the treaty for that type of ship a signatory power could, upon prior notification, similarly disregard the treaty limitation in its own construction; and article 26, which provided that upon prior notification a signatory power could increase its previously announced annual program of naval construction if it deemed such increase necessary.

Examination of the treaty in the context of the times reveals that while it seemed to offer a large measure of limitation, in reality its success depended primarily upon the whim of one nation--Japan. Furthermore, the anxiety over Japan's probable reaction was evident in the numerous safeguarding clauses attached to the treaty. If Japan should choose to ignore all the qualitative limitations stipulated in the treaty, each signatory power would then be freed from the treaty's restrictions, thus nullifying all its major provisions and rendering it in effect a dead letter. In short, if the Japanese did not act as though they had signed the treaty--and there was no reason to suppose that they would--the conference at London might as well not have been held.

CHAPTER X
THE END OF LIMITATIONS:
RESUMPTION OF NAVAL COMPETITION.

The London Naval Treaty of 1936 was concluded during a time when the prospects for limitation of armaments were extremely poor. The attack on Ethiopia by Italy, Hitler's disregard of the armaments restrictions of the Versailles Treaty and his march into the Rhineland, and Japan's clearly menacing attitude all foreshadowed war in the not-distant future. Under the circumstances reaction to the new treaty was not generally enthusiastic. In the United States the Senate held but one hearing on the treaty prior to approving it, during which Davis was the chief witness to appear. He was careful to stress the factors which might lead the Japanese to sign the treaty, such as the lack of quantitative limitations which would allow them to build a fleet as large as they might choose, and that the notification provisions would give them valuable information on other navies which they might not otherwise be able to obtain.¹ The Senators however, seemed more concerned with satisfying themselves that the safeguards in the treaty were ample enough to prevent the United States from being trapped. In debate on the floor of the Senate

¹U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing on the London Naval Treaty, 1936, 74th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1936), pp. 33-34, 38-39.

more concern was shown over the possibility that other countries might cheat on the notification clauses and that the treaty did not provide for real reduction of armaments, but there was remarkably little argument over its main provisions. On May 18, 1936, the Senate approved the treaty without bothering to take a roll call vote.² Only the French seemed pleased. The removal of the restrictions of the Washington Treaty were considered a positive advantage. The new treaty had no discriminating clauses, and the safeguards left the French free to counter the possibility of a threat by Germany.³

The immediately important question, however, concerned the reaction to the treaty in Japan. Would the Japanese see enough advantage in it to persuade them to join in its provisions--either officially or in effect by limiting their building programs--or would they defy it? For the time being, the Japanese seemed unwilling to face the consequences of a large scale naval armaments competition. Grew reported some Japanese officials had said they favored another conference as soon as possible, while others had expressed fear that the United States would begin the development of extensive fortifications in the Philippines as soon as the Washington Treaty

²CR., LXXX, 7437. For the Senate debates see pp. 6425-7433, 7437-74.

³French Embassy to Hull, Apr. 15 1936, SD500.A15A5/782.

expired.⁴ In the State Department Hornbeck saw these statements as evidence that the American building program was beginning to overawe the Japanese and that perhaps another conference might have better results.⁵ Yet the British reported that the Japanese had definitely stated they would not accede to the new naval treaty.⁶ As it was, the only significant attempt after the 1935 conference to re-negotiate any part of the expiring treaties occurred when the British, responding to unofficial Japanese statements favoring the extension of the non-fortification agreements, indicated to the Americans that it might be well to approach Japan favorably upon the subject.⁷ The subject was referred to the General Board, which promptly rejected the whole idea. In view of the unsettled situation in the Far East and of "the inability of the United States Government clearly to define its future policy in regard thereto", such negotiations should not be initiated.⁸

THE ACCELERATION OF NAVAL CONSTRUCTION.

⁴Grew to Hull, May 15 1936, SD500.A15A5/783.

⁵Hornbeck to Hull, May 16 1936, SD500.A15A5/788½.

⁶Welles to Standley, July 30 1936, SD500.A15A5/809.

⁷"Memorandum of conversation between the British chargé and the assistant chief of the Division of Western European affairs", Sept. 11 1936, enclosure in Ser. 1730/G.B. 438-1, 17 Oct. 1936.

⁸Ser. 1730/G.B. 438-1, 17 Oct. 1936.

While hopeful that Japan might not upset the delicate balance in the naval situation, the powers concerned were not willing to trust the future. In May the British unofficially requested the American government to approve the retention by the Royal Navy of 40,000 tons of overage destroyers, even though under the London Treaty this tonnage was supposed to be scrapped by the end of the year.⁹ The General Board, while willing to acquiesce, took the opportunity to demand that the United States Navy should be allowed to retain an equal amount of tonnage as allowed by a safeguarding clause in the treaty.¹⁰ The Japanese, unable to retain a proportionate tonnage because they did not possess enough overage destroyers, announced they would keep 15,598 tons of old submarines.¹¹ Thereupon the United States announced it would retain an equal amount of submarine tonnage.¹² The barriers were already collapsing.

Since the 1936 London Treaty did not provide for quantitative limitations, it had no effect whatever upon the American naval construction program. The qualitative limitations

⁹Bingham to Hull, July 15 1936, FRUS, 1936, I, 135.

¹⁰Ser. 1719/G.B. 438-1, 25 May, 1936.

¹¹Saito (Ambassador in Washington) to Hull, Dec. 28 1936, FRUS, 1936, I, 156.

