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The Naval Policy of the United States, 1919-1931

Lillian Ruth Nelson

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THE NAVAL POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES
1919 - 1931

Lillian Ruth Nelson
Loyola University
February 1941
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Preface

Since 1883, when the modern navy of the United States was first begun, our navy has grown steadily from a point where we were quite satisfied with a very small navy, to the pinnacle it has now reached, a navy second to none. It has been said that the size of the navy is dependent upon the foreign policy of the government and then account must be taken of our demands for Freedom of the Seas, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Open Door Policy.

There is a large group of people in the country, who, for either patriotic or personal reasons, desire a very strong navy; but there is equally as large a group who fail to see the practical sense of building battleships, that cost nearly forty-million dollars and which become obsolete and useless after a few years of peaceful floating about the seas. This latter group along with those who have grown weary of useless warfare and who have been appalled by the wicked sacrifice of life and wealth, have sought a way for diminishing the size of our navy, rather than for its expansion. Both groups have tried to direct public opinion, since they realize it is public sentiment that determines the policies of the country.

The purpose of this paper is to record the results of an investigation of the development of the naval policy of the United States, 1919-1931, explaining the basis upon which it rests, and showing how it has been influenced by the two opposing forces in the country—the one demanding a continuous increase of the navy and the other attempting to limit it.
CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NAVAL POLICY

OF THE UNITED STATES TO 1921
Background of our Naval Policy

In general, the naval policy of the United States in the period 1919-1932 was the maintaining of a naval establishment equal to that of Great Britain and larger by 5/3 than that of Japan. To understand the naval policy of the United States, it is necessary, first, to summarize the facts and events which brought about our naval expansion program and, second, to analyze the motives behind this building plan. It was in 1916 that the United States decidedly became sea-minded. For half a century the American people had thought very little about the sea, for there were easier ways of earning a living in this country than by the hard, self-denying labor of the sea. The resources of our country made our people much more interested in agriculture and in internal improvements. Then our country became highly industrialized—factories were built at strategic sites and great cities came into being.

With startling suddenness, our people became imperialistic; prestige demanded that we become a world power with outlying possessions of our own. Probably the outstanding aspect of this increased nationalism was a desire for power on the ocean.

Modern navalism dates from about 1880 although its seeds had been sown some twenty years earlier when the first experiments with iron side armor and turret mountings, as well as with steam propulsion had introduced the machine age into naval warfare. To survey the historical development of this modern American Navy, it will be necessary to study the expenditures for the navy.
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Certain facts are discernible. In 1880 the amount spent on the navy was at a low point, but by 1890, we find an extraordinary rise in expenditure, while the 1900 figure more than doubled the 1890 amount. Since that time it has risen almost steadily until it reached its abnormal peak in the World War years.

It was in the administration of President Arthur that the new navy—a very modest one—was begun. There was no serious thought of disputing the "dominion of the sea" with England's great fleet and our naval policy at the time was decidedly not naval expansion. As late as 1894, we were content to stand about sixth on the list of naval powers. The idea of "parity" with the large British fleet would hardly have been advanced by the most ambitious naval expansionist. Yet only ten years later a great change had taken place. By 1904, we had built a fleet that was the second largest in the world, surpassed only by that of Great Britain and we had more than doubled the amount

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spent on our navy.

Just what events had occurred that made naval defense such an active issue? First, there was the Samoan affair that stirred the national honor. In March 1889, it was rumored that a German ship had sunk an American vessel.

A wave of excitement swept over the country says the historian, Harry Thurston Peck.

In San Francisco, great crowds filled the streets and massed themselves about the newspaper offices, awaiting the posting of further bulletins. The tone of the press was one of intense hostility to Germany. The government at Washington began preparing for any emergency that might arise. All the vessels of the Pacific squadron were notified to be in readiness.\(^2\)

At last the real news came. The rumor had been false—a frightful hurricane had wrecked the ships—yet, the Americans began to realize that a navy was necessary. Second, there was the Venezuelan affair with Great Britain, that brought home clearly the fact that if our government was to assert authority that implied war, then provision would have to be made for fighting the war. Even though it was discovered that Great Britain was mainly right in her demands on Venezuela, this did not alter the psychological force behind naval expansion.

Third, there was the victorious war with Spain which generated great enthusiasm for the navy. Our navy had covered itself with glory in the war and the Americans were very proud of it. It was not difficult to prove to the people and Congress that our naval power must be expanded, since there were also the Philippine Islands and Porto Rico to protect. We realized

that we were becoming an important world power.

Theodore Roosevelt was greatly responsible for the big-navy idea. In his address before the Naval War College in June 1897, he paid tribute to peace at the same time that he advocated a big navy:

In all our history there has never been a time when preparedness for war was any menace to peace. On the contrary, again and again, we have owed peace to the fact that we were prepared for war....Arbitration is an excellent thing....but ultimately those who wish to see this country at peace with foreign nations will be wise if they place reliance upon a first class fleet of first class battle-ships, rather than on any arbitration treaty which the wit of man can devise. A really great people, proud and high-spirited, would face all the disasters of war rather than purchase that base prosperity which is bought at the price of national honor....We ask for a great navy partly because we....feel that no national life is worth having if the nation is not willing, when the need shall arise, to stake everything on the supreme arbitrament of war, and to pour out its blood, its treasure, and tears like water rather than to submit to the loss of honor and renown.3

For the fiscal year which closed shortly before President Roosevelt was inaugurated, the amount spent on the navy was $60,506,978; for the year which closed a few months after his departure from Washington, the amount spent was $115,546,011. During his terms of office, the outlay almost doubled.

At this time, Great Britain and Germany entered into a naval race that ended in the ruin of Germany. Great Britain alarmed by the growth of the German navy brought out in 1906 "H.M.S. Dreadnaught", the first all big-gun battleship, planned to make obsolete at a stroke the whole German navy.4 The design succeeded; but unfortunately, it also made obsolete the British

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navy and every other navy as well. The great battleship fleet built up during the Roosevelt administration was now only a second string defense. The superiority of the British fleet had been removed; all the nations could start at an equal point in the new race for dread-naught tonnage, which had become the only thing that counted. The Germans and British plunged ahead, but the Americans held back, our expenditures increasing steadily though not spectacularly. By 1914, at the end of the next ten-year period, the British had built forty-six dread-naught battleships and cruisers, the Germans had twenty-eight, and even Japan had ten. The United States had only twelve. The second power standard had been dropped, but still the competitive idea was in the minds of the people, and just a few years later we were asserting our right to a navy at least equal to that of the strongest power on the seas and greater by one third than the next most powerful fleet.

How had this come about? Once more it seems to have been the outcome of historical accident. The outbreak of the war in Europe, added to the excitement of the Vera Cruz landing and the Mexican border trouble had naturally awakened a great interest in the state of our own military machinery. During the World War in the neutral years, amazing changes in commerce and finances in the United States had taken place. Large groups and interests turned their attention to maritime affairs. Decreased production in Europe made increased demands on our goods, and our shipping and commercial interests made huge dividends. Our people became highly nationalistic and our navy plans were transformed. President Wilson in his annual message of December 1914 declared "A powerful navy we have always regarded as our proper and

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and natural means of defense.6

The European War promised to give practically for the first time, a sort of laboratory trial of the effectiveness of the machine-age navy. For a time, the belief had gained ground that the submarine had greatly reduced the importance of the big ship, but, at Jutland in May, 1916, the success of the heavily armored vessel with large-caliber guns had disposed naval men to return to their faith in the powerful capital ship. It was decided that the all-big-gun ship was the best.7 After the submarine sinking of the Lusitania the great campaign of naval building began.

The naval bill of 1915 carried increased appropriations but that was only a beginning.8 The Republicans were not satisfied and referred to the weak-kneed attitude of the Wilson administration on defense. They asked for the old second power standard, which seemed a simple demand, hallowed by precedent. By the fall of 1915, the secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, asked the General Board to prepare a five year program that would make our navy second to Great Britain's. This he felt would be the correct answer to the critics who said the Wilson administration was neglecting national defense.


7Report of the Secretary of the Navy for 1920, 7.


This program was to make history. President Wilson was in favor of it, and when Congress reopened in December 1915, the diplomatic tension and the patriotic fervor had become so great that he devoted his entire message to the one subject of national defense. Summarizing he said:

I have spoken today, gentlemen, upon a single theme, the thorough preparation of the nation to care for its own security, and to make sure of entire freedom to play the important role in this hemisphere and in the world which we all believe to have been providentially assigned to it.\footnote{Public Papers of Woodrow Wilson \textit{III}, \textit{op. cit.}, 423.}

It was the president, again, who gave the next great extension to our mounting navalism. At the beginning of 1916 he had gone on a speaking tour of the United States, speaking on behalf of preparedness and his own re-election. It ended in St. Louis on February third. In an afternoon speech, Mr. Wilson had portrayed the horrors of the war in Europe but at the coliseum in the evening, his subject was preparedness. At first, the audience seemed unfriendly, but as he made his plea stronger and stronger, he carried his listeners to emotional heights. Possibly, in response to this emotionalism, he, too, was carried away, for he cried that the American navy "ought in my judgment, to be incomparably the most adequate navy in the world."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, \textit{IV}, 112-114.} Thus was the idea of the United States not simply as the second power of the McKinley, Roosevelt days, but as the supreme naval nation definitely introduced into the body of our naval policy.

The Naval Act of 1916 was a milestone in our naval expansion.\footnote{\textit{Senate Document 428}, "Navy Yearbook", 490.}
its final form the 1916 program enacted by Congress did not authorize a navy "incomparably the most adequate in the world", but it did provide for the building within three years of 813,000 tons of naval vessels, calling for ten battleships with twelve sixteen-inch guns, and six battle cruisers, armed with eight sixteen-inch guns and capable of a thirty-four knot speed. In addition, the program planned for ten scout cruisers, fifty destroyers, sixty-seven submarines, and some lesser types, the whole estimated to cost from $544,000,000 up. Actual appropriations could be made for one year alone therefore in the first year, it provided for four battleships, four battle cruisers, four light cruisers, and a few of the lesser vessels.

The Act of 1916 would have given the United States a great preponderance in heavy ships. A forecast of the anticipated naval situation of 1923, made prior to the Washington Conference by Congressman Britten of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, showed that altogether the American fleet would have possessed thirty-three capital ships as compared with thirty-five in the British navy, but our ships would have been larger and would have had greater gun power. This comparison led Hector Bywater, the able British naval writer to observe in 1921:

On the basis of modern armored vessels completed, building, and authorized the British navy has already declined to second rank. And in this connection it is important to note that the modern armored vessel—the capital ship—remains in the deliberate opinion of the British Admiralty the unit on which sea power is built up.13

The 1916 program was never completed. In a few months we were at war with Germany and the 1916 program was cast aside as useless. What was

required to fight the Germans was not battleships or battle cruisers, it was merchant ships to carry food and light men-of-war capable of dropping depth bombs on submarines. Of the eight leviathans which were to have been commenced by July 1917, we actually laid down just one. But the destroyer program had been greatly increased. By 1919, we had built five times as many destroyers as had been authorized by the 1916 program. Of the ten battleships we had barely got started on two; we laid down only two of the ten light cruisers, and of the six majestic battle cruisers we had actually laid down not a single one.

The naval program enacted in 1916 was spectacular and it set in motion programs and counter programs. It gave rise to suspicions and alarms and finally led to a series of remarkable international conferences. Before the war, our navy endangered no-one, but by 1919 we had become a part of the world system of military rivalry.

The Motives Behind the Naval Expansion Program

So far a summary has been given of the facts and events which brought about our naval expansion program. What are the motives behind this building plan?

Our naval policy has its roots deep in our national history. Once free of Great Britain, our chief purpose for many years was to keep out of European affairs, especially out of the war waging between England and France. At the same time, our commercial interests were trying to trade with all the European nations, regardless of their state of belligerency. Our naval policy evolved fundamentally out of this state of affairs. We looked upon ourselves as neutrals and insisted upon our rights as neutrals. We called
that "freedom of the seas". We claimed the right in time of war, to carry everything, except military supplies to both belligerents, unless the belligerent port were actively and actually blockaded. For a time, during our Civil War, our government abandoned this doctrine and England became its temporary, but lukewarm advocate, abandoning for the time being her policy of "Control of the Seas".

The outbreak of the world war in 1914 found the two countries firmly supporting their traditional doctrines. The United States insisted on her rights as a neutral, while Great Britain paid very little attention to our demands. In carrying out her plan to starve Germany into submission, England often stopped our ships at sea and this interference, justifiable from the British point of view, crystallized the demand in this country for a navy second to none.

In an article in the New York Times, James T. Shotwell, Professor of History at Columbia University, writes:

All through American history there has been one supreme principle of naval rights which has remained an ideal unattained, and that is freedom of the seas. On the other hand, the British have almost as consistently opposed this principle. The reason for the two national attitudes lies chiefly in the fact that the presumption of the United States has been that in most wars it would be a neutral, therefore it was but natural that it should be the champion of neutral rights against belligerents....

On the other hand, Great Britain involved as it is in the maintenance of a world-wide empire, has been more likely to think in belligerent terms and more likely to be drawn into wars arising almost anywhere throughout the world.14

George Young, adviser on international affairs to the British labor party claimed that the two policies--freedom of the seas and control of the

14 Literary Digest, 100, February 16, 1929, 9.
seas—are merely points of view of the same thing. He explained that England, fighting for the freedom of the seas refused her by the Papal Bull dividing the seas between Spain and Portugal, acquired command of the seas and predicted that the same outcome was inevitable in the case of America. To gain freedom of the seas, America would very likely also gain command of the seas, unless something different were definitely planned.  

This belief in our neutral rights and in the freedom of the seas is fundamental in our creed and has been a most useful argument for the advocates of large navies. Rear Admiral W. L. Rodgers declared:

The principal diplomatic service of the American navy will always be found in its support of neutrality and the neutral rights of commerce. This support is a fundamental policy which directs the shipbuilding program of the Navy Department. For the navy must be adequate to guard its commerce when other nations are at war.

As an outgrowth of this policy of freedom of the seas, it has naturally developed in our naval policy that our navy should be strong enough to protect our commerce. This was strikingly emphasized while debating the cruiser bill of 1929 by Senator Borah:

So Mr. President,...we really have in our minds the sole question of how we are going to protect our commerce. I do not think many think of the use of the Navy in any other light....The moving, controlling question is how to protect our commerce against the inroads of those who may be engaged in war.

Congressman Britten objected strenuously to what he said was British regulation of our commerce during the World War.


17 Congressional Record, 70, 2183, Jan. 24, 1929.
In order to ship furniture, shoe polish, etc., from my own district to Norway in American bottoms from our own ports, I had to go to the British embassy here for a permit to ship them. The application had to indicate the character of the material, how it was to be packed, the size of it, and the cost. That information was turned over to the commercial office of Great Britain in London. The permit itself was issued in London. Do you think a powerful nation upon the seas would countenance such an insult? No; it never would have asked that permission. 18

It has been argued that our doctrine of neutral rights has very little value. It is true that our neutral trade rose to unprecedented heights both before 1812 and 1917, and it is also true that when we began fighting, our profits were lost. But even though this is fact, yet our pride prohibits us from submitting to interference with our neutral trade on the part of a belligerent. It is sad that the plans for abolishing wars has gone awry, for it is only through peace that commerce can be really made profitable.

The fundamental motive behind our naval policy is protection. Unquestionably, our navy must defend our American heritage—our land where 131,000,000 people live, our wealth the outgrowth of our enormous resources, our social interests and our institutions. We want this protected against foreign invasion, but as inexpensively as possible. Fortunately, it is not difficult to guard the United States against enemy attack. Our geographic position has given us the advantage of long distances on the east and west between our country and foreign nations and an invasion of our country along either of our shores is almost unbelievable. There is no reasonable chance that a foreign government would be able to take the coast of the United States against the defense of our fleet, with its battleships, cruisers, coast artillery, torpedo craft, mines, and aircraft. The only danger would be from enemy aircraft.

18 Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishment, 1927-1928, 1345-46.
carriers reaching a distance from which it would be possible to send out planes to raid our coast cities.

Next to guarding continental United States, the safeguarding of the Panama Canal is necessary. Strategically our canal is of great importance since war vessels can pass through it from ocean to ocean with great expediency. Commercially, also, the canal is of value and the United States cannot permit its capture. While the defense of the canal seems rather simple, yet, in a war, air bombardments would be possible, again sent from airplane carriers, three hundred or four hundred miles from the canal. In 1929, the naval maneuvers were planned to illustrate this possibility. Hidden by the night, the aircraft carrier Saratoga, supposedly of the enemy fleet, sped toward the canal and got within ninety miles of its entrance from which forty-five planes took off. Theoretically, these planes bombed the locks. Of course with adequate air and water patrols this danger could be reduced to a minimum.¹⁹

In the Pacific the question arises as to how far the United States should extend its naval power. The imperialists of our country advocated that the Philippine islands must be defended,²⁰ a defense which would require an extremely large navy since the forces would be maintained in waters far distant from their homeland. The protection of the Hawaiian Islands has been carefully made. Pearl Harbor, located 2100 miles from San Francisco, is well fortified. The harbor is large and deep and the largest vessels of the

²⁰ Hearings of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 1930, 233.
American fleet can enter it. It has been considered a strategic point of first importance by American naval officers and it has been built up to a high point of excellence and strength. Heavy guns defend it, and the barracks, good roads, electric lights, the modern water and sewage system, its radio station, its submarine base facilities, its oil depot, its large drydock and machine shop to repair battleships, all contribute to make Pearl Harbor an extremely up-to-date strong base and a protection for the United States against Japanese attack.21

It was mentioned in the discussion of neutral rights that our navy was expected to guard commerce. In the case of Great Britain and Japan, both highly industrialized, populous, maritime countries, the imports from overseas lands is an absolute necessity. To these nations protection of the sea lanes is as important as the protection of their homelands. One important aspect of modern warfare is the struggle of the warring nations for food and materials and the British are particularly vulnerable. Without their navy and air defense they could easily be blockaded.

Fortunately, the food resources of the United States are so great that we would never need to fear starvation because of a blockade. Our wheat, fruits, meats, fish, and dairy products are sufficient. We have, of course, come to rely upon imported foods, also, such as coffee, sugar, cacao, and exotic tropical fruits and in time of war, the coffee situation could be most irritating. We are the greatest coffee users in the world;22 we import


our entire supply and we would dislike having the importation of it cut off. However, its loss would not be disastrous.

In regard to other raw materials, the United States is again fortunate, but we do lack some of the products necessary for modern industrial efficiency. Particularly, do we lack certain minerals.23 Even though the United States produces about forty percent of the world's minerals, yet we must import other minerals.24 The Committee on Foreign and Domestic Mining Policy of the Mining and Metallurgical Society of America has listed the minerals we lack entirely and those of which we have inadequate supplies--nickel, cobalt, platinum, tin, diamond dust, antimony, asbestos, manganese, mica, and others.25

The committee illustrated the importance of imported minerals by using manganese as an example. To the steel industry, manganese is indispensable.26 It is used as a deoxidizer, and a desulphurizer, and as an alloy to give greater resistance to steel. We do have a small supply of manganese ore, but it could be mined only at great expense and would very soon be exhausted. To illustrate how necessary steel is to modern warfare, Colonel William P. Wooten explained that during the World War, the Allies used nearly two and a half tons of steel annually for each soldier in the field.

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24 Ibid., 48.

25 For these statistics, see *International Control of Minerals*, 13, the American Institute of Mining, New York, 1925.

26 Ibid., 53.
Since steel is absolutely essential to military equipment, and since manganese is absolutely essential to the manufacture of steel, our navy must make it possible for manganese to reach us at all times.27

Besides certain minerals, the United States also lacks such products as rubber, which we import from the British and Dutch East Indies, sisal from Mexico, manila from the Philippines, and shellac from India.28 The task of guaranteeing that these supplies will reach the United States at all times, belongs to the navy and it is a most difficult if not impossible job. To do so would mean that the United States must maintain a navy strong enough to defend American trade everywhere in any waters of the world, against any power or combination of powers. Theoretically this might be possible; but in practice such an aim is impossible of realization. If war should come, the United States must expect to worry along without certain imports and look for new sources wherever possible. Since protection of commerce is such a hopeless charge, it seems more feasible to guarantee this by planning for peaceful and cordial relations with the world. When naval expansion became so great as to interfere with the maintenance of friendship with other countries it would do more harm than good to American commerce.


28 Benjamin H. Williams, op. cit., 370.
The New Naval Race, 1919-1921

It was in 1919 that the world realized that a new naval race was in progress with Japan, Great Britain, and the United States the main participants. The World War had ended and the need for our products ceased. Our commerce was practically at a stand-still but the vast war-materials machine had to go on. It was decided to go on with the 1916 program. The second of the 1916 battleships was laid down in 1919, and a start was made upon the other eight. In 1920, the remaining eight light cruisers were also begun as well as the first of the battle cruisers. In 1921 we got started on the last five battle cruisers. 29

By waiting until 1919 to begin our program we had all the lessons of the war at our disposal and as a result the new ships were to be so much more powerful than the earlier dreadnaughts as to entirely outclass them. 30 In December 1920, the Washington Post made a startling discovery:

Within three years the United States will hold supremacy on the seas. After three hundred years of undisputed supremacy, the British navy will take second place, the Stars and Stripes will float over a fleet stronger than the two fleets that fought the battle of Jutland. 31

Calculations like this rested on the assumption that our new building would bring no answer from abroad, and that we could plunge into a project for supremacy without arousing other people's navalists. The assumption was unwarranted.

30 Frederick Moore, America's Naval Challenge, Macmillan Co., New York, 1929, 10.
Japan was the first to counter America's 1919 naval program with its eight and eight program and the naval race was well on its way. The Far East was no longer a land of remote romanticism. Japan had seized Shantung and Tsingtao, crushing its way to dominance over China; she had occupied the former German colonies in the Pacific and planted a foothold in Siberia; she had strengthened her public finances, extended her manufacturing and commerce and in general had taken a long step toward the goal nearest her heart—ascendancy in the Far East. As one of the three great powers of the world, she challenged white supremacy. Her eight and eight naval plan was ambitious. This was designed to give the Japanese navy by 1927, two squadrons each of eight battleships and eight armored cruisers none of which should be more than eight years old. A third squadron was to be formed of older battleships. In addition, Japan planned to build twenty-six small cruisers and to increase as well her submarines, torpedo boat destroyers and aviation flotillas. Last of all, she proposed to erect a series of coast defenses that would give her an impregnable line of sea fortresses and naval bases from Sakhalin on the north, to the Bonin Islands, and thence to Marianne, Caroline, Marshall, and Pelew archipelagos in the central Pacific. She would thus have a line of military posts from the equator to the fiftieth degree north latitude, interrupted only by the American Philippines.

At the completion of Japan's new naval plan, she would have only two capital ships fewer than America, and her ships would have been newer. This


new development caused grave concern in the United States and Great Britain, while Australia and New Zealand watched with jealous hostility Japan's expansion southward.

Naturally, England could not stay out of this naval race. The deep feeling with which the doctrine of naval supremacy was regarded was given expression by Winston Churchill, who said:

Nothing in the world, nothing that you may think of, or dream of, or anyone may tell you, no arguments, however specious, no appeals, however seductive, must lead you to abandon that naval supremacy on which the life of our country depends.34

Speaking in the House of Commons on March 17, 1921, Lieutenant-Colonel Archer-Shee explained to his countrymen:

By 1925, this great nation overseas will have built a fleet which will practically make obsolete all of the battleships of our fleet with the exception of the Hood. . . . To meet this situation the government proposes to lay down four ships only this year.35

But the four, it was said, would go to 50,000 tons apiece and would mount eighteen inch guns. The dreadnaughts we were constructing would be retired by these super-ships. Another new American building program would be necessary, which would frighten the Japanese into a new building program and so on. Neither the United States, Great Britain nor Japan would stop as long as the other nations kept on. Yet, it would avail them little to match new ship with new ship, plane with plane, gas with gas, for their relative positions would remain the same.

Great Britain and Japan were limited by a depleted treasury. It is

34 H. Bywater, Navies and Nations, 21.

sometimes said that the United States had more money than Great Britain and Japan combined and could outbuild them. But would Great Britain and Japan wait for us to finish such a gigantic plan? Very likely not. They would form a combination and strike before we were ready. The prospect of spending millions upon something so unstable that what one nation did would completely upset everything done by another could not have any popularity with the taxpayer.

It appeared that the continuance of the program was highly undesirable and it was the height of statesmanship for the United States to invite her chief naval rivals to attend a conference to discuss the limitation of armaments.

It was on August 11, 1921, that the government of the United States invited the four principal Allied Powers "to participate in a conference on the limitation of armaments." When the Harding Administration assumed control of the government, there were obstacles before it. Anglo-American relations were strained. As has been noted, Great Britain was maintaining and increasing a vast fleet, but not only that was remaining a party to a military alliance with Japan which needed no renewal to keep it alive. We feared that this alliance might be directed against us. Again, our relations with England were strained due to the fact that certain Americans had sympathized too concretely with the Irish in their hopes of becoming free.

With respect to the Far East and the Pacific there were unsettled


37 Ibid., 821-22. See also address of Mr. Balfour at the fourth plenary session of the Conference, December 10, 1921.
questions which had produced an international tension.\textsuperscript{38} Their adjustment was necessary before any naval limitation could be arranged. They concerned China, as well as the United States, France, Great Britain and Japan. Mr. Hughes, Secretary of State, was anxious to get these international matters settled amicably.

Besides, there was a strong current of public opinion in favor of naval disarmament. Appeals were sent to Congress, speeches were made from pulpits and platforms, articles appeared in the newspapers, all demanding that naval expenditures be reduced. It was difficult to see wherein it was practical to build battleships costing "nearly forty-million dollars apiece, which become obsolete and useless after fifteen years of peaceful floating about the seas"\textsuperscript{39} Secretary of the Navy Daniels gave a statement to the newspapers favoring naval disarmament:

With reference to the naval program of the United States, there are just two courses....open. First, to secure an international agreement with all, or practically all nations, which will guarantee an end of competition in navy building, reduce the national burden and lead in the movement to secure and buttress world peace. Second, to hold aloof from agreement....with the other nations as to size of armament. This will require us to build a navy strong enough and powerful enough to be able on our own to protect Americans and American shipping, defend American policies in the distant possessions as well as at home, and by the presence of sea power to command the respect and fear of the world.

Of the two plans....I press the first....An international conference to end competitive navy construction was proposed by me in my first annual report in December, 1913, and proposed in every successive report and in every hearing before the Naval Affairs Committee for nearly eight years.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 109-10.

\textsuperscript{39} "Navies of the World, To-day and To-morrow", \textit{Literary Digest}, 71, November 12, 1921, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{New York Times}, January 12, 1921.
In December, 1920, Senator Borah introduced a joint resolution—later embodied in the Naval Supply Bill which was approved on July 12, 1921—urging the President to invite Great Britain and Japan to a conference to draw up an agreement by which the naval expenditure of the three Powers should be reduced.\(^4^1\) This resolution was passed by both the Senate and the House of Representatives—in the Senate unanimously, and in the House by a vote of 230 to 4. Also, in 1920, the Republican party had been emphasizing the necessity of the United States entering into some form of association with other nations for the reduction of armaments, and in June 1920, the Republican National Committee had warned its leaders that the party stood to lose a large number of votes unless naval expenditures were reduced.\(^4^2\)

The government was thus carrying out the wishes of the people in issuing the invitation to the Conference, the immediate aim of which was later described in the following terms by the American delegation to the Conference in their report to the President:

The declared object was, in its naval aspect, to stop the race of competitive building of warships which was in process and was so distressingly like the competition that immediately preceded the war of 1914. Competitive armament is, however, the result of a state of mind in which a national expectation of attack by some country causes preparation to meet the attack. To stop competition it is necessary to deal with the state of mind from which it results. A belief in the pacific intentions of other Powers must be substituted for suspicion and apprehension.\(^4^3\)


\(^{42}\) "Republicans and the League", New Republic, 102, June 23, 1920, 103.

\(^{43}\) "Report of the American Delegation to the President", Senate Document 125, 3.
CHAPTER II

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE
NAVAL POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES 1921-1922
The Opening of the Conference

It was in Washington, Armistice Day, November 11, 1921, a Friday. A long procession with President Harding, the ambassadors, the delegates, the troops of all arms, and poor ex-President Wilson had gone out to Arlington cemetery to take part in the ceremony of the burial of The Unknown Soldier. The whole city was drenched in tears. It seemed an appropriate introduction to the epochal naval disarmament conference which opened the following day. The delegates from Great Britain, Japan, France, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, China and the United States met in the classic building known as the Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution. This was to be open diplomacy and the place was crowded with reporters anxious to see and hear everything that took place at the square table in the center around which the delegates were seated. President Harding gave the introductory address concluding with the sentence:

We are met for a service to mankind. In all simplicity, in all honesty, and all honor, there may be written here the avowals of a world conscience refined by the consuming fires of war and made more sensitive by the anxious aftermath.