¹²Moore (Acting Sec. of State) to Grew, Dec. 30 1936, ibid.; p. 158.

of the London Treaty, which governed the design of the newer vessels, were similar to those established by the new treaty which in any case did not come into force until 1937. Under the authorization provided by the Vinson-Trammell Act of 1934, the shipbuilding program progressed favorably. In June, 1936, the Naval Appropriation Act provided \$115,300,000 to continue work on the ships begun under the NRA program, to complete two submarines authorized previously, and to lay down under the authority of the Vinson-Trammell Act 12 destroyers, 6 submarines and 2 battleships as replacements for the aging Arkansas and Texas, the oldest battleships in the fleet.¹³

A month later the General Board submitted its recommendations for the 1938 program. Increasingly confident of favorable Congressional action on its proposals, the board stated that all tonnage necessary to reach treaty limits should be laid down before the end of the year. It recommended the appropriation of funds to commence the construction of 2 battleships, 1 experimental destroyer of 3,000 tons, 10 destroyers of 1,500 tons, and 4 submarines. In addition, funds should be voted to lay down a number of sorely needed naval auxiliaries.¹⁴ Altogether the situation was much improved. The Navy's strength had been greatly increased and by early 1937

¹³U.S. Statutes, XLIX, pt. 1, 1416.

¹⁴Ser. 1727/G.B. 420-2, 22 July, 1936.

TABLE 9

UNDERAGE SHIPS BUILT, BUILDING
OR APPROPRIATED FOR, MARCH 1, 1937.

	United States Built/Building or appropriated for	Great Britain Built/Building or appropriated for	Japan Built/Building or appropriated for
Battleships tonnages	15/2 464,300/70,000	15/2 474,750/70,000	9/0 272,070/0
Aircraft carriers tonnages	3/3 80,500/54,500	6/3 115,350/66,000	4/2 68,370/20,100
Heavy Cruisers tonnages	16/2 151,800/20,000	15/0 144,200/0	12/0 107,800/0
Light Cruisers tonnages	10/9 70,500/90,000	20/16 130,280/123,800	16/4 86,895/33,950
Destroyers tonnages	32/54 43,300/84,850	82/34 110,529/58,505	78/18 101,629/25,944
Submarines tonnages	25/17 33,620/24,295	38/14 45,214/14,900	44/7 60,472/10,200

Source: Tables in CR., LXXXI, 1897-98.

was in a more favorable position relative to the strength of the other powers.

There was little question that after mid-1936 the Navy enjoyed smooth sailing in its relationship with Congress. Relations had been improving steadily since 1933, and the results of the 1935 conference and treaty had sharpened the sense of urgency regarding the need for naval expansion and had dashed finally the hopes of those congressmen who had believed naval limitations were still feasible. The State Department had already shown its willingness to follow rather than to ignore the advice of the naval officers concerning negotiations at the disarmament conferences; at the 1935 Conference Davis had given Standley the kind of respect and authority to negotiate that had been conspicuously absent in the relationships of diplomats and naval experts at most of the previous conferences on naval limitations. The changing attitude of Congress was reflected in the relative ease with which the naval appropriations and authorization bills were passed after 1935. It was a novel situation in which naval planners found themselves, and it may be presumed that they enjoyed it to the fullest.

There was no doubt they exploited their opportunities. December 31, 1936, came and went, and with it passed a fourteen year era of quantitative limitation on naval armaments. Reflecting both a desire to take fullest advantage of the freedom from limitations on total tonnages built and also

anxiety over what kind of action Japan might take, the supporters of naval expansion urged upon Congress and helped secure the passage of legislation which marked the greatest expansion of naval strength in the peacetime history of the United States.

The Naval Appropriations Act of April 25, 1937, appropriated \$90,000,000 to begin the construction of 8 destroyers and 4 submarines authorized by the Vinson-Trammell Act and provided \$27,186,000 for new aircraft authorized by the same Act.¹⁵

On July 30, responding to naval pleas for a large scale addition to the fleet of naval auxiliaries,¹⁶ Congress passed an act which authorized the construction of a seaplane tender, a destroyer tender, a submarine tender, a minesweeper, a fleet tug, and an oil tanker, and less than a month later, appropriations to begin work on those vessels was voted.¹⁷

So rapid was the expansion that naval planners became concerned lest the shipyards could not accommodate the increasing load, particularly in submarines.¹⁸ It was a period of expansion and optimistic feeling which had not fallen to the Navy's lot since before 1920.

¹⁵U. S. Statutes, L, pt. 1, 114, 111.

¹⁶U. S. Senate, Naval Affairs Committee, Hearing on S2193. Construction of Certain Auxiliary Vessels for the Navy, 75th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1937), pp. 2-14.

¹⁷U. S. Statutes, L, pt. 1, 44-45, 767-768.

¹⁸Ser. 1741/G.B. 420-2, 8 May, 1937.

THE FAILURE OF THE SECOND LONDON TREATY:
THE END OF THE DISARMAMENT ERA.

When the Second London Treaty came into force, it was not known whether the Japanese would adjust their building program to the limitations stipulated by the treaty or whether they would choose to ignore them. The answer was not long in coming. Before the end of January the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy had indicated their acceptance of the 14 inch gun limitation for their future battleships,¹⁹ but nothing final could be decided until Japan accepted the restriction. However, reports indicated that the Japanese were contemplating the construction of new battleships to displace 60,000 tons and to mount a main battery of 18 inch guns.²⁰ By the end of March it appeared that the Japanese would not agree to limit their battleship construction as provided by the treaty, and their decision voided the 14 inch gun limitation of the London Treaty, forcing recourse by the signatory powers to the safeguarding clause whereby the gun size could be raised to 16 inches. The formal Japanese rejection did not come until June. Although they said that they could not agree to observe qualitative limitations without quantitative limitations, their real reason probably was their desire to con-

¹⁹Bingham to Hull, Jan. 15 1937, FRUS , 1937, I, 619.

²⁰Grew to Hull, Jan. 18 1937, ibid., p. 621.

struct unusually powerful battleships in order to redress the naval balance more nearly in their favor.²¹

The first result of the changed situation was the American decision to mount 16 inch guns on the new battleships which were to replace Arkansas and Texas. As originally planned they had characteristics which kept within treaty limits--a displacement of 35,000 tons, a main battery of twelve 14 inch guns, armor protection to withstand the fire of 14 inch guns, and the relatively high speed of 28 knots.²² Upon being informed that the Japanese would not agree to restrict the guns on their future battleships to 14 inches, Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson told the General Board that the United States was no longer bound by the London Treaty in this respect. Accordingly, the Board authorized the changing of the main battery armament of the new battleships to nine 16 inch guns, the rest of the design remaining unaltered.²³

Bad as the situation was, it soon became worse. When the American government inquired whether the Japanese government would comply with that part of the London Treaty relating to

²¹Their battleships, Yamato and Musashi, displaced more than 60,000 tons and mounted nine 18 inch guns. Laid down in 1937, they were completed in 1942.

²²Ser. 1735/G.B. 420-6, 16 Nov., 1936.

²³Ser. 1747/G.B. 420-6, 31 Mar. 1937. The battleships built to these specifications were North Carolina and Washington, commissioned in 1941.

mutual notification of laying down of warships and the transmission of information as to their characteristics, it received an unsatisfactory reply.²⁴ Navy spokesmen were certain that the Japanese were laying down tonnage in excess of the maximum provided for in the 1930 London Treaty and favored a unilateral declaration by the United States of the right to escalate their construction under Article 25 of the 1936 London Treaty. Admiral Leahy, then Chief of Naval Operations told State Department representatives that "this Government should escalate in all categories of naval vessels and build such ships, and of such size and armament, as may be necessary for the defense of the United States."²⁵ Secretary Swanson wanted to invoke the escalation clause in cruisers as well as battleships, but Hull prevailed upon Roosevelt to sanction a more moderate course.²⁶ They decided to invoke the clause only in regard to battleships, and to undertake the action jointly with the British and perhaps the French. The British endeavored to keep the rise in tonnage limits moderate--only to 40,000 tons--but the Americans insisted upon a higher figure. Ultimately a protocol was signed on June 30, which de-

²⁴Grew to Hull, Feb. 12 1938, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan, 1931-1941, (2 vols., Washington, 1943), I, 303-304.

²⁵Memorandum of conversation at Navy Department, March 3 1938, SD500.A15A5/124.

²⁶Leahy Diary, IV, 27 (5 Mar. 1938); Memorandum by Moffatt, March 4 1938, FRUS, 1938, I, 896.

clared that the three countries agreed that the upper limit of tonnage for battleships was henceforth 45,000 tons, gun size remaining at 16 inches.²⁷

For all practical purposes naval limitations were at an end. Although the London Treaty of 1936 remained in effect, the use of the safeguarding clauses rendered its original purposes invalid. The agreements in that treaty to abide by the quantitative limitations of part III of the London Treaty of 1930 were dealt a severe blow by the passage of the so-called second Vinson Bill on May 17 1938, according to which treaty tonnages could be exceeded by 23 percent in every category. Altogether this law authorized: a total strength for the Navy of 630,000 tons of battleships, 175,000 tons of aircraft carriers, 412,500 tons of cruisers, 228,000 tons of destroyers, and 31,950 tons of submarines; the construction or purchase for conversion of a number of tenders, oil tankers, tugs and mincraft; and an increase of naval aviation strength to 3,000 airplanes.²⁸ The new law also provided the beginning of an extensive program of naval base and fortification construction in the Pacific when it requested the Navy to report to Congress on the need for base

²⁷Johnson (chargé London) to Hull, June 28 1938, FRUS., 1938, I, 916.

²⁸U. S. Statutes, LII, pt. 1, 401-402.

development in the Pacific.²⁹ Shortly thereafter the General Board submitted a report on a 10-year naval shipbuilding program based upon the authorizations of the second Vinson Bill and earlier legislation. The report called for the construction during the period 1939-1948 of 14 battleships, 5 carriers, 8 heavy cruisers, 19 light cruisers, 78 destroyers, 49 submarines and 61 other vessels.³⁰ This amount was approximately double the existing strength of the Navy. Naval expansion was moving into high gear. Yet with all this construction, the damage done to American naval power by the lack during earlier years of a consistent program of construction and replacement was not made up for some time. As late as January, 1939, the United States had fewer carriers, submarines, and underage destroyers in commission than did Japan, and only a few more cruisers.³¹

The American declaration that the tonnages authorized would not be built for some time served to keep the limitations of the 1930 London Treaty officially in effect. When the

²⁹ A Naval Board under the leadership of Admiral Hepburn was established. It submitted a report to Congress on December 27, 1938. U.S. House of Representatives, The Hepburn Report, House Doc. no. 65, 76th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1938).

³⁰ Ser. 1802/G.B. 420-2, 25 July 1938. Later the program was modified by the inclusion of 4 26,000 ton battlecruisers and the deletion of 2 heavy cruisers and a light cruiser. Ser. 1885-A/G.B. 420-2, 7 Oct. 1939.

³¹ Tables in CR., LXXXIV, 5696.

Second World War broke out, however, there was not much point in maintaining naval limitations officially or unofficially. The final doom of limitations occurred when, on September 3, 1939, the British notified the Americans that in view of the outbreak of hostilities the treaty limitations were suspended.³² The British action marked the official end of an era in naval policy.