Each country sent its foremost statesmen. The United States had been represented by four delegates, Secretary Hughes, Elihu Root, and Senators Lodge and Underwood, all of whom had established reputations in domestic politics. Secretary Hughes and Elihu Root were well known internationally.

1 Manchester Guardian, November 13, 1921.
From the beginning the persuasive and convincing personality of Secretary of State Hughes dominated the convention. He was anxious to remove causes of friction and to build up good will.

Without doubt, the climax of Mr. Hughes successful career came at the opening of the Washington Conference. In a speech, delivered on the first day of the conference, he outlined in detail, practically all that was to be accomplished in the way of naval tonnage limitation. Offering to give up the American building of capital ships in return for certain concessions from Great Britain and Japan, he said:

The first (consideration) 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 armaments, 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 impractical. There is only one adequate way out and that is to end it now.

It is apparent that this cannot be accomplished without serious sacrifice. 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 sacrifice is futile. We must face them or yield our purpose.4

He then presented an exact plan for reduction which he summarized as follows:

1. That all capital shipbuilding programs, either actual or projected should be abandoned;

2. That further reduction be made through scrapping of certain of the older ships;

3. That in general, regard should be had to the existing naval

4 Ibid., 58.
strength of the powers concerned;

4. That the capital ship tonnage should be used as the measurement of strength for navies and a proportionate allowance of auxiliary combatant craft prescribed.5

He also named the capital ships which should be scrapped by America, Great Britain and Japan and which should be retained by each power.

Charles E. Hughes' speech was a radical departure from the usual vague, meaningless statements which had been the ruin of previous disarmament conferences. The British writers Kenworthy and Young exclaimed about it: "He was sinking in a few sentences more tonnage in battleships than all the battles of the world had sunk in a century."6

Ichihashi, who was attached to the Japanese delegation wrote: "It electrified the calm session; some were shocked, some were even alarmed, but others were pleased. It made the day a memorable one in history.7

Mark Sullivan, a seasoned journalist, described it dramatically in his book The Great Adventure at Washington. He gave the reaction to "that inspired moment", of various persons in the plenary session. He declared that Admiral Beatty of the British Navy "came forward in his chair with the manner of a bulldog, sleeping on a sunny porch, who has been kicked in the stomach by an itinerant soap-cansvasser" and that "Lord Lee reached around excitedly for pencil and paper".8

5 Ibid., 60.
6 J. M. Kenworthy and George Young, Freedom of the Seas, Horace Livelyright, New York, 1928, 155.
Miss Tarbell testifies that the Japanese "took it without the flicker of an eyelash", while Louis Siebold wrote: "There was no discounting the surprise of Prince Tokugawa, Baron Kato, and Ambassador Shidehara. The Italians, Portugese, and Belgian envoys seemed to be greatly pleased if a trifle startled.\(^9\)

These writers had great reason to be enthusiastic. They were witnesses to history in the making at one of its most dramatic times.

Idealism characterized the Americans. When Secretary Hughes reached the sentences, "There should be a naval holiday. It is proposed that for a period of not less than ten years there should be no further construction of capital ships," he was interrupted by loud applause. The Americans present, in particular, applauded. "But what were they applauding?" asked Professor George H. Blakeslee of Clark University, who had served as technical adviser to the American delegation, "A proposal to surrender the potential command of the seas within the grasp of the United States."\(^11\) It appealed to the American people to sacrifice for a just cause—"equitable mutual reduction".

At the second plenary session, Mr. Balfour arose and accepted the American proposals for the British government,

not with cool approbation, but with full, loyal and complete cooperation. ...We have considered your scheme with admiration and approval, and we agree with its spirit and purpose as making the greatest reform ever carried out by courage and statesmanship.\(^12\)


\(^12\)Conference on the Limitation of Armament, 65-70.
The whole audience arose as in a theatre. Mr. Balfour had won for England a position of favor and confidence that was never lost.\textsuperscript{13}

Then Admiral Kato spoke in Japanese, uttering sounds without visible movement of his lips, as Japanese courtesy demands. His speech was translated as implying general approval, though with certain unnamed reservations. A good Japanese delegate must know how to say yes and no at the same time.\textsuperscript{14}

After Chairman Hughes’ unexpected and far reaching proposal at the first plenary session, two committees were formed—one to discuss limitation of armaments and the second, Pacific and Far Eastern questions. Each held numerous meetings where decisions were tentatively formulated for submission in the plenary sessions. The several treaties and the twelve resolutions which resulted are ample proof that progress was made.

\textbf{The Naval Treaty}

The starting point for limitation and reduction was Mr. Hughes’ point three—the existing naval strength. In ascertaining this amount it was planned to include "the extent of construction already effected in the case of ships in progress" and this definite quantity was to give the ratio between the several Powers. This was further explained in the report of the American Delegation to the Conference, which described the method followed in determining the ratio as follows:

It was obvious that no agreement for limitation was possible if the three Powers were not content to take as a basis their actual existing strength. General considerations of national needs, aspirations, and

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Sullivan}, \textit{Adventure at Washington}, 53.

expectations, policy and program, could be brought forward by each Power in justification of some hypothetical relation of naval strength with no result but profitless and interminable discussion. The solution was to take what the Powers actually had, as it was manifest that neither could better its relative position unless it won in the race which it was the object of the Conference to end. It was impossible to end competition in naval armaments if the Powers were to condition their agreement upon the advantages they hoped to gain in the competition itself......There was general agreement that the American rule for determining existing naval strength was correct, that......by capital ship tonnage......upon ships laid or upon which money had already been spent....that ships in the course of construction should be counted to the extent to which construction had already progressed at the time of the convening of the Conference.15

The Japanese argued against the last point saying that a ship wasn't a ship unless it were finished and ready to fight, but they were won over to the principle that a completed percent was so much naval strength. Both the British and Japanese accepted the ratio which the American government had proposed.16

This starting point being accepted, the United States Government proposed to carry out points one and two, also, by scrapping six battle cruisers, seven battleships in course of construction, and two battleships already launched--and fifteen older existing battleships.17 It was suggested that the British Empire and Japan reduce their navies in the same proportions according to their "existing strength". The ships belonging to the three Powers were considered individually and in setting them off against each other, their age as well as their tonnage was taken into account.

With regard to replacement, the proposals were as follows:

16 Senate Document, No. 126, 252.
17 Senate Document, No. 125, 18.
1. That it be agreed that the first replacement tonnage should not be laid down until ten years from the date of agreement;

2. That replacement be limited by an agreed maximum of capital ships as follows: The United States and Great Britain, 500,000 tons each and for Japan, 300,000 tons;

3. That subject to the ten-year limit above fixed and the maximum standard, capital ships might be replaced when they were twenty years old, by new capital ship construction;

4. That no capital ship should be built in replacement with a tonnage displacement of more than 35,000 tons.\footnote{18}{Senate Document No. 125, 100.}

Neither France nor Italy was asked to scrap any existing tonnage in capital ships, since it was recognized that the relatively small size of their respective fleets would not constitute a fair basis for any scheme of reduction.\footnote{19}{Ibid., 24.} The Japanese asked for a replacement ratio of 10:10:7 instead of 10:10:6, and objected to the scrapping of their latest and most powerful ship, the Mutsu,\footnote{20}{Ibid., 20.} the construction of which was not quite complete. They were accordingly allowed to retain this, and in exchange the United States was allowed to complete two new ships under construction and to scrap instead two older ships.\footnote{21}{Ibid., 22, 23.}

On February 6, 1922, these five governments, United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy, signed a Treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armament which was duly ratified and entered into effect on August 21, 1923.\footnote{22}{United States Treaty Series, Number 671.} The treaty provided that between 1923 and 1931, when replacements...
could begin, the status of the battleships of the five powers should be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Capital Ships</th>
<th>Tons^{23}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Empire</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>558,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>525,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>301,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>221,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>182,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tonnage for the British Empire was somewhat larger at first, but that was due to the fact that all her ships were older than those of the United States. Our ships, also, carried more guns than the British. The ships scrapped by the three great naval Powers amount to about forty percent of their capital ship strength built and building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Tonnage</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Empire</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>447,750</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>289,580</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>192,751</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vessels Scrapped Under Washington Treaty

Beginning in 1931, replacements could be made so that by 1942 the capital ships of the five naval powers could be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Capital Ships</th>
<th>Tonnage</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Empire</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>525,000</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>315,000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>No. not fixed</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>No. not fixed</td>
<td>175,000</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A schedule defined in detail how and when replacements should take place. The Washington Naval treaty also limited total tonnage in aircraft carriers to 135,000 tons for the United States and Great Britain and 81,000 tons for Japan while France and Italy were allowed 60,000 tons.  

Finally the treaty provided that after eight years, or in 1931, the United States shall arrange for a conference of all the contracting parties....to consider what changes, if any, in the treaty may be necessary to meet possible scientific and technical developments. The treaty should remain in force to 1936, and should continue in force until notice has been given two years previous by any party to terminate it. Thus was developed the policy of parity with Great Britain and five-thirds greater strength than Japan.

Japan made it quite plain that her agreement to the naval treaty would be conditional upon America's promise not to fortify Guam and Manila. It was common knowledge that the United States planned to build naval bases at these points and to retaliate Japan had hurriedly completed the naval works at the Bonin Islands and Amami-Oshima. Hector Bywater, a careful student of the Far-Eastern question, said that the evidence of these serious naval preparations had led many observers to believe that Japan might consider the beginning of work on the American bases in Guam and Manila as a cause of war.

25 Senate Document 126, 885.
26 Ibid., 21.
27 Hector Bywater, Navies and Nations, 149.
Japan considered these bases would be definite threats to her existing sphere of influence in the Far East. Secretary Hughes reluctantly agreed to accede to Japan's request that the status quo be maintained in the Pacific with respect to naval bases and fortification. Great Britain also assented to this principle.

The treaty drawn up finally provided for the maintenance of the status quo with regard to the following Pacific possessions:

For the United States: The insular possessions in the Pacific except those adjacent to the coast of the United States, Alaska, and the Panama Canal Zone. The possessions to which restrictions would apply were the Philippines, Guam, American Samoa and the Aleutian Islands. From that time on the United States would have to depend upon Hawaii for its furthest fortified western base.

For Great Britain: Hongkong and the insular possessions in the Pacific, east of the meridian of 110 degrees east longitude except those adjacent to the coast of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The line drawn at 110° excluded Singapore from the operations of the treaty.

For Japan: All her possessions in the Pacific except Japan proper plus all which she might acquire later.28

The effect of this limitation is summarized by Bywater who stated that before the war the possible naval bases of the United States and Japan would have been so close that they would have been within easy striking distance of each other. The wide waste of water which has served so well to isolate the United States in the past would have been eliminated. When the status quo

28 Article XIX of Treaty, Series No. 671.
was decided upon the ocean barrier continued to protect the United States against a prospective foe.  

The Position of France and Italy in the Washington Conference

Aristide Briand, the representative of France, was rather irritated at being ignored at the Conference. He felt that he had not been shown correct international courtesy. France was particularly annoyed at being considered along with Italy. She had large overseas dominions that looked to her for protection as well as seacoasts on both the Atlantic and Mediterranean. The war had held up her naval construction, but since France was not willing to give up her historical claim of being one of the world's leading maritime powers, she believed she should be given the right to build up to the position she occupied in international affairs. Briand demanded a fleet well-nigh the equal of England's. The French navy is made up primarily of destroyers, submarines, and cruisers and has been a very real force in international affairs. It is the type of navy England does not want as an enemy and it was the real reason for the Anglo-French Entente.

In apposition to France stood Italy, a nation old in tradition, yet young in spirit, whose dream it is somehow to recreate the Roman empire of the Mediterranean. The maritime history of Italy is a long and glorious one. The sailors of Venice and Genoa bore the brunt of the war at sea against the invading Turks, and the Italian Cabots gave England her claim to North America. Unfortunately, Italy suffered from petty kingdoms, all intriguing against one

29 Bywater, Navies and Nations, 150.
30 Senate Document 126, 259-264.
another. It is only natural that a finally united Italy should seek to replace the ancient sea power she lost centuries ago. Besides, Italy is very vulnerable to blockade for she lacks coal and oil, the very bases of industrial and military strength.\textsuperscript{31}

Anxious to win France's consent to the naval agreement and yet not willing to antagonize Italy, the naval committee proposed that both France and Italy could keep their capital ship tonnage intact; but in replacement both should restrict themselves to a maximum limit of 175,000 tons with the right to lay down new tonnage in 1927, 1929, and 1931—the total for the three years not to go beyond 105,000 tons.\textsuperscript{32} As this placed Italy on an equal basis with France, it was satisfactory to her. France also accepted it although she pointed out that she would not accept such figures for auxiliary vessels.

\textbf{The Four-Power Treaty}

Since 1902, there had been an alliance between England and Japan which stirred up international suspicion, relating to equal opportunity and territorial integrity in China and Korea.\textsuperscript{33} If either Japan or England were at war with some nation about these matters and a third power should enter the conflict against them, then the ally must come to their assistance. For instance, in the Russo-Japanese War, if any country had gone to Russia's assistance, England would have had to enter on Japan's side. Japan like the

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Senate Document 126}, 161-63.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Senate Document 125}, 24.

\textsuperscript{33}Frederick Moore, \textit{Op. Cit.}, 45ff.
alliance, since it increased her prestige to be linked with England. On the other hand, England was anxious for Japan to be neutral in case of any European trouble and naturally would like Japan's aid if there were trouble over the Far Eastern matter.

The treaty was renewed in 1905 and 1911 with some slight changes, but in 1921 it came up for renewal again. Japan wanted the alliance continued, since at that time she feared encroachments by the United States. Great Britain was undecided since the Pacific dominions were hostile toward it; but neither did Britain wish to take an inferior position as a naval power. When the United States showed herself willing to give up her huge ship-building program, Britain was willing to drop her alliance with Japan. Mr. Balfour proposed a quadruple understanding for Great Britain, the United States, Japan and France,—the countries which had interests in the Far East. Japan was not consulted about it at all in the beginning and was considerably annoyed.34

However, a Four-power Pacific treaty was signed the text of which reads as follows:

The United States, the British Empire, France and Japan--

With a view to the preservation of the general peace and the maintenance of their rights in relation to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the region of the Pacific Ocean--

Have determined to conclude a treaty to this effect:......