In retrospect it seems clear that the experiment in naval disarmament was not a failure. While most naval officers would have preferred to have had the kind of fleet which the 1916 Authorization Act made possible, it was more than likely that Congress would not have voted the appropriations necessary to construct all the ships in the time desired by the naval experts. Meanwhile, Great Britain and Japan would have been building rapidly, and it is conceivable they would have finished their programs long before the Americans did. In that event we might have found ourselves faced with a more unfavorable ratio of strength, particularly in battleships, than was actually developed under the treaties. This view is not based upon mere speculation, for we have before us the example of what did happen in the construction of the unrestricted classes after 1922, especially in cruisers.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that while naval experts were not at all convinced a 5:3 ratio represented a

³²British Aide Mémoire, Sept. 3 1939, FRUS., 1939, I, 558.

clearly superior margin of strength over the Japanese Navy and were still less satisfied with the 10:7 ratio which developed under the London Treaty of 1930, they would probably have displayed considerably less anxiety than they did during the decade after 1922 if the ratios established by the treaties had actually been in effect. The real cause of concern, as this study has shown, was the fact that American naval strength, except in battleships, fell well below the treaty ratios. For that situation the responsibility rested with Congress and the Administrations, and beyond them with the attitude of the public, which was not ready to believe that the achievement of even treaty strength in naval power was a necessity.

Two other conclusions seem inescapable after serious study of the disarmament era. One is that while the disarmament treaties greatly affected the formulation of naval policy, especially in so far as qualitative limitations restricted ship construction and naval strategy, it is also unquestionably true that the naval policy makers' concepts of the kind of navy the United States needed for its security affected the progress of disarmament. The limitations finally agreed upon at the various conferences usually represented the minimum to which the naval experts would agree. At Geneva in 1927 and 1932 and at London in 1935 the views of the naval experts set the limits upon the concessions which the Americans were willing to make and markedly influenced the final form of the second London Treaty. Only in two cases--in

1922 and 1930-- were the results of the negotiations roundly denounced by the great majority of the naval officers and serious doubts entertained by them that the basic naval strategy of War Plan Orange could be executed; even in this case, the problems which the naval planners faced as practical realities rather than as theoretical possibilities arose more from the lack of Congressional and Administration support than from the restrictions of the treaty. As is frequently the case elsewhere, the relationship of the Navy to naval disarmament was a circular cause-and-effect relationship.

The second point to be made regarding the naval disarmament era is that agreements concerning naval limitation were either the direct result of improved relationships among the powers involved or--in the case of Washington in 1922-- came about because the powers realized that limitation was preferable to continued competition. In the latter case the realization was stimulated by the understanding that the fundamental policies of the powers were not in conflict. On the other hand, whenever there was a serious conflict of fundamental interests, or when a conflict was seriously believed to exist, no agreements were reached. The relations between the United States and Japan in the period after 1931 may be cited as the outstanding example of this conflict of interests, but it is by no means the only one. As the only serious attempt by the nations to limit their armaments, the story of naval limitations provides an excellent lesson in inter-

national relationships for anyone who wishes to understand the influence of armaments on policy, or the reverse.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

The essay which follows includes some material not cited in the body of this study, and several works cited which do not appear in the bibliography are mainly periodical articles contemporary with the events they discuss. Those materials which do appear in the following pages are those which seemed to be of special importance in the study of naval policy and disarmament. The listing is by no means exhaustive.

MANUSCRIPT MATERIALS

The student of American naval policy in the disarmament era will of necessity do much research in the records of the General Board of the Navy. Fortunately the Board's materials on the subject are well catalogued and remarkably complete. The materials themselves--ranging from published government documents of the United States and the League of Nations to memoranda, statistical tables and attaché reports occupy several yards of shelf space in the archives of the Naval Historical Division at the Washington Navy Yard. They are well indexed in a folder entitled "International Conferences and Discussions: Records and Publications, 1921-1938." There are fifteen groupings called series, each dealing with a particular subject and containing a wide variety of materials.

Prominent among General Board materials relating to disarmament are its official studies and reports. These as well as studies on other naval subjects from 1913 to 1949 are indexed by serial number in a folder entitled "Inventory of Records and Study Numbers." The studies relating to the Washington Conference were collected and bound in two volumes entitled "The General Board and the Conference on the Limitation of Armaments, 1921-1922." Most of the same material, better organized is in "Final Action of the General Board," including studies from July 1921 to November 1922.

Other General Board documents closely connected with the reports and studies are the hearings conducted by the Board and bound in separate volumes called "Hearings before the General Board of the Navy." Mention should also be made of the "Proceedings of the General Board." These are bound volumes of typewritten minutes of meetings, each volume covering one year. They are valuable primarily for ascertaining which subjects were discussed on a particular day, who attended the meetings and whether hearings were held on particular subjects. They do not indicate what was said at the meetings, beyond stating what subjects were discussed. All the General Board records enumerated above were extensively consulted for this study.

A second major source of material on naval policy and disarmament is the record of the reports and other communications of officials of the State Department. These materials



relate primarily to the various disarmament conferences and are stored under custody of the Foreign Affairs section of the National Archives. The file numbers concerned are 500.A15A4b (Washington Conference), 500.A15A1 (1927 Geneva Conference), 500.A15A3 (London Conference of 1930), 500.A15A4 (1932 Geneva Conference), and 500.A15A5 (1935 London Conference). Other National Archives material may be found in the Navy Department section, much of it duplicating that available in the General Board collection.

Finally, several other manuscript sources should be mentioned. Several of the persons who played key roles in the formulation of naval policy have left their papers in the care of various depositories. In the research necessary for this study the papers of two leading naval officers were consulted: those of Admiral Hilary Jones and the diaries of Admiral William D. Leahy. These are in the keeping of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

Another major source on naval policy in the disarmament period is the public record itself as made available in government publications of several kinds. The State Department published reports on the two London Conferences and on the preparations for the 1932 Geneva Conference, containing minutes of meetings, committee reports and press releases. These

titles are:

1. Proceedings of the London Naval Conference of 1930 and Supplementary Documents, conference series no. 6 (Washington, 1931).
2. The London Naval Conference, 1935. Report of the Delegates of the United States of America, Text of the London Naval Treaty and Other Documents, conference series no. 24 (Washington, 1936).
3. Report of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, and Draft Convention, conference series no. 7 (Washington, 1931).