I. The High Contracting Parties agree as between themselves to respect their rights in relation to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the region of the Pacific Ocean.

If there should develop between any of the High Contracting Parties a controversy arising out of any Pacific question and involving their said rights which is not satisfactorily settled by diplomacy and is likely to affect the harmonious accord now happily subsisting between them, they shall invite the other High Contracting Parties to a joint conference to which the whole subject will be referred for consideration and adjustment.

II. If the said rights are threatened by the aggressive action of any other Power, the High Contracting Parties shall communicate with one another fully and frankly in order to arrive at an understanding as to the most efficient measures to be taken, jointly or separately, to meet the exigencies of the particular situation.

III. This treaty shall remain in force for ten years from the time it shall take effect, and after the expiration of said period shall continue to be in force subject to the right of any of the High Contracting Parties to terminate it upon twelve months notice.

IV. This treaty shall be ratified as soon as possible in accordance with the constitutional methods of the High Contracting Parties and shall take effect on the deposit of ratifications, which shall take place at Washington, and thereupon the agreement between Great Britain and Japan, which was concluded at London on July 13, 1911, shall terminate.35

Everyone had expected that something would be done about the Anglo-Japanese alliance at the Washington Conference and the first question put to the Japanese delegation by newspapermen was whether or not they would favor the abrogation of the agreement. In a prophetic manner, Prince Tokugawa replied: "It would be highly beneficial to the maintenance of world peace, if, for instance, America, Great Britain, and Japan could form an entente cordiale in one form or another."36

The Four-Power treaty was a sort of entente cordiale and it made the great ocean off our western coast pacific in fact as well as in name. Dr. R. L. Buell summarized as follows:

36New York World, November 4, 1921.
As a result of the Naval Treaty, adopting the 5:5:3 ratio and the non-fortifications agreement, it is now impossible for any power to intervene successfully in the Orient by force, if acting alone. By the Four-Power Treaty, it is now impossible for Great Britain and the United States to combine their fleets in order to intervene jointly. Moreover, by the Four-Power treaty the freedom of the United States and Great Britain to bring diplomatic pressure against Japan is also probably limited. Consequently, as long as these treaties are adhered to, Japan is absolutely supreme in the eastern Pacific and over Asia.

At the same time, the Naval Treaty has made a successful Japanese attack on the Pacific Coast impossible, because Japan as far as capital ships are concerned, will have a fleet forty percent inferior to the American fleet; because Japan has no real bases or fortifications in the Pacific this side of the Bonins; and because the United States retains the right to increase the fortifications in Hawaii. As a result of this treaty it has become a physical impossibility for the United States to successfully attack Japan, and Japan to attack the United States.37

Newspaper Comments on the Four-Power Treaty

The Four-Power treaty received much newspaper comment.38 The Hearst papers, on the whole, were against everything accomplished by the Washington Conference and the New York American admonished us that the peace pact was a "war breeder, not a peace maker". The governments of England, France, and Japan were called imperialistic and militaristic. "To go into partnership with these international highwaymen is to become an insurer of their stolen goods--to pledge our military, naval, and financial help to the thieves whenever the rightful owners of the goods try to regain their property." Arthur Brisbane, also a Hearst man, described England, France, Japan and the United States as four "gentlemen highwaymen trying to agree not to cut each other's throats over the spoils". The treaty was said to be a great British diplomatic triumph. Another Hearst writer claimed it was a step toward our

38 "Workability of the Four-Power Peace Pact", Literary Digest, 71, December 24, 1921.
recognition of the League of Nations. He wrote:

Article eighteen of the Covenant of the League of Nations provides that "Every treaty or international engagement entered into hereafter by any member of the League shall be forthwith registered with the secretariat and shall as soon as possible be published by it. No such treaty or international engagement shall be binding until so registered."

This makes it mandatory to Great Britain, France and Japan who signed the covenant, to register this new proposed agreement with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and the United States recognized the League ipso facto when it enters into an agreement which it knows, must be approved by the League of Nations before it becomes binding.39

Senators Reed and LaFollette were against the treaty, also. Reed denounced the treaty as "treacherous, treasonable, and damnable", while LaFollette asserted that it had "all the iniquities of the League of Nations, with none of the virtues claimed for that document".39

Although there was some adverse criticism of the treaty, the favorable criticisms far outnumbered them. The Houston Chronicle maintained that it was a good beginning, establishing a precedent for further agreements of the same kind, and summed up:

Thus the Pacific is to be made the home of a new policy--a policy of reduced fleets, of fewer fortifications, of less aggressiveness, of reliance and peaceful adjustments.39

Agreeing with this, the New York Tribune wrote:

Concerts of this sort need not be limited to the Pacific, but can be extended to other parts of the world where stabilization is sought and where American cooperation is desirable.39

The papers of the west were optimistic. To take two illustrations we can read in the Los Angeles Times that the Pacific agreement was "a long
step in the direction of world peace" and in the Denver Rocky Mountain News that it "brings very much closer the English-speaking peoples."\textsuperscript{39}

The foreign papers likewise praised the treaty, commending the "idealism in action" of President Harding and Secretary Hughes. The London Daily Chronicle seemed satisfied as it stated that

it is now possible to regard the Conference as having put an end for the present to the evil prospect of a Pacific armaments race and the fateful friction and jealousies in China and also as placing Pacific affairs on a most satisfactory footing of mutual consultation, recognition, and guaranty.\textsuperscript{39}

Japan, too, was pleased for in a Tokyo dispatch we are told that Japan considered her international standing raised and anything she might have lost through the abrogation of the Japanese alliance with Great Britain, she has regained through the Four-Power treaty.

The Question of Auxiliary Ships

Limitation of navies is fundamentally a political problem for nations must reach an agreement about the political direction of their nation to get results. It was possible to reach a naval agreement about battlefleets, because all agreed that a collision of battlefleets was unthinkable, but when it came to the matter of the cruiser and submarine no agreement was possible. The principle behind the cruiser was the protection or destruction of trade and as there was no semblance of agreement as to when either side should have the right to interfere with the trade of the other, no agreement was possible. This involved the knotty question, "the freedom of the seas" about which there could be no political agreement. The main purpose of the submarine is like-

\textsuperscript{39}Ibid.
wise the destruction of trade and limitation of it could not be agreed upon.

It was France, however, who advanced the strongest opposition to restriction of auxiliary tonnage. Her agreement to the capital ship tonnage depended upon the point that no attempt be made to limit her tonnage in cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. The people of Great Britain advocated the abolition of the submarine in a resolution submitted to the Conference on December 22, 1921. In the World War the submarine threats had brought the British face to face with the menace of starvation and they were anxious to do away with this instrument of death. Lord Lee, the principal spokesman of the delegation on the subject, advanced an elaborate argument to prove that the submarine had very little value in protecting the coast lines, that it was practically worthless in an attack upon a naval vessel, and that its only use was to attack merchant vessels.40

France wanted a submarine tonnage of 90,000 tons, a three-hundred percent increase of her existing tonnage. She wanted parity with the United States and Great Britain in the submarine. This amount LeBon claimed as the absolute minimum "for all nations who may want a submarine force", and without which France's vital interests would be imperiled. He argued that such amounts were absolutely necessary to protect her mainland and her colonies. It was his belief, also, that this demand should be allowed in compensation for the position of inferiority which France accepted in capital ship tonnage. The submarine, he claimed, was inherently a defensive weapon and comparatively inexpensive.41

40 Senate Document 126, Conference on the Limitation of Armament, 264-269.
41 Ibid., 278-284.
Here, then, was a fundamental clash of policies. There ensued a series of debates between the French and British delegates on this question. Britain took the stand that with Germany defeated, the French submarine could be employed with the greatest force against Britain, herself. With this threat immediately before her, she must refuse to accept any restriction of auxiliary surface craft, the only effective antidote of the submarine.

The cold and cynical leader of the British delegation, Mr. Balfour, replied sharply to the effect that the 90,000 tonnage French demand constituted a somewhat singular contribution to the labors of a conference called for the diminution of armament....It was perfectly obvious that the proposed 90,000 tons of submarines were intended to destroy commerce..... It was perfectly clear that if at Britain's gate a fleet of 90,000 tons of submarines was to be constructed, no limitation of any kind on auxiliary vessels capable of dealing with submarines could be admitted by the Government which he represented.

Japan and Italy had declared that the submarines if rightly used were an indispensable part of their navies. Italy made it clear she would expect the same amount of tonnage as that allotted to France. The United States rather favored the British point of view--especially as there was great popular opposition to that type of vessel which had so outraged American pride during the war. The American delegates, however, were guided partially by the report of a special committee appointed to advise them. An excerpt follows:

The retention of a large submarine force may at some future time result in the United States holding its outlying possessions. If these colonies once fall, the expenditure of men necessary to recapture them will be tremendous and it may result in a drawn war which would really be

42 Ibid., 296.
43 Ibid., 298.
44 Ibid., 289-90.
a United States defeat. The United States needs a large submarine force to protect its interests.45

The American delegates argued that the submarine had great value as a scout ship. After these discussions it was decided to cease further efforts to limit auxiliary craft and instead adopt a compromise on the submarine problem. The delegates realized that the submarine had been used in a barbaric manner and to stop this they agreed unanimously to Mr. Root's set of resolutions.46 They were to the effect that merchant vessels must be ordered to submit to visit and search before they could be seized and that they must not be attacked unless they refuse to submit.47 If an attack is made, passengers and crew must be placed in safety and small boats were not considered places of safety unless the submarines were positive that another vessel would soon pick up the stranded people. If these amenities could not be observed, then, the merchant ship was to be allowed to proceed unmolested. This, in itself, was merely an agreement on paper among a few powers, and had, therefore, practically no binding force. Such rules would make the submarine harmless as a commerce destroyer.

The treaty drawn up as a result of Mr. Root's resolutions included a clause preventing the use of noxious gases and chemicals. It was signed by the delegates of the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. The adhesion of all other nations was invited.


What was finally concluded about the cruiser was more harmful than beneficial. On December 28, 1921, Mr. Hughes suggested that at least an agreement upon the tonnage limit of individual cruisers might be reached even though no agreement was possible for the total tonnage. Great Britain had just finished building four magnificent cruisers of the Hawkins class, which had a displacement of 9,850 tons and carried 7.5 inch guns, and these they were loath to give up. Possibly to protect them, Mr. Hughes suggested that no ship of war built in the future, except battleships or aircraft carriers, should exceed a displacement of 10,000 tons, nor should any such ship carry a greater gun than an eight inch. This was accepted by the Conference.

This provision in regard to ten-thousand ton, eight-inch gun cruisers, instead of limiting naval construction caused renewed competition. Mr. Bywater stated:

It is morally certain that but for the stimulus which the treaty gave to their development, most if not all of the cruisers now under construction would have been vessels of less than seventy-five hundred tons.

The building of 10,000 ton 8-inch gun cruisers began almost simultaneously in several countries. In 1924, France, Japan, and the British Empire began building so-called treaty cruisers. A bill authorizing the construction of eight such vessels was introduced in the United States Congress on April 15, 1924 and enacted in December of the same year.

48 Congressional Record, Jan. 3, 1929, 1082. Senator Hale said that this was Mr. Hughes' idea.


50 H. Bywater, Navies and Nations, 48.

51 Congressional Record, 1924, Vol. 65, 6448.
The Chinese Situation

Mr. Peffer, a careful student of Asiatic affairs hoped that the situation of China would be alleviated by the Conference.

Here is an opportunity to avoid war—a war that may draw to its flame, yellow and white—if it fails, then war is brought menacingly nearer, he declared in an article in November Century magazine.52

Of all the problems before the Conference, said Richard Hatton in Current Opinion,

the most important to the American people is that concerning a practical and permanent settlement of those Asiatic questions which are universally recognized as the germs from which the next great war will be bred.

First among these Asiatic questions, he stated positively, is

the definite fixing of the status of China.53

The United States government was really anxious to improve the Chinese situation, but this was practically impossible. England and France had vested interests in China which could not be questioned. Japan took every effort to evade the problem and the United States was helpless. China was too far committed to Japan.

This was possibly as disappointing to the Americans as to the Chinese, for we have been rather sentimental about China, that ancient country, with its fascinating history, and glorious achievements. Since the time of John Hay there has been an American movement to preserve China intact and independ-


We have urged her to develop her own resources and have done what we
could to help. We have surely been the greatest educators of the Chinese, but
still China lagged far behind Japan.

The most definite accomplishment was the return of Shantung by direct
agreement between China and Japan and the withdrawal of the most unsatisfac-
tory of the so-called "Twenty-One Demands".\textsuperscript{54} There were formal resolutions
and declarations made regarding a Board of Reference for the Far Eastern
Questions, Extraterritoriality in China, Foreign Postal Agencies in China,
Radio Stations, and Armed Forces in China. There were three resolutions
drawn up about the unification of the railways in China, but these included
a demand that China improve conditions for foreign travel.\textsuperscript{55}

Two treaties were drawn up regarding Chinese neutrality and the "Open
door" in China which was signed by the delegates of all the countries present,
including China herself, Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal participating
with the five large Naval Powers, the United States, Great Britain, Japan,
France and Italy.

These measures together with the Four-Power Treaty and the status-quo
in the Pacific had to suffice China. She had to hope and believe that each
country would exercise good will and carry out the pacific intentions guaran-
teed.

\textsuperscript{54} Senate Document 126, 231.

\textsuperscript{55} United States Treaty Series, 671.
Ratification of the Treaty

Since the United States Senate very often refuses to ratify treaties, the people feared especially for the Four-Power Pacific Treaty--the foundation stone of all the Washington Conference treaties.56

An interesting poll was made by The Literary Digest of the leading newspapers of the country on the subject. They received eight hundred three replies out of which seven hundred three were for ratification, sixty-six were against ratification, and fourteen refused to commit themselves. Forty-seven states were represented in these replies. Another canvass was made by the Committee for Treaty Ratification of New York. The results of this were as follows:

1. The church forces of the nation appear to be practically a unit in support of the treaties as they stand, as expressing the moral judgment of the people.