Materials on the disarmament conferences are only a part of the State Department records bearing on naval policy. The continuing publication of diplomatic correspondence, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, for the years 1921 through 1937 were used extensively for this study, supplemented by special publications on foreign policy in the thirties: Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Japan 1931-1941 (2 vols., Washington, 1943); and Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941 (Washington, 1943). Another State Department publication, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1939, Series C, vols. III and IV (Washington, 1959-1962), is useful for German participation in the conferences and in the Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935.

Congressional documents, reports and hearings are major

sources for the study of naval policy because of the role of Congress as a creator of policy. The basic Congressional publication is of course its journal, the Congressional Record. Hearings on naval appropriations bills, construction authorization bills and special hearings on naval policy are also important sources and have been closely examined; these--together with House and Senate reports concerning the bills--have been cited already in the body of this study and need not be repeated here. Two Congressional documents which deserve special consideration and mention here are:

1. U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Conference on the Limitation of Armament, Sen. Doc. no. 126, 67th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, 1922).
2. U. S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Records of the Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armament Held at Geneva, Switzerland, from June 20 to August 4, 1927, Sen. Doc. no. 55, 70th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1928).

Several publications of the Navy Department are valuable for the study of naval policy. Chief among these is the Annual Report of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1913 (Washington, 1914), and the reports for subsequent years to 1932. Also significant as a presentation of the Navy's estimate of the naval situation in the mid-twenties is Information Concerning the United States Navy and Other Navies (Washington, 1925). Ships' Data, United States Naval Vessels, published

annually, is the official source of statistical data on tonnage and characteristics of American warships.

One other American official source must be mentioned. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) conducted the war crimes trials of Japanese leaders. Its Record of Proceedings (Tokyo, 1946-48) is without question the most important single source on the inner workings of the Japanese government during the period from 1930 to 1941. The total collection consists of many volumes of documents and other material which has been duplicated on 36 rolls of microfilm for distribution to libraries. The Record is summarized in Judgment of the IMTFE (Tokyo, n.d.). Paul S. Dull and Michael T. Umemura, The Tokyo Trials: A Functional Index to the Proceedings of the IMTFE (Ann Arbor, 1957) is indispensable as an aid in the proper use of the many volumes of documents.

Several publications of foreign governments relate closely to naval policy. Those from the British Foreign Office used for this study include:

1. Documents of the London Naval Conference, 1935 (London, 1936).
2. "Papers Regarding the Limitation of Naval Armament", Parliamentary Papers, misc. no. 6, Command 3211 (London, 1928).
3. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler (eds.), Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, 1st series (13 vols. London (1947-) and 2nd series (8 vols).

The League of Nations published several documents relating to the Geneva conferences and the meetings of the Preparatory Commission. The most significant are:

1. Documents of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference Entrusted with the Preparation for the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments,
 Series I-IV (Geneva, 1925-27).
 Series VI (Geneva, 1928)
 Series VIII (Geneva, 1929)
 Series IX (Geneva, 1931)
2. Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference: Report of Sub-Commission A (Military, Naval and Air) (Geneva, 1926).
3. Records of the Conference for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments, Geneva, 1932,
 Series A: Verbatim Records of Plenary Meetings (Geneva, 1937).
 Series D, vol. II: Minutes of the Naval Commission (Geneva, 1937).

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

A. BIBLIOGRAPHIES

American naval policy as a field of study has not been much explored; consequently, no bibliography solely on naval policy exists. However, two bibliographies on naval history contain useful references to materials on naval policy. These are: Robert G. Albion, Maritime and Naval History: An An-

notated Bibliography (Mystic, Conn., 1963); and W. B. Ellinger and H. Rosinski, Sea Power in the Pacific, 1936-1941: A Selected Bibliography (Princeton, 1942). The former is the more useful. Material relating to the disarmament conferences may be found in three older bibliographies. The League of Nations Library, Annotated Bibliography on Disarmament and Military Questions (Geneva, 1931), contains references on naval disarmament in Chapter IX, emphasizing British sources. Two Library of Congress publications offer more sources. These are: Disarmament, with Special Reference to Naval Limitation: A Bibliographical List, compiled by Florence S. Hellman (Washington, 1929); and its companion by the same compiler, Disarmament, with Special References to Naval Limitation: A List of Recent References (Washington, 1934).

B. ALMANACS AND OTHER STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS

Specifications and characteristics of the warships in the navies of the world powers, as well as comparisons of overall naval strengths and analyses of contemporary developments, may be found in several publications. One of the best is Jane's Fighting Ships, a London publication issued annually since 1898 --not always under that title. Another good source is Brassey's Naval Annual, another London publication, more analytical than Jane's. More information on Japanese naval programs is in The Japan Year Book (Tokyo). Statistics on land and air forces as well as navies is in the League of Nations annual publication, Armaments Year Book: General and Statistical Information (Geneva).

C. PERIODICALS.

Many scholarly periodicals include articles on naval policy. Several of these have been cited in the text. One periodical deserving special mention here is the Survey of International Affairs, written and edited by Arnold Toynbee under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Issued annually since 1919, the Survey contains good contemporary analyses of the disarmament conferences.