2. The civic organizations--commercial, economic, social and political,--have expressed themselves with similar unity.

3. The educational institutions have been unhesitating in their support.

4. The outstanding and representative bodies of women have rendered vigorous testimony to the same import.

5. The organizations of labor have expressed themselves in hearty accord with the favorable action of the American Federation of Labor.57

From this it would certainly seem that the people themselves were united in approving the work of the Conference.


57 "The Treaty Triumph in the Senate", Literary Digest, 73, April 8, 1922, 12-13.
The Senatorial phase in the life of the treaties negotiated at the Washington Conference began directly after the Conference closed its sessions on February 6. On the 10th, President Harding presented the treaties to the Senate, making a speech in which he earnestly pleaded for ratification, saying in part:

If we cannot join in making effective these covenants for peace and stamp the Conference with America's approval, we shall discredit the influence of the Republic, render future efforts futile and unlikely, and write discouragement where to-day the world is ready to acclaim new hope. Either these treaties must have your cordial sanction or every proclaimed desire to promote peace and prevent war becomes a hollow mockery.

Your government encouraged and has signed the compact which it had much to do in fashioning. If to these understandings for peace, if to these advanced expressions of the conscience of leading Powers, if to these concords to guard against conflict and lift the burdens of armament, if to all these the Senate will not advise consent, then it will be futile to try again.58

The debates in the Senate were heated, long, and drawn out, centering chiefly on the Four-Power Pact, with such questions as: Did the Four-Power Treaty imply the use of force? Was it a basis for security and peace? Did it involve the United States in entangling alliances? The group favoring this pact defended it chiefly on the ground that it did not do so. Among those holding this view were Senator Poindexter of Washington and Senator Lenroot of Wisconsin.59 Meanwhile, Hannis Taylor, a prominent lawyer in Washington wrote articles in favor of the pact, calling its stipulations "war-preventing agreements", which involved no entangling alliances. These were written into the Congressional Record.60

58 Senate Document 125, Pages V-XII.
60 Ibid., 7888.
In opposition were members of both parties. Senator Borah of Idaho commented that no American could have written the pact, but later read a letter from Mr. Hughes in which he acknowledged the authorship.

Senator Glass of Virginia opposed the pact on the grounds that there must be some underlying meaning in it that was most satisfactory to the Japanese, since they seemed to be pleased about the termination of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Charles E. Russell, journalist, author, and a member of the Special Mission sent to Russia in 1917, wrote Senator Borah that by joining the Four-Power Pact he believed that United States would aid England and Japan at the expense of helpless China. Senators King of Utah, and LaFollette of Wisconsin also argued against the pact as well as others. Finally it was agreed that the United States would accept with the reservation that "there is no obligation to join any defense". The vote was sixty-seven to twenty-seven, a margin of four over the necessary two-thirds.

A scathing editorial followed in Mr. Hearst's New York American, entitled "England Recaptures Her Colony". The accusation against the Senate

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61 Ibid., 3608-67.
62 Ibid., 3779.
63 Ibid., 3721-22.
64 Ibid., 4781.
was as follows:

The Senate voted for an alliance not with all the nations of the earth like the League of Nations, but an exclusive alliance to guarantee the possessions and the indefinable rights of the three aggressive imperialisms of the earth--Britain, France and Japan. They are the same three imperialisms for whose sake we have just sacrificed twenty-six thousand millions of treasure.

The Senate commits the country to an exclusive alliance designed to protect the aggressions of Japan against our friends Russia and China.

It is an alliance to prop up the tottering British Empire.

It is an alliance so threatening that to-day it is driving together, for self-protection the brains of Germany and the brawn of Russia, those two republics gasping for the breath of life.

The Senators failed us, opened the gates, let in the foreign foe.67

An Estimate of the Conference

The Washington Conference was an outstanding achievement of post-war diplomacy. It is sad that the good work begun in the establishment of security and the preservation of peace has been allowed to pass into the region of forgotten things.

In the concluding speech to the convention President Harding commented:

This Conference has wrought a truly great achievement. It is sometimes hazardous to speak in superlatives, and I will be restrained. But I will say, with every confidence, that the faith plighted here to-day, kept in national honor, will mark the beginning of a new and better epoch in human progress.68

Mr. Balfour, head of the British delegation, declared that the work of the delegates

diminished national armaments and increased national security; removed long-standing causes of offense and substituted good-will for suspicion;

67 Literary Digest, 73, April 8, 1922, 13.
68 Senate Document 125, 89.
made peace less costly and war less probable.69

In Japan we realized that a new spirit of moral consciousness had come over the world, but we could not bring ourselves truly to believe that it had struck so deeply into the souls of men until we came to Washington said Admiral Baron Kato, who headed the Japanese delegation and he added:

We came and we have learned; and in turn we have, I think, given evidence, such as no man can mistake, that Japan is ready for the new order of thought--the spirit of international friendship and cooperation for greater good of humanity--which the conference has brought about.70

By diminishing the causes of war and decreasing the weapons of war, we have reduced the possibility of war,71 averred Albert Sarraut, speaking for the French delegation, and giving the Italian comment Senator Schanzer declared

The Conference marked the point of departure of a new era.72

Thus optimistically spoke the men who were intimately in touch with the work of the Conference. The world was not ready to benefit permanently from this experiment in Utopia--it still persisted in the ways of pettiness and greed and fear--but the fact that much was accomplished will make it a foundation for future endeavors. The Washington Conference deservedly stands as a commendable and significant advance in world affairs.

69Ibid., 212-18. Also Senate Document 126, 65-70.
70Ibid., 222-24.
71Ibid., 218-20.
72Ibid., 220.
The Effect of the Washington Conference on the American Naval Policy

A decided change was effected in our Naval Policy as a result of the Washington Conference. The principle of naval dominance adhered to in 1919 was changed to the policy of parity in 1922. Ending competition in the construction of capital ships, limiting the size of capital ships, cruisers, and aircraft carriers, restricting the calibre of the guns, and removing the friction in the Far East brought about this change. The most obvious benefit from this change in policy was financial, but the more important benefit was the lessening of the possibility of war. Friction between the United States and Great Britain was removed through the cancelling of the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the ending of the naval race, while possible trouble with Japan was averted by allowing her to be supreme in the Far East.73

So far, the development of our naval policy has been traced through several steps. Our original policy had been a modest one. Up to the Civil War and for several decades after, our fleet was expected to vindicate, first our independence, then our position on neutral rights. The purpose of our naval policy was a very definite one. There was no use then of that meaningless phrase, "an adequate navy", meaningless because it fails to answer the question, "adequate for what?" During the two decades after the Civil War we had very little use of a naval policy at all and it was not until the Spanish War with its unexpected development of imperialism, that we followed

the European nations into the extraordinary pre-war race in battleship building. In 1916, it was we who set a new pace, when President Wilson called for a navy "incomparably the most adequate in the world".

The navy is considered to instrument of foreign policy, but some of our policies are such that they cannot be enforced except by a navy of exceptional strength. Our Open Door policy and the territorial integrity of China are two policies that belong in this class. Any armed vindication of these policies by the United States alone would require victory over Japan. To conduct hostile operations five thousand miles from our shores is a tremendous task and nigh impossible. Possibly those policies should be abandoned.

With our changed policy of 1922, our navy was adequate to our historical American policies, first the unquestioned defense of our independence, single handed, then the realization of our international ideals in concert with nations of like mind.

At the conclusion of the Washington Conference, our naval policy was a very definite one--to maintain a navy equal to the British navy and larger by five-thirds than that of the Japanese. Our naval men liked the idea of parity. Something definite to work toward.
CHAPTER III

NAVAL DEVELOPMENTS 1922-1930 AND LATER

EFFORTS AT NAVAL DISARMAMENT
Secretary of Navy Denby outlined the American Naval policy in the opening passage of his annual report, made public on December 4, 1922. He said:

For the first time in the history of our country the Navy and Congress have a definite naval policy of building and maintenance standard to work to, a standard which is proportionate to our position as a world Power. The maintenance of this standard in all respects is necessary to our defense and to our prestige.

He then stated that the following had been adopted as the fundamental naval policy of the United States:

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 possessions.

It is believed that this policy is sound and not subject to question. It should be true for all times and under all conditions.

Then the Secretary said that having in view the terms of the treaty for the Limitation of Naval Armaments, the Navy department considered that it was the intention of our conferees that the ratio 5:5:3 should apply to the relative total strength of the navies concerned; and that therefore, the following general program had been adopted:

To 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.\(^1\)

The Secretary of the Navy recommended that the United States build auxiliary vessels to match Great Britain and Japan.\(^2\)

\(^1\) New York Times, December 4, 1922.

\(^2\) Ibid.
It would be appropriate here to say something of the naval construction programs which had been adopted by the Powers concerned since the signature of the Washington Treaty. The conference had only made a beginning in the settlement of the naval problem. The fact that the agreements reached was confined to capital ships should not be lost sight of and some of the powers had begun a new race—this time in cruisers. All powers had adopted the Washington maximum for cruisers—ten-thousand tons with eight-inch guns—as the normal type of cruiser. This new ship was referred to by Commander Kenworthy as "a miniature or pocket dreadnought, miscalled a light cruiser".  

The following table shows the number of cruisers laid down from 1922 to 1928:

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<tr>
<th>Yr.</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<th>Japan</th>
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<td>1 8300 6-8&quot;</td>
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<td>8 71584</td>
<td>6 40000</td>
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4Figures are taken from a Senate Committee Print Navies of the World, prepared for the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs by the chairman Senator Frederick Hale, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1928, 1-3.
Further appropriations had been made for additional building as follows:

United States--none
Great Britain--two, 16,800 ton vessels
Japan --one, 10,000 ton vessel.
France --one, 6,496 ton vessel.
Italy --two, 20,000 ton vessels.

From these statistics we see that although the United States withheld cruiser appropriations immediately after the Washington Conference, other governments adopted extensive building programs in the vessels unlimited at Washington. In 1922 and 1923 the lead was taken by Japan and France, and in 1924 England began construction. The British made no secret of the fact that they wished more cruisers than other nations. Lord Birkenhead and Sir Austen Chamberlain explained the situation to some visiting American editors, saying that as Great Britain could not put in a supply of food for longer than a seven weeks period, she was forced to have great cruiser strength to protect her trade lanes.

In the United States a bill authorizing the construction of eight 10,000 ton cruisers was passed by Congress on December 18, 1924 and appropriation for five of these was made in the Naval Appropriations Acts of 1925 and 1926. The American Navy Department pointed out that the American Navy was much inferior to other navies in cruisers and that to put our fleet on a basis

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\(^5\)Ibid.; also from "Should the United States Build More Cruisers" Congressional Digest VIII, 14.
of equality with Great Britain, the construction of twenty-two large cruisers was necessary instead of eight, and Congress held back from making appropriations for them in the hope that a new limitation of arms conference would be held. The desire that armaments be effectively reduced and limited in the interest of peace and economy was shown in the naval appropriations bills of 1923, 1924, and 1925.  

President Coolidge was in sympathy with the efforts to reduce naval armaments which in his estimation had two goals—peace and thrift. In his inaugural address he called for a display of reason rather than a display of force and said, "If we expect others to rely on our fairness and justice, we must show that we rely on their fairness and justice".  

Addressing the American Legion at Omaha, on October 6, 1925, he said:

We have been attempting to relieve ourselves and the other nations from the old theory of competitive armaments. In spite of all the arguments in favor of great military forces, no nation has ever had an army large enough to guarantee it against attack in time of peace or to ensure its victory in time of war. No nation ever will. Peace and security are more likely to result from fair and honorable dealings and mutual agreements for a limitation of armaments among nations, than by any attempts at competition in squadrons and battalions....I can see no merit in any unnecessary expenditure of money to hire men to build fleets and carry muskets when international relations and agreements permit the turning of such resources into the making of good roads, the building of better homes, the promotion of better education, and all the other arts of peace which minister to the advancement of human welfare.  

In February of the year 1927, the United States renewed its plans for the reduction of naval disarmament, the phase that primarily interested us.

6Congressional Digest VIII, 14.


President Coolidge took the plunge and a formal proposal was delivered at the Foreign Offices in London, Paris, Rome, and Tokyo by the American ambassadors, to attend a conference to be held at Geneva for the consideration of the separate problem of naval armaments and more particularly the limitation of those vessels which had not been covered by the Washington Treaty. 9

The Calling of The Geneva Conference, 1927

The Conference for Limitation of Naval Armaments had for its specific aim the extension of the principles of the Washington Conference of 1922, to auxiliary vessels, the class in which competitive building had begun. Mr. Coolidge included this idea in his invitation and said:

The American government was disposed to accept in regard to auxiliary cruisers an extension of the 5:5:3 ratio with reference to the United States, Great Britain and Japan and to leave the ratio of France and Italy for discussion—due consideration being given to national requirements. 10

Would this conference succeed where the Washington Conference had failed? Both France and Italy refused the invitation to send delegates to the conference, but later they did agree to send representatives as observers. The French note, dated February 15, 1927, began in the usual diplomatic manner by praising the ideals of the American proposal; then it went on in an unruffled strain to reject it. Several reasons were given. First, the authority of the League of Nations would be weakened if this work were taken from it; second, all the nations with navies were concerned in the limitation

9 Records of the Conference for Limitation of Naval Armaments, Geneva, 1927, p. 7. This is Senate Document No. 55. Hereafter it will be cited as Records.

10 Ibid., 7.
of cruisers, not only the five invited to the conference; and third, the American proposal had ignored the French contention that only total tonnage should be limited, not the classes. Italy refused on the grounds that her geographical peculiarities made it impossible for her to commit herself to naval limitation.

Japan accepted Mr. Coolidge's proposal in an answer made public on February 19, but stated that the 5:5:3 ratio established at the Washington Conference for capital ships would not be accepted for the smaller ships.

After consulting the governments of the Dominions the British government also accepted the invitation. The British note contained the following statement regarding Great Britain's position:

The views of His Majesty's Government upon the special geographical position of the British Empire, the length of inter-imperial communications, and the necessity for the protection of its food supplies are well known, and together with the special conditions and requirements of the other countries invited to participate in the conversations, must be taken into account. His Majesty's Governments are nevertheless prepared to consider to what extent the principles adopted at Washington can be carried further, either as regards the ratio in different classes of ships between the various Powers or in other important ways.

In spite, however, of the refusal of two of the interested Powers, it was decided after further consultation to hold a Three Power Conference at Geneva. The first session opened on June 20, 1927 and the delegates from the United States, Great Britain and Japan tried to agree upon cruisers, destroyers, and submarines. The three delegations put on the table the proposals of their respective Governments.