D. DIARIES, MEMOIRS AND REMINISCENCES

Many of the key figures in the story of naval policy and disarmament published their own impressions. Prominent among these were Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era: Years of War and After, 1917-1923 (Chapel Hill, 1946), and Charles Dawes, whose Journal as Ambassador to Great Britain (New York, 1939), contains information pertaining to the 1930 London Conference. Another was Henry L. Stimson, who, in collaboration with McGeorge Bundy, wrote On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, 1947). Nicholas Roosevelt wrote his impressions of the Washington Conference in A Front Row Seat (Norman, Okla., 1953), while Kikujiro Ishii, in Diplomatic Commentaries (New York, 1939), presents a Japanese view. Another Japanese statement, especially useful in connection with the 1930 London Conference, is Military Intelligence Section, General Staff, General Headquarters, U. S. Army Far East Command, The Saionji Harada Memoirs: Supplement. Prince Saionji and the London Disarmament Treaty (Tokyo, 1946). Cordell Hull, in The

Memoirs of Cordell Hull (2 vols., New York, 1948), presents his views of the tumultuous thirties, while Lord Robert, Viscount Cecil, discusses his own role in A Great Experiment: An Autobiography (Oxford 1941). Hugh R. Wilson, American Ambassador to Switzerland and a frequent representative at disarmament conferences, wrote his recollections in Diplomat Between Wars (New York, 1941). Recently his son brought out a selection of some of his father's letters and statements bearing on the 1932 Geneva Conference, entitled Disarmament and the Cold War in the Thirties (New York, 1963).

Naval men have left a number of memoirs, chief among which are: Admiral Robert E. Coontz, From the Mississippi to the Sea (Philadelphia, 1930), which is useful for the period before and during the Washington Conference; Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King and Walter M. Whitehill, Fleet Admiral King: A Naval Record (New York, 1952), which is good on the development of naval aviation during the thirties; and Admiral William H. Standley and Arthur A. Ageton, Admiral Ambassador to Russia (New York, 1947), which has some information on the 1935 London Conference.

E. BIOGRAPHIES

A useful biography of Hughes is Merlo Pusey's Charles Evans Hughes (2 vols. New York, 1951). A prominent critic of naval policy before and after the Washington Conference is presented in Elting E. Morison, Admiral Sims and the Modern Navy (Boston, 1942). Kellogg is critically analyzed in L.

Ethan Ellis, Frank B. Kellogg and American Foreign Relations, 1925-1929 (New Brunswick, 1962). Marian McKenna, in Borah (Ann Arbor, 1961), presents a sympathetic study of a leading figure in the Senate. Stimson is analyzed in two biographies, Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson: A Study in Statecraft (New Brunswick, 1954), and Elting E. Morison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston, 1960). The latter is the more critical, particularly of Stimson's role at the London Conference. Ramsay Mac Donald is thoughtfully discussed in Benjamin J. Sacks, J. Ramsay MacDonald in Thought and Action (Albuquerque, 1952).

F. MONOGRAPHS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

The Pre-1918 Period.

Certain areas of naval policy development have been fairly well researched, but other areas are almost barren of study. The period before 1890 is practically a pioneer field; by contrast the era from 1900 to 1918 is reasonably well covered. Naval policy under Theodore Roosevelt is discussed in a short work by Gordon C. O'Gara, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of the Modern Navy (Princeton, 1943). With less detail on purely naval aspects but developing a fine overall perspective is Howard K. Beale, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power (Baltimore, 1956). The development of American-Japanese naval rivalry in this period is well elaborated in William R. Braisted, The United States Navy

in the Pacific, 1897-1909 (Austin, 1958) and Outten J. Clinard, Japan's Influence on American Naval Power, 1897-1917, University of California Publications in History no. 36 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947).

Naval policy under Woodrow Wilson is discussed, with special reference to American-German naval relations, in Edward H. Buehrig, Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power (Bloomington, Ind., 1955). Edward H. Brook, "The National Defense Policy of the Wilson Administration, 1913-1917" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1950) is more specific with regard to the 1916 Naval Act. Both of these studies show Wilson as realistically aware of international power relationships. Among the many examples of the propaganda of the preparedness movement of 1915-16, one of the most representative is Julius W. Muller, The Invasion of America: A Fact Story Based on the Inexorable Mathematics of War (New York, 1915). Its title indicates its content--the invasion, incidentally, was by Germany.

Post war Rivalry and the Washington Conference

This period has been well but not exhaustively examined. The best study made at the time--in part written while the conference was under way--is Raymond K. Buell's The Washington Conference (New York, 1922). Excellent on the situation which led to the conference, it suffers to an extent by being too close to the event. Yamato Ichihashi, The Washington Confer-



ence and After (Stanford, 1928), is a good account from the Japanese viewpoint, with some perspective. Both Ichihashi's and Buell's accounts concentrate as much attention on China as upon naval problems. Harold and Margaret Sprout, Toward a New Order of Sea Power: American Naval Policy and the World Scene, 1918-1922 (Princeton, 1940), is by all odds the best study to date of the purely naval aspect of the Washington Conference, even though it could not make much use of manuscript sources.

The naval situation on the eve of the Washington Conference is well presented in Hector Bywater's Sea Power in the Pacific: A Study of the American-Japanese Naval Problem (London, 1921). The conference as a whole, with special reference to the Four Power Treaty, is examined in John Chalmers Vinson, The Parchment Peace: The United States Senate and the Washington Conference (Athens, Ga., 1955). In Preface to Preparedness: The Washington Conference and Public Opinion (Washington, 1941), C. Leonard Hoag thoroughly analyzes public pressures which greatly influenced both the calling of the conference and its final approval. The relationship of the League of Nations is told in A. H. Abbott, "The League's Disarmament Activities and the Washington Conference," Political Science Quarterly, XXXVII (1922), 1-24. For the role played by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, see C. N. Spinks, "The Termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," Pacific Historical Review, VI (1937), 321-340. French-American relations

are examined in detail in Louis A.R. Yates, The United States and French Security, 1917-1921 (New York, 1957).

The Post-Washington Era to the 1927 Geneva Conference

Periods between naval conferences have not been generally researched by students of naval policy. One of the few works dealing with naval policy during the twenties as a whole and coming to a focus upon the 1927 Geneva Conference is Gerald E. Wheeler's Prelude to Pearl Harbor: The United States Navy and the Far East, 1921-1931 (Columbia, Mo., 1963). As the title indicates, it is concerned primarily with Japan's role as it affected American naval policy. The London Conference of 1930 is also discussed, though not in detail. Wheeler's study is essentially an elaboration of his dissertation, "Japan's Influence on American Naval Policies, 1922-1931" (University of California, Berkeley, 1954).

No published work dealing solely with the Geneva Conference of 1927 exists. Among unpublished studies the most comprehensive is Ben Scott Custer's "The Geneva Conference for the Limitation of Naval Armament--1927" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Georgetown University, 1948). The student of the conference is obliged to turn almost immediately to the primary sources. An excellent analysis of the naval situation on the eve of the conference, as well as a good coverage of the period as a whole, is Hector Bywater, Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments Since the Great War (Boston,

1927). Another study, Nicholas Roosevelt's The Restless Pacific (New York, 1928), emphasizes Japanese-American naval relations.

The London Naval Conference of 1930.

The most thorough study of the subject is Raymond G. O'Connor, Perilous Equilibrium: The United States and the London Naval Conference of 1930 (Lawrence, Kans., 1962). The study makes extensive use of manuscript materials of the Navy and State Departments and from a purely diplomatic standpoint may well be definitive. O'Connor does not thoroughly treat public attitudes, however.

The discussions preceding the conference are analyzed in James L. Godfrey, "Anglo-American Naval Conversations Preliminary to the London Naval Conference of 1930," South Atlantic Quarterly, XLIX (1950), 303-316. O'Connor's article, "The Yardstick and Naval Disarmament in the 1920's", The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLV (Dec. 1958), 441-463, treats exhaustively one important aspect of the conversations. Wheeler states the idea that an Anglo-American understanding concerning Japan was developing before 1930 in "Isolated Japan: Anglo-American Diplomatic Cooperation, 1927-1936," Pacific Historical Review, XXX (1961), 165-178.

American-Japanese naval relations have been far more attractive for naval scholars than the area of Anglo-American relations. One study which throws light upon a relatively

neglected field is George V. Fagan, "Anglo-American Naval Relations, 1927-1937," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1954). As the dates indicate, Fagan's work includes the period of the second Geneva and second London Conferences.

The Post-London Situation and the 1932 Geneva Conference.

The period following the first London Conference has not been closely analyzed; only a few published studies exist. One of the more comprehensive works is Thaddeus V. Tuleja, Statesmen and Admirals: Quest for a Far Eastern Naval Policy, 1931-1941 (New York, 1963). Dealing in detail with American-Japanese naval relations, it discusses--though not exhaustively--the 1932 Geneva Conference and the second London Naval Conference. Denna F. Fleming, The United States and World Organization, 1920-1933 (New York, 1938) contains useful material on American participation in the Preparatory Commission and the 1932 conference. A good contemporary evaluation of the conference is in John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Disarmament Deadlock (London, 1934). Another contemporary study, W. Arnold-Foster, "British Policy at the Disarmament Conference," Political Quarterly, III (1932), discusses the British position on the eve of the conference. One aspect of the conference--that dealing with the problem of offensive versus defensive weapons--is thoroughly explored in Marion W. Boggs, Attempts to Define and Limit "Aggressive" Armament

in Diplomacy and Strategy (Columbia, Mo., 1941).

The part played by the Great Depression in aggravating international tensions in the thirties has been closely examined, and some valuable studies have been produced. One of the most important, from the point of view of American policies, is Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933 (New Haven, 1957). Ferrell's study provides important information on the 1932 Geneva Conference. G. C. Allen, in A Short Economic History of Modern Japan, 1867-1937 (London, 1946) traces the effect of the depression upon Japan, while Richard Storry, The Double Patriots: A Study of Japanese Nationalism (London, 1957) is a good account of the political consequences of the economic dislocation. A detailed study of the rise of Japanese militarism, making extensive use of the documents of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, is Yale C. Maxon, Control of Japanese Foreign Policy: A Study of Civilian-Military Rivalry, 1930-1945 (Berkeley, 1962). Though Maxon's work emphasizes the Japanese Army, it also develops to an extent the role played by the Navy.

After Geneva

The period following the 1932 Geneva Conference has not been studied in any detail. Samuel Eliot Morison's monumental History of the United States Naval Operations in World War II includes some valuable material on the pre-war Japanese Navy

and the naval situation in general in volume III, entitled, The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April, 1942 (Boston, 1948). Two studies of the mid-thirties reflect American and Japanese viewpoints on the naval situation developing as a result of the termination of the Washington and London Treaties. The American attitude is presented in Sutherland Denlinger and Charles B. Gary, War in the Pacific: A Study of Navies, Peoples and Battle Problems (New York, 1936); the Japanese in Jiuji Kasai, The United States and Japan in the Pacific: American Naval Maneuvers and Japan's Pacific Policy (Tokyo, 1935).

War Plan Orange has been thoroughly studied by Louis Morton, one of the Army's official historians and a leading American military historian. In "War Plan Orange: Evolution of a Strategy", World Politics XI (Jan. 1959), he gives much important information regarding the plan, especially in the period after 1930.