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11 Ibid., 7-8.
12 Ibid., 10-11.
13 Ibid., 9-10.
14 Ibid., 12.
The Three Proposals

The United States came to the conference with a program based on parity, economy and security. It was defined by Hugh S. Gibson who said in part:

The American delegation has come to the conference with an estimate of what we consider equitable tonnage allocations in the various categories of vessels. We are prepared to discuss the question of tonnages fully and frankly in the light of our several legitimate needs....

We have none of us a right or interest to maintain a naval force sufficient for our legitimate requirements of national defense.\(^\text{15}\)

The American proposal in effect was that no change should be made in the prevailing limits to the size of ships, but that the three Powers should agree to limit their tonnage in each class of subsidiary ship—cruiser, destroyer, and submarine—to conform to a 5:5:3 ratio. The following table gives this plan in practice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Tonnage in Cruisers</th>
<th>Tonnage in Destroyers</th>
<th>Tonnage in Submarines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>250,000 tons</td>
<td>200,000 tons</td>
<td>60,000 tons</td>
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<td>and Great Britain</td>
<td>300,000 tons</td>
<td>250,000 tons</td>
<td>90,000 tons</td>
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We demanded parity with Great Britain for two reasons; first, to protect our foreign trade since there were some important products we could not do without, as manganese, rubber, and tin, and second, to protect our right

\(^\text{15}\text{Ibid.}, 24-28.\)
as a neutral which England had threatened to disturb in the past.

The Japanese proposal was that the relationship between the three powers, at that time, as indicated by the actual number of vessels built and being built, should be stabilized that henceforth none of the three Powers should be allowed to build any new ships except for replacement. This would work out roughly at a ratio of 5:5:4, instead of 5:5:3. Japan did not want to scrap anything of value, nor did she want to begin a large and expensive naval program. They would not agree to any limitation of eight-inch gun cruisers as a matter of principle except to declare that they would not build any further eight-inch gun cruiser except those already authorized, provided Japan were given a total tonnage of at least 315,000 tons for cruisers and destroyers combined.16

Both the American and Japanese proposals seemed simple, the Japanese having the apparent merit of no future increase in the scale of expenditure, but not, on the other hand, involving any reduction. The American delegation objected at once to the Japanese plan because of the change in ratio.

The British proposal was complicated. It began by opposing the principle of limitation of total tonnage alone, on the ground that the maximum sized ship (10,000 ton eight-inch gun) would inevitably become the minimum. The delegates, instead, proposed a reduction in the size of ships and guns and that the naval strength should be rationed on the basis of reasonable needs of the three countries. First, they suggested that there be a strict limitation of the 10,000 ton eight-inch gun ship, and second, that there be established a secondary type of 6,000 tons carrying six-inch guns. They

16 Ibid., 32-34.
produced definite figures. Great Britain, they said, required seventy cruisers, and this number they refused to change throughout the conference. This was absolutely necessary, they declared, to meet its special needs.\(^{17}\) This number of ships would run the total tonnage up to approximately 600,000 tons, and on this figure she would grant parity to the United States. This figure was twice the American figure and would mean naval increase rather than naval reduction if we tried to reach parity.

The plans were assigned to the Technical Committee for investigation and meanwhile the newspapers, daily, predicted failure. In criticism of the British proposals, the *New York Herald Tribune* said:

To revise the agreements as to capital ships and as to tonnage and armament maximum for cruisers, and to delay replacements in both classes, as the British suggest, would play havoc with naval equality.

The British-backed cuts in tonnage and armaments ignore the importance to the United States of possessing both capital ships and cruisers of high steaming radius. They overlook an existing disparity in naval stations and bases......

It is not conceding anything essentially valuable to Great Britain to advocate smaller battleships, smaller airplane carriers, smaller cruisers, destroyers, and submarines, or to recommend sweeping reductions in the calibre of guns. To allow no auxiliary to carry a gun heavier than six-inch would at a stroke vastly increase Great Britain’s cruiser strength. She has many merchant ships which can be fitted with six-inch guns and converted quickly into naval auxiliaries......

The Washington Treaty unwisely aggravated our poverty in naval bases and stations......Our lack of bases further east than Hawaii compels us to maintain a navy of Washington Treaty units and requirements. It would be folly under such circumstances to listen to British pleas for unit tonnage which would further handicap us and relatively to increase British naval strength.\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) *Ibid.*, 28-32

\(^{18}\) *New York Herald Tribune*, June 22, 1927, editorial, 16.
A London dispatch to the *New York Times* urged the British not to change their decision:

We are glad to see that our representatives at Geneva have not included smaller cruisers and destroyers in such a ratio as is desired by the United States, and we earnestly hope there will be no backsliding on this vital point.

Such a ratio in these vessels would be grossly unfair to Great Britain, as our insular position and dependence for existence upon sea cargoes require a much larger number of these vessels than can be necessary for the United States. 19

The *Chicago Daily Tribune* was bitter:

British naval action in all her later wars has been to blockade her enemy. "Contraband" is what Great Britain wishes to declare contraband. The guarding of imperial commerce in fact has meant an interference with neutral commerce, whenever it suited British interests to interfere. This has worked a serious injury to American commerce in the past and may do so again as long as the protection of trade routes is allowed to remain a British monopoly.

Our interest in foreign trade... is increasing.... America is beginning to outsell Britain in her own dominions.... At the same time our dependence on the raw materials of industry which are not found in our country is becoming greater and without which our industrial system must stagnate. If not our lives, then our prosperity and our standard of living will be imperiled by cutting us off from the world. 20

The clash of opinion was in the main a clash between Great Britain and the United States. Since both governments had been genuinely anxious to reduce naval expenditure and the general danger of war, it was absurd that they could not agree on some means.

After weeks of difficult and anxious discussion by the experts, after all three parties had consulted with their respective Governments on more than one occasion, after the British delegation had actually suspended the conference by returning to London to consult with the Cabinet, it had been found

20 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 26, 1927, editorial, 10.
impossible to enter into a written agreement. The core of the clash was the cruiser. With regard to the submarines and destroyers some measure of agreement seemed likely. In the matter of further limitation of capital ships, which had been informally suggested by the British delegates, an agreement seemed possible. But on the issue of cruisers the conference broke. Each side wanted the advantage.

The first contention was over the question of parity and the British naval men did not want parity with the United States in cruisers. The Right Honorable E. S. Amery, formerly First Lord of the Admiralty wrote:

We agreed at the Washington Conference to what is in effect an equality of battle fleet strength with the United States. But obviously it would be impossible to arrive at any similar figure with regard to the strength of cruisers required for commerce protection. For us, at any rate, a sufficiency of cruisers is a matter of life and death.21

Mr. Bridgeman, the chief British delegate said in 1926:

It would be a very dangerous thing for Great Britain to allow it to be thought that we could be satisfied with a one-power standard in cruisers, for example. In cruisers, at any rate, we want to feel superior to other countries.22

At the conference he was not as frank for he declared:

"It is not parity with America that is troubling us. We have not raised any objection to that."23

Winston Churchill, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, did not agree with Mr. Bridgeman and in no uncertain terms he gave his opinion as follows:


23 Records, 40.
"Therefore we are not able now—and I hope at no future time—to embody in a solemn international agreement any words which would bind us to the principle of mathematical parity in naval strength." 24

Lord Jellicoe gave as reasons why Great Britain should have more cruisers than the United States, first, Great Britain's insular position and her great need for raw materials and food, and second, the great length of her trade routes and the extensive coast line of all parts of the Empire, which must be protected. 25

The United States delegates would not recognize that Great Britain's needs were any greater than our own and finally, England was forced reluctantly to grant parity.

The second problem confronting the delegates was the apportioning of the various units of tonnage. The American delegation declared that it could not agree to limit the number of 10,000 ton cruisers to less than twenty-five because, unlike the British Empire, the United States did not have a large number of naval bases strategically situated with respect to its trade routes.

The United States needed ships with large cruising radius.

It was at about this stage of the game, that the British delegates returned to London and came back with a new set of proposals. 27

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24 London Times, August 8, 1927.
25 Records, 37.
26 Ibid., 95.
27 Ibid., 174-77.
tons for Britain and the United States and 385,000 tons for the Japanese. The restrictions called for were objectionable to the United States. First, the 10,000 ton cruisers were to be limited to twelve for the United States and Great Britain and eight for Japan. Second, the total tonnage in the destroyer class could be used for vessels of 1500 tons and under, but only sixteen percent could be used for flotilla leader ships, i.e., vessels of above 1500 tons and limited to a maximum of 1850 tons. Third, the retention of overage vessels to the extent of twenty-five percent of the total tonnage was to be allowed.

Japan made a final effort to provide some solution and this Great Britain agreed to. She proposed that she and Great Britain declare a naval holiday until 1931 with reference to the larger cruisers and give the United States a chance to catch up. The United States refused as it would mean that the number of 10,000 ton cruisers would be limited and that the United States would have to accept a small tonnage for the remaining cruisers. After four weeks of technical disagreement, each delegation was practically where it started.

The United States delegation remained unbending in her argument about large cruisers and Great Britain remained just as unyielding in advocating the six-inch gun smaller cruiser. The American objection was due primarily to the fact that the British government had at its disposal 888,000 tons of fast merchant ships capable of being readily converted into cruisers with six-inch guns.

28 Ibid., 181.
29 Ibid., 180 appendix.
30 Ibid., 179-80.
The Japanese delegates would not agree to a restriction of gun calibre for Japan had placed eight-inch guns on ships of 7500 tons.

To summarize, Great Britain wanted a relatively large number of 6000 to 7500 ton cruisers; America wanted a free hand with 10,000 ton cruisers, since she had not much use for the small cruiser. It finally ended in deadlock and complete failure.

Mr. Simonds, an American journalist, gave a sensible estimate when he wrote:

"Equality in cruiser tonnage was at all times perfectly obtainable provided both countries frankly accepted the principle that the fleets were never to be against each other."\(^{31}\)

**Why the Conference Failed**

Why did the conference at Geneva fail? Who was to blame? Some critics have said that there was a lack of preparation. Vice-President Dawes touched on this subject in his speech at the dedication of International Peace Bridge connecting the United States and Canada at Buffalo.\(^{32}\) Mr. Dawes said that in his opinion the lack of results at Geneva was due to insufficient inquiry on both sides as to the actual needs of the other.

In England, R. MacDonald voted a move of censure against the government as follows:

That the House deplores the lack of preparation by the government and the military character of the British delegation which seriously contributed to the failure of the recent Naval Conference at Geneva.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{31}\)F. Simonds, "Naval Disaster at Geneva", Review of Reviews, September 27, 1927, 270.

\(^{32}\)New York Times, August 8, 1927.

\(^{33}\)Times, London, November 25, 1927, 8.
Mr. Baker, a careful student of the conference, pointed out that the conference was set in an environment unfavorable to the American style of open diplomacy which had proved to be so successful at Washington. Only three plenary sessions were held in public—the main work being done in the privacy of technical committees.  

The Geneva environment did not lend itself to the Washington type diplomacy. Writing on the theatricals of diplomacy, Kenworthy and Young describe the atmosphere necessary to successful American methods:

For Americans do not yet seem to have learned how important atmosphere is for the proper producing of their diplomacy by popular appeal. This new diplomacy of theirs with a good producer, the "star" parts well filled and featured, and the "stunts" carefully staged, will beat the old diplomacy all the time. But all diplomats know that off their own grounds, in unfamiliar surroundings, Americans lose confidence in their own ways of playing the diplomatic game and are likely to copy the ways of Europe with disastrous results to themselves.

The man in the streets of the cities of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan alike found cynical criticisms in the newspaper to suit his mood. To cite two illustrations:

"Responsibility for the deplorable outcome," wrote the Chicago Daily News, rests principally with the British experts and their reactionary supporters in the Baldwin Cabinet.

The British viewpoint was shown by a headline in the Liberal Manchester Guardian: "Conference Imperiled by the United States Insistence on Super-Cruisers."

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37 Manchester Guardian, July 16, 1927.
Practically all writers on the subject agreed that failure was due to the fact that the delegates were predominantly naval men whose whole professional careers have been a training toward striving for superior navies, not equal ones.

Mr. Villard writing in the Nation stated:

Thus, it has always seemed to me the height of stupidity, if not insincerity, for our Presidents to send navy officers to naval disarmament conferences. They can not be zealous for the decrease of the navy.38

It is true that the delegations were composed of a very large number of technical naval officers. No member of the American delegation could boast of an established reputation for statesmanship. Hugh Gibson, United States minister to Switzerland and Admiral Hilary Jones were our delegates and up to that time neither had been extremely prominent in public affairs. Mr. Gibson was capable and well-trained, but he was just beginning his career. Admiral Jones was thoroughly familiar with the technical aspects of the subject, but his whole viewpoint was one-sided. In addition there were eight naval advisers, one legal adviser, one State-Department adviser, a secretariat of four persons and one archivist on hand to assist the American delegates.39

The other delegations were likewise encircled with naval advice and showed but little eminence in their personnel. Great Britain sent four delegates, only one having an outstanding reputation, Viscount Cecil, but he was controlled by the cabinet at London. Canada, Australia, and New Zealand also sent naval officers. Of the two Japanese delegates, one was an admiral, while in addition there were sixteen navy men attached to give advice.

These men thought of war and not of peace. To them, national safety was of greatest importance. It was their responsibility to protect the people of their respective countries and to see to it that they were not endangered to the least degree.40

Although the conference may be termed a failure, it was not truly without result, for the publicity and discussion had called attention to the seriousness of the problem. The points of conflict became known, and the importance of taking the matter out of the hands of the naval experts was seen. As a preliminary event it was successful.