The period of the second London Naval Conference is as yet generally unexplored by historians of naval policy. There is no book on the subject, and only a few studies dealing with related areas. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935 is treated in detail but not exhaustively in D. C. Watt "The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of 1935: An Interim Judgment," Journal of Modern History, XXVIII (June, 1956), 155-175. Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge, in Sea Warfare, 1939-1945: A German Viewpoint (trans. M.G. Saunders, London, 1957) briefly develops

the situation from the point of view of the German Navy. The naval expansion program which developed in earnest both before and after the conference is traced in G. H. Fuller, Expansion of the United States Navy, 1931-1939 (Washington, 1939). It is especially helpful in furnishing statistical data and legislative information.

Related Areas

The problem of Japan's mandated islands and their effect upon American naval strategy is thoroughly discussed in Earl S. Pomeroy, Pacific Outpost: American Strategy in Guam and Micronesia (Stanford, 1951). A detailed study of the mandates themselves--of their people and their administration by the Japanese--is Paul H. Clyde, Japan's Pacific Mandate (New York, 1935). Clyde indicates that, as of 1935, the Japanese had not extensively developed a program of fortification in the mandated islands.

Public opinion played a major role in the development of naval policy in the interwar period. A number of good studies of American public opinion exist, one of the chief ones being Eleanor Tupper and George McReynolds, Japan in American Public Opinion (New York, 1937). Hadley Cantril and Mildred Strunk, Public Opinion, 1935-1946 (Princeton, 1951) is also useful and concentrates upon the Gallup Polls. A classic study of the operation of public pressures as they affected Congress is George Grassmuck, Sectional Biases in

Congress on Foreign Policy, John Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Series LXVIII, no. 3 (Baltimore, 1951). Armin Rappaport examines closely the role of a big-navy propaganda organization in The Navy League of the United States (Detroit, 1962), while on the other side Merle Curti analyzes the peace movements in Peace or War: The American Struggle, 1636-1936 (New York, 1936). Two studies which are more general but provide good insights into the problem of public opinion in foreign policy are Thomas A. Bailey, The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy (New York, 1948); and Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in American Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century (Chicago, 1953).

Another important pressure group in foreign policy was the military men themselves. The role of the military in the making of policy--with emphasis upon conflict--is Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., The Civilian and the Military (New York, 1956). Another thorough study by a prominent military historian is Alfred Vagts, Defense and Diplomacy: The Soldier and the Conduct of Foreign Relations (New York, 1956). The latter work offers especially good information on the role of the military in other countries.

The story of the airplane versus the battleship has not been discussed in this study except in so far as it related to the question of disarmament. The best study thus far of

the question is Archibald D. Turnbull and Clifford L. Lord, History of United States Naval Aviation (New Haven 1949). Based on extensive research in naval archives, the work unfortunately is not well documented. Another study well worth reading is Harry H. Ransom, "The Battleship Meets the Airplane" Military Affairs, XXIII (Spring, 1959), pp. 21-27.

Finally, reference should be made to three unpublished studies which discuss particular aspects of naval policy bearing to an extent on disarmament. These are: Dorothy T. Groelling, "Submarines, Disarmament and Modern Warfare" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1935), an analysis of the role of the submarine as it affected both naval policy and the disarmament conferences; Richard W. Leopold, "Fleet Organization, 1919-1941" (unpublished study in Naval History Division files, 1945), a short but useful work; and Willis E. Snowbarger, "The Development of Pearl Harbor" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1950), which discusses the difference between naval and Congressional desires regarding Pearl Harbor.

G. General Works

The classic work on American naval policy is Harold and Margaret Sprout, The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918 (Princeton, 1939). It is almost the only work of consequence on naval policy before 1890. Its emphasis, however, is on the period between 1880 and 1918. Somewhat overlapping and

supplementing chronologically is George T. Davis, A Navy Second to None; The Development of Modern American Naval Policy (New York, 1940). It covers the period after 1936 in a sketchy manner. Neither book makes much use of original manuscript materials, which were not then generally available.

Histories of the United States Navy are relatively plentiful. They do not generally develop the story of policy but instead emphasize naval strategy and tactics in wartime. Most were written by naval officers or those closely associated with the Navy, so they can not escape the charge of bias. Among the better histories which briefly treat naval policy in the interwar years are: Allan Westcott (ed.), American Sea Power Since 1775 (Philadelphia, 1947), a collaborative effort by several instructors at the Naval Academy; Dudley W. Knox, A History of the United States Navy (rev. ed., New York, 1948); and Samuel W. Bryant, The Sea and the States: A Maritime History of the American People (New York, 1947). Bryant's study shows some sympathy toward views other than those naval. D. W. Mitchell, History of the Modern American Navy (New York, 1946), concentrates on the period after 1890. Bernard Brodie, Sea Power in the Machine Age (2nd ed. Princeton, 1943) is an interesting study of the effects of technology on naval development, covering the application of steam power, armor and modern gunnery, as well as the submarine and airplane.

General histories relating to the diplomacy of naval

disarmament are few. One of the best of these is Benjamin H. Williams, The United States and Disarmament (New York, 1931). It is a good exposition of pro-disarmament thought just before the onset of the critical events of the thirties. From the British point of view, a good contemporary study is John W. Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security Since Locarno (London, 1932). An exhaustive study of British-French problems of cooperation is Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles (New York, 1940). It is especially valuable in regard to the problem of French security.

Japan, the particular problem in American naval strategy, has received a great deal of attention from scholars. One of the best studies of American-Japanese relations in the modern period is Foster Rhea Dulles, Forty Years of American-Japanese Relations (New York, 1937). Seiji Hishida, Japan Among the Great Powers (New York, 1940) is a good presentation of foreign relations as the Japanese saw them. Tatsuji Takeuchi, War and Diplomacy in the Japanese Empire (Chicago, 1935) is a valuable analysis of the mechanics of policy making in Japan. It contains useful accounts of the Japanese ratification of the Washington and London treaties.