United States Naval Developments 1927-1929

As a result of the failure of the Geneva Conference the tension between the English-speaking nations was increased and the "most startling building program it has ever had to consider"41 was brought before the Congress. This program called for twenty-five cruisers, nine destroyer leaders, thirty-two submarines, and five aircraft carriers, at a total cost of $725,000,000. There was too much opposition for the Congress to pass this bill, but in February 1929, a bill was passed that still called for a rather large construction program. This new bill called for fifteen cruisers, and one aircraft carrier and was to cost $274,000,000. A time limit was added requiring that all fifteen of the eight-inch gun cruisers be started by July 1, 1931 and finished about 1934 and 1935. The only concession made to the president was the authorization to suspend building if an international agree-

40 Ibid., 180.

ment for further limitation of naval armaments was concluded.42

In February 1929, Congressman Fred Britten, chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs and a leader of the "big navy" group in the United States wrote that the completion of fifteen American cruisers authorized in 1929 will, unless Great Britain or Japan extend their naval programs, place the United States on a basis somewhere near equality with any other naval force it might be called upon to meet.43

By referring to the table of the three leading navies and comparing the two largest fleets--that of the United States and Great Britain--we find Mr. Britten's statement to be a fact.44 If the 1929 programs would be completed Great Britain would have a naval superiority in cruisers, but that would be offset by the fact that we would have five large eight-inch gun cruisers more than the British plus a superiority in destroyers and submarines. It seemed as if another naval race might be looming in the near future, unless something definite could be done to limit naval armaments.


Comparison of Leading Navies, Sept. 15, 1929

The United States Navy

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Japanese Navy

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A New Movement Toward Disarmament

An Anglo-American clash was a possibility. There was much written about "Freedom of the Seas" and "Belligerent Rights", the two opposing doctrines of the United States and Great Britain. Advocating a big navy, Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske (retired) stated that the progress of civilization had always been accompanied by war, and that each nation should maintain armament in proportion to its wealth. An Englishman's opinion was given by W. G. Carlton Hal, who said that the United States thought nothing of violating a treaty and that they could always produce evidence to support their actions, even if they had to manufacture it "as they did in 1898 when they deliberately sank the 'Maine' in Havana Harbor to provide themselves with a casus belli against Spain". He would have liked some new sea laws agreed upon which would extend Great Britain's belligerent rights.

A great number of writers on the subject were genuinely anxious to ease the relations between the two countries. Allen W. Dulles proposed a plan whereby a comparison of fleets would be more elastic. He had been associated with the delegation at Geneva and he realized it was impossible to make the British and American fleets exact equals in every phase—type, number, size and calibre of guns—when each had such different needs. He declared that the United States should make allowance for the great superiority in conflict of the larger cruiser and in figuring the size of navies the smaller cruiser should be calculated at a deduction.

45 Rear Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, "Delusion of Pacifists", Forum 81, February 1929, 75-77.
It must be remembered that the Kellogg Pact, the Multilateral Treaty for the Renunciation of War, had been approved by the United States Senate in January, 1929, just a month before the 1929 Naval Construction Bill was passed. It was definitely inconsistent to renounce war on one hand, and build for war, on the other. On March 4, 1929, Herbert Hoover became President of the United States and in his inaugural address he made a passing reference to disarmament.

The recent treaty for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy sets an advance standard in our conception of the relations of nations. Its acceptance should pave the way to greater limitation of armament, the offer of which we sincerely extend to the world.48

In his Memorial Day address at Arlington, President Hoover made a straightforward appeal for arms reduction. No one knows the horror, the economic waste, and the ruthlessness of warfare better than Mr. Hoover. His remedy is to cut naval programs the world over so sharply to the defensive level, that there can be no competitive building. His speech in part follows:

Since this day a year ago, a solemn declaration has been proposed by America to the world and has been signed by forty nations. It states that "They solemnly declare in the names of their respective peoples that they condemn recourse to war for the solution of international controversies, and renounce it as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another".

They "agree that the settlement or solution of all disputes or conflicts of whatever nature, or of whatever origin they may be, which may arise among them, shall never be sought except by pacific means".

Despite the declarations of the Kellogg Pact, every important country has since the signing of that agreement been engaged in strengthening its naval arm. We are still borne on the tide of competitive building.

The present administration of the United States has undertaken to approach this vital problem with a new program. We feel that it is useless for us to talk of the limitation of arms if such limitations are to be set.

48 New York Times, March 5, 1929.
so high as virtually to be an incitement to increase armament.

We believe the time has come when we must know whether the pact we have signed is real; whether we are condemned to further and more extensive programs of naval construction. Limitation upward is not now our goal, but actual reduction of existing commitments to lowered levels.

It is fitting that we should give our minds to these subjects on this occasion; that we should give voice to these deepest aspirations of the American people in this place. That aspiration is that the world should have peace.

Fear and suspicion will never slacken unless we can halt competitive construction of arms. They will never disappear unless we can turn this tide toward actual reduction.49

President Hoover's willingness to attempt settlement of the naval problem, plus Ramsay MacDonald's anxiety to improve Anglo-American relations created a new atmosphere in the early months of 1929. At the president's direction, Mr. Gibson, the American representative on the Preparatory Commission of the League of Nations, made a significant suggestion, which was later termed the "yardstick formula". He declared that

in order to arrive at a basis of comparison in the case of categories in which there are marked variations as to unit characteristics, it might be desirable in arriving at a formula for estimating equivalent tonnage to consider certain factors which produce these variations, such as age, unit displacement, and calibre of guns.50

He had worked out a system of index numbers; 100 might represent a new ten-thousand ton eight-inch gun cruiser; 60 might represent a seventy-five hundred ton six-inch gun cruiser; and other numbers might represent the remaining vessels in correct proportion.


This speech was well liked. Sir Austen Chamberlain stated that it prepared the path for a "real advance".51

The "yardstick formula" made it possible for Great Britain to have a larger number of small cruisers and a larger total tonnage, while the United States could have a larger number of big cruisers. Each could have what best suited their needs. The stalemate of the Geneva Conference was broken. The Anglo-American cruiser problem could be solved.

Soon thereafter, President Hoover postponed construction of three cruisers and was severely criticized for so doing by Paul V. McNutt, then National Commander of the American Legion who argued that the United States should build ships until parity was reached. The following is President Hoover's reply in part:

Competitive building creates burdensome expenditures, a constant stream of suspicion, ill-will and misunderstandings. Moreover, by constant expansion of naval strength we cannot fail to stimulate fear and ill-will through the rest of the world toward both of us, and thus defeat the very purposes which you have so well expressed as being the object of the Legion, when you say "the Legion stands uniformly for movements which will make permanent peace more certain and assure better understanding between nations".

....I fear you have been misinformed as to the actual problems that lie before us if we are to succeed in such a negotiation, for they are far more intricate and far more difficult than can be solved by the simple formula which you suggest.52

Another case which influenced favorably the disarmament movement was the Shearer incident. To explain this briefly suffice it to say that it was discovered that Mr. Shearer had been hired by some ammunition companies to do

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51 London Times, April 29, 1929, 9.

what he could to make the Geneva Conference fail. Despite the denials of these companies, which were not believed, the people's wrath was aroused against interference with the disarmament plans by private corporations.

Meanwhile what was England doing about the naval question? The British government was very sincere about removing the ill-will produced by the misunderstanding. First, they slashed their cruiser demands from the seventy claimed at Geneva to fifty. Fifteen were to be eight-inch gun cruisers and thirty-five were to be six-inch guns or less. Second, they made overtures to the United States Ambassador, Charles G. Dawes.

Since Great Britain was ready to make such great reductions, President Hoover called for a report from the General Board of the United States navy, stating the least number of eight-inch gun cruisers which this country could assent to. On September 11, 1929, the board gave its figure at twenty-one. These twenty-one cruisers would measure 210,000 tons and carry eight-inch guns. Fifteen six-inch gun cruisers of 105,500 tons were added to the board's estimate.

In a communication from Ambassador Dawes, August 31, 1929, it was pointed out that the Labor government of England could not accept our number of twenty-one cruisers, but they would not be averse to eighteen. Since the Japanese demanded a ratio of 10:7 in large cruisers, Japan would insist on fourteen, just one less than the British number. The British Dominions in

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53 Discussed in detail in Chapter IV of this paper.
54 Congressional Record, 73, July 15, 1930, 158. Also New York Times, January 11, 1930.
55 Treaty on the Limitation of Naval Armaments (1930 hearings), 128.
the Pacific feared this small superiority would be insufficient. It boiled down to the point where it seemed the only important difference was whether the United States should have twenty-one or eighteen large cruisers with an additional number of six-inch cruisers to make up the tonnage of the three cut off the program. The problem did not seem insurmountable. It was at this time that Prime Minister MacDonald, democratic statesman that he was, visited the United States. In an inspiring address to the United States Senate on October 7, he begged that naval rivalries cease. His speech, in part, is as follows:

There can be no war; nay, more: it is absolutely impossible, if you and we do our duty in making the peace pact effective, that any section of our army, whether land, or sea, or air, can ever again come into hostile conflict.

Think upon that when we face many of our own problems of jealousy, problems of fear, problems the young and rising and successful generation put into the hearts of the old generation. They all disappear, and in virtue of the fact that they have disappeared we have met together and we have said, "What is this bother about parity?" Parity? Take it, without reserve, heaped up and flowing over.....That was the only condition under which competitive armaments could be stopped and we could create a public psychology which could pursue the fruitful and successful avenues of peaceful cooperation.57

How different was this speech from the one made by Winston Churchill during the Geneva Conference period.58

After conversations between Prime Minister MacDonald and President Hoover were held at the President's camp on the Rapidan in Virginia, it was agreed to call a naval conference. The British government issued the invita-

56 Ibid., 131.
57 New York Times, October 8, 1929.
58 Page 67 of this paper.
tions for a meeting to be held in London January, 1930, to the United States, Japan, France, and Italy. All accepted.59

The London Conference-1930

The Aims of the Conferees

First, consideration should be given to what each country hoped to gain as a result of the conference to be held at London. For the United States, the most important point was parity with Great Britain. So much publicity had been given to parity in the United States that a treaty without it, could not be accepted. Our second aim was to extend the 10:6 ratio with Japan, although that did not matter quite as much. We agreed with Great Britain that it would be a step forward to abolish the submarine, but disagreed with her about giving up the capital ships. We definitely took a stand against political involvements that France wanted. It would be impossible to get a treaty ratified if it contained political obligations.60

The United States did not intend to make the same mistake as was made at Geneva by sending an unsympathetic delegation. The one chosen this time was especially fine. The head of the delegation was Secretary of State Stimson, whose experience could not be denied. The following are some of the positions he had held: United States District Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Secretary of War under President Taft, Special Agent to Nicaragua in 1927, and Governor-General of the Philippine Islands. Another


delegate was Charles G. Dawes who had gained a world-wide reputation through his several posts--First Director General of the Budget, Chairman of the Committee on German reparations, Vice-President of the United States 1925-1929, and Ambassador to Great Britain. Dwight Morrow was a third delegate who had earned his Government's grateful regard for his splendid diplomatic service in Mexico. The fourth delegate was Hugh Gibson whose entire training had especially fitted him for the work. He had served the United States government on the League of Nations Preparatory Commission and had been the civilian delegate to the Geneva Conference. To represent the navy, Secretary of the Navy Adams was chosen.

In addition to these five reputable men, President Hoover sent two United States Senators, David A. Reed of Pennsylvania and Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, both very capable men. Since a treaty must be ratified by the Senate, it is well to have some members of it favorable to the treaty and who are influential enough to sway the group.

If the personnel of the delegation had anything to do with success or failure, then this conference should succeed.61

The British were divided into two schools, those who wished Great Britain to be supreme on the seas and those more practical who saw that this was impossible as well as unprofitable. It was difficult for the British to break away from their traditions, but it was still more difficult to foot the bill of naval construction. The arguments used by the practical school were first, that the powerful navy had not been able to guarantee trade to the British

anyway, and second, that in modern warfare airplanes could cause waste, havoc, and devastation that the navy could not combat. The Labor government was on the side of the practical ones and it had won the friendship of America by its cancelling of the construction of the twenty cruisers, and by its assent to our principle of parity.

The traditionalists were still strong enough to influence the British in the view that they must have a navy equal to the combined fleets of France and Italy. Their route to the East must be kept open. Even this is illogical, for here again planes will be a grave menace.

Japan wanted security plus reduction. She knew that if Great Britain and the United States would agree to reduction it would benefit Japan in two ways, by reducing the possibility of attack from either of these two governments the only ones she feared at this time, and by reducing the burden of taxation. However, it was very difficult to convince the Japanese that they were not "losing face" when they agreed to reduction of armaments and as a result the very lives of the delegates are endangered. A dagger suitable for suicide was presented to Admiral Hyo Takarabe, on his return from the London Naval Conference. He was denounced as a traitor for abandoning the demands of Tokyo under pressure of tyrannous America and Britain and was urged to commit hara-kiri to expiate his crime in concluding a treaty disadvantageous to Japan.62

In November, 1930, Premier Hancoguchi was gravely injured by a gun-

62 Cable dispatch from Tokyo to New York Times, May 19, 1930.
and there was an outbreak in the Japanese House of Representatives when the treaty was up for ratification, in which several were seriously wounded.64

The Japanese government had a serious decision to make when they advocated reduction. A second aim of Japan was the retention of the submarine. They use submarines very advantageously to repel attack and they were positive that they would not scrap a single ton of their 70,000 tons of submarines. A third aim was a 10:7 ratio, not a 5:3 ratio for cruisers.

The rivalry in the Mediterranean between France and Italy caused apprehension.65 The Mediterranean is an important route for both of them. The route to Africa must be kept open to the French. The French remember with sadness that it was because this route was closed that Napoleon failed in Egypt. The Italian route cuts across the French route and to make her route safe, the Italians insisted on parity with France. France would agree to parity only on the Mediterranean, not on the Atlantic. If they could not agree, then Great Britain would not know how large her navy must be to be the size of the combined French and Italian fleets, and the United States would have difficulty knowing what parity with Great Britain would amount to. It was bound to become a vicious circle.

The Work of the London Conference

On January 21, 1930, George V of England opened the London Conference and the first plenary session was given over to polite, diplomatic speeches of

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64 Ibid., February 7, 1931.
65 Vera Michele Dean, "France and Italy in the Mediterranean", Foreign Policy Association Service VI, No. 1, March 19, 1930.
friendship. At the second plenary session, January 23, the naval needs of
each government were presented by the heads of each delegation. The most im-
portant presentations were those of M. Tardieu speaking for France, and of
Signor Grandi speaking for Italy. Their irreconcilable aims were immedi-
ately given to the conference to solve. No solution was possible. The French
demanded the right to build their fleet up to 724,479 tons and if Italy
would build a like sized fleet, and if Great Britain wanted a fleet equal to
the combined French and Italian fleet, their programs would perforce be ones
of expansion rather than reduction. This would mean the failure of the con-
ference. The only possible solution was a security pact which would allow
France to feel safe without building a large fleet. The conference was well
acquainted with the American stand on alliances, and therefore a compact was
proposed that would not bind the United States except as a consultant. Our
delegates, naturally, refused. The Times reported that

the American delegation had reached the unanimous opinion that the United
States will not take part in any consultative pact in connection with the
proposed London Treaty.

The argument was that at some future time our consultation promise might be
construed to mean military aid as it had for England in 1914, when likewise
there had been no military agreements. Surprisingly, on March 26, our dele-

66 Proceedings, p. 3. Also Documents of the London Naval Conference,

67 Ibid., 109ff. Also Proceedings, 49-55.

68 Ibid., 519. Also Proceedings, 55-56.

gates changed their decision, but even this brought about no solution.70 France would sign no pact calling for parity with Italy; Italy would sign no pact that did not call for parity with France. The final outcome was to allow France and Italy to do what they chose about cruiser limitation. A happy way out of the tangle for Britain was the provision incorporated in Article XXI of the final Treaty which allowed Great Britain to build up her cruiser strength if trouble in the Mediterranean broke out because of the expansion of the French and Italian fleets.

The problem of the ratio between the United States and Japan was settled amicably. At first Japan insisted on the ratio 10:7, but since neither the British dominions nor the United States would agree to this, a compromise was finally arranged. The United States was to have eighteen cruisers (180,000 tons) while Japan was to have twelve cruisers (108,400 tons) making the ratio very close to 10:6 in tonnage.71 In return for this concession, Japan was given parity in submarine tonnage as well as a higher ratio in destroyers.72

The British wanted a new settlement about battleships. According to the Washington Conference capital ship replacement was to begin in 1931. In a ten-year period both the United States and Great Britain were to replace fifteen capital ships and Japan, nine. Since the prospect of spending at least forty million dollars on each of these capital ships was not pleasing to the taxpayers of the countries concerned, it was not too difficult to reach an agreement about limitation of battleships. The British government wanted

70 Ibid., March 27, 1930.

71 Senate Document 197, 34.

72 Congressional Record 73, July 15, 1930, 162-63.
to abolish them entirely, but this the Americans were not willing to agree to.\textsuperscript{73}

The Terms of the Treaty

One clause of the treaty called for a new naval holiday in the building of capital ships. No capital ship was to be replaced until after 1936, which meant a huge saving of money. In addition some ships were to be scrapped immediately. Great Britain was to scrap five, the United States, three, and Japan, one. As a result of this scrapping the United States would reach parity with Great Britain in 1930 instead of in 1936, as was planned in the Washington treaty. A great amount of adverse criticism came from some of our naval experts about this matter. It was said that the large ships were the backbone of the navy, the "infantry of the sea".\textsuperscript{74} Senator Hale, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs gave the opinion of the navy group as follows:

If the battleships are to be later replaced, and God forbid that statesman diplomacy should ever bring about such a calamity over the heads of naval opinion as not to replace them, the postponement of replacement is analogous to the postponement of the payment of a note and nothing more.\textsuperscript{75}

Another clause of the treaty gave a more definite definition of an aircraft carrier than was given in the Washington Treaty. The Washington Treaty defined an aircraft vessel as a war vessel more than 10,000 tons, especially fitted for carrying aircraft. If this were interpreted literally, it would be possible to build any number of 10,000 ton aircraft carriers.

\textsuperscript{73} Proceedings, 98.

\textsuperscript{74} New York Times, January 17, 1930.

\textsuperscript{75} Congressional Record, Vol. 73, July 11, 1930, 96.
without violating the treaty.\textsuperscript{76} The London Treaty took care of this point. It defined an aircraft carrier as any surface vessel, whatever its displacement, that was specially designed for carrying aircraft. The smaller vessels were limited to carrying guns of six-and-one-tenth-inch calibre, while the carriers of more than 10,000 tons were allowed to carry ten eight-inch guns.\textsuperscript{77}

The London treaty also provided that the decks of all new capital ships, twenty-five percent of all the cruisers and all the destroyers, could be fitted with landing-on and flying-off platforms, if the governments wished to do so.

The United States, Great Britain, and Japan signed a limitation agreement on cruisers, the conclusions of which can be shown clearly in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cruiser Tonnage Adopted at London, 1930</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Great Britain</th>
<th>Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large cruisers (tonnage)</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>146,800</td>
<td>108,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cruisers (tonnage)</td>
<td>143,500</td>
<td>192,200</td>
<td>100,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (tonnage)</td>
<td>323,500</td>
<td>339,000</td>
<td>208,850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sacrifice of the three 10,000 ton cruisers demanded by the naval board drew roars of protest. Rear Admiral Hilary P. Jones in a speech to the Foreign Relations Committee argued that the 10,000 ton eight-inch gun ships were necessary because of the problem of long communications with which the United States is confronted and that this type of vessel possessed offensive

\textsuperscript{76} Articles IX, X, Washington Treaty.

and defensive characteristics that were necessary for such operations.

Great Britain with its bases,

he added,

would be supreme if the United States had all its cruisers in six-inch guns. The nearer that condition was approached, the more powerful Great Britain became, relatively, and the weaker the United States became. 78

Admiral Pratt, on the other hand, commended the treaty. He said he would like ships with a variety of gun calibre. He said:

I admit the eight-inch gun is a better shooting gun and I want some. I want absolute equality of fighting strength in action, or a little better, if I can get it. The eighteen-inch gun is better than the fifteen-inch, and the fifteen-inch is better than the twelve.....But you also need sixes.

If we had only eight-inch gun cruisers, they probably would have to keep outside the fleet in action, as they must be protected. They are not like battleships in regard to armor. 79

"As an expert," asked Senator Borah,"is this treaty satisfactory to you?" 80

"Yes, sir; it suits me. And when I say that, I remember that, if we had to fight, I'd have to do the fighting." 81

To analyze the sacrifice, let us compare the proposal of the General Board asked for twenty-one eight-inch gun cruisers totalling 210,000 tons. The treaty authorized eighteen totalling 180,000 tons. The difference is 30,000 tons. The General Board asked for six-inch gun cruisers totalling 105,500. The difference is 38,000 tons. The argument is whether the United


80 Ibid., 71.

81 Ibid., 71.
States should have 38,000 tons in six-inch gun cruisers or 30,000 tons in eight-inch gun cruisers. It seemed a minor matter.

From the conflicting opinions given it is clear that both the six-inch gun cruisers and the eight-inch cruisers have their particular uses. Answering the senators, Admiral Pratt said:

The eight-inch gun is a corker where you have clear weather and high visibility, but much of the time you have fog and all sorts of trouble, perhaps, ahead of you, and under those circumstances I would prefer the six-inch gun to the eight-inch gun.\(^{82}\)

To summarize, the six-inch gun cruiser is good for close-up work in resisting attacks from destroyers and submarines. Its guns can be fired twice as quickly as the eight-inch guns, they can be loaded by hand, and twelve guns can be mounted on each cruiser.

The eight-inch gun will shoot a greater distance, and in clear weather the eight-inch gun cruiser has the advantage in its longer range, but in thick weather when fighting is at closer quarters, the six-inch gun cruiser is better. Senator Reed stated that there had never been a shot fired in a naval combat at a greater range than twenty-thousand yards and a six-inch gun can shoot that distance.\(^{83}\) This may of course be changed since airplanes can locate the enemy vessels for the larger cruisers.

Whatever the value of the two ships, our delegates were amply justified in accepting the compromise which made an agreement with Great Britain possible.

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\(^{82}\) Congressional Record, Vol. 73, July 11, 1930, 105.

\(^{83}\) Congressional Record, 73, 105.
In the destroyer class, Japan was given a higher ratio by the London Treaty. The United States and Great Britain were each allowed 150,000 tons and Japan 105,500, a ratio of 10:10:7.03. This meant a substantial reduction for the United States that was satisfactory, since we had built too many destroyers during the World War.

It was more difficult to settle the submarine differences. The British view was given by Mr. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty. He argued that submarines were wholly offensive weapons, whose warfare methods were horrible, and whose living conditions for the crews were exceedingly bad. He advocated abolition of the submarine, although it was impossible to convince the French and Japanese delegates that this plan was feasible. M. Leygues, French Minister of Marine, gave the opposite view as did Admiral Takarabe of Japan. The Japanese delegate argued that the submarine was an "appropriate medium of defense as a scout and an instrument to ward off an enemy attack in the adjacent waters of a country".

In an effort to humanize the submarine warfare methods, however, Article XXII was added to the Treaty. It reads as follows:

The following are accepted as established rules of international law:

1. In their action with regard to merchant ships submarines must conform to the rules of international law to which surface vessels are subject.

2. In particular, except in case of persistent refusal to stop on being duly summoned, or of active resistance to visit and search, a

84 Senate Document 197, 34.
85 Proceedings, 78.
86 Ibid., 84ff.
87 Senate Document 141, 30. Article XXII.
warship whether surface vessel or submarine boat, may not sink or render incapable of navigation a merchant vessel without having first placed passengers, crew, and ship's papers in a place of safety. For this purpose the ship's boats are not regarded as a place of safety unless the safety of the passengers and crew is assured in the existing sea and weather conditions, by the proximity of land, or the presence of another vessel which is in a position to take them on board.

The high contracting parties invite all the powers to express their assent to the above rules.88

Japan was the master of the submarine tonnage situation, since she had already a large tonnage built up. To prevail on Japan to make some reduction in her tonnage, she was given a ratio of 10:10:10. This was included in the three-power limitation agreement.

It is interesting to compare the results gained by the London Conference in limiting the tonnage of auxiliary ships with the desires of Mr. Hughes in 1921. At Washington Mr. Hughes had suggested a total auxiliary tonnage of 540,000 tons for the United States and Great Britain and 324,000 tons for Japan. At London, the United States was limited to 526,200 tons, not very much less, and Great Britain was limited to 541,700, not very much more. If Mr. Hughes had been successful, he would have been hailed as a master diplomat and statesman. At London, no one was given much credit, since drastic reductions had been hoped for and not gained. It was only in the case of Japan that the figures of Mr. Hughes did not closely match the London Treaty figures. Japan had received a substantial increase from the Hughes figure of 324,000 tons to the London figure of 367,000 tons.

In the Senate the fight over ratification was prolonged by Senators Johnson of California, McKellar of Tennessee, and Hale of Maine. At this

88 Senate Document 197, 40. Also Congressional Record, 73, July 15, 1930, 162.
time, the President’s wisdom in choosing two senators as delegates became apparent, for Senators Robinson and Reed fought ably in the defense of the treaty. They denied that the United States had lost any of its standing as a naval power by pointing out that in 1930, Japan’s cruiser strength was more than double that of this country, and with that of England still greater. The opponents to the treaty often resorted to the radio to arouse the public against the pact. On June 25, 1930, Senator McKellar named the following argument against ratification in a radio speech:

It gives Japan the absolute control of the East, and let me say right here what this means to the American people is shown by the fact that our trade with the East amounts to more than two billion dollars a year.\(^89\)

W. T. Stone, of the Foreign Policy Association, praised the pact and the Japanese saying, "I take my hat off to the Japanese government in this treaty."\(^90\) He pointed out that, with Japan’s military traditions, it took great courage for Tokyo to approve the compromise agreement worked out by the civilian delegates at London. With this Senator Moses took an opposite view. He believed that "The treaty hamstrings us in the Pacific by its unjustified and unfair increase in the ratio of Japan."\(^91\)

President Hoover called the Senate in special session early in July to force through ratification. The battle still went on. Senator Copeland of New York, opposed the treaty because it made insecure both American possessions in the East; he also favored the establishment of a naval base at Dutch

\(^{89}\)Congressional Record, Senate, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Volume 72, part II, 11753.

\(^{90}\)New York Times, June 29, 1930.

\(^{91}\)Congressional Record, 72, part II, 12047.
Harbor on the island of Unalaska in the Aleutian chain. Senator Reed objected to this on the ground that such a step would be an unfriendly act against Japan, to which Mr. Copeland replied that the construction of the naval base furnished a military advantage against Japan, which nation had won practically everything at London. Considering the difference in actual naval construction and the difference in coast line and commerce lanes which had to be protected, the New York Senator agreed with Rear Admiral Hilary P. Jones who said: "I believe that the ratio with Japan in reality amounts to 5:5 plus." 92

Senator Hale denounced the treaty in these words: "Never in the course of American diplomacy....have our interests been sacrificed as they have been in this wretched Japanese fiasco." 93

Finally, to hasten the end debate was limited to a certain time for each man. On July 21, 1930, the vote was taken which showed fifty-eight yeas, twenty-nine not voting, and nine nays.

The accomplishments of the London Treaty were briefly these: (1) Great Britain agreed to accept naval parity with the United States, (2) the holiday on the building of capital ships was extended to 1936, and (3) limits within a system of ratios were set to the building of auxiliary craft.

In the decade 1921 to 1931, what may be called a legislative system of dealing with naval armaments was brought into existence. The great gain from the Washington and London Treaties was not the certainty of immediate naval reductions and the lowering of costs, but the demonstration that the armaments of a nation are the subject which can be properly considered by an international gathering—that rivalries can be settled by diplomacy.

92 Congressional Record, Senate, 71st Congress, Special Session, Volume 73, 67.
93 Ibid., 21.
CHAPTER IV

FORCES INFLUENCING THE GOVERNMENT IN DETERMINING

THE UNITED STATES NAVAL POLICY
The Opposing Forces

All through this period of developing our naval policy there were two distinct schools of thought. One important section paid high tribute to the policy of abandoning competition in naval armament. This group included those citizens, said Hon. James V. McClintic,

who take into consideration the economic and financial conditions of this country and the various nations of the world, keeping in mind that the ultimate object of all the best citizens should be the maintenance of peace with other nations, also keeping in mind that should the nation be so unfortunate as to become involved in a war that the kind of preparedness we should have would be the newer, more modern kinds of defense that any nation will need to be victorious.\(^1\)

The second group included those people, who believed that our government had made a grievous blunder in surrendering our potential supremacy at sea and in sacrificing actual tonnage for the sake of parity with Great Britain. Representative McClintic described this group thus:

Those that can see a war cloud in the middle of every sunshiny day and who continuously try to take advantage of every opportunity to involve this country in great expenditures for the kind of preparedness that is believed by many to be useless in time of war.\(^2\)

This division of our citizens into two classes had been brought about to some extent by our economic development and our emergence into the world of commerce and finance. Those who had made foreign investments knew that their investments could be destroyed by war and it behooved them to advocate peace. Business houses who wished to sell their goods abroad, knew that this trade would come to a standstill in time of war, and, therefore, they too were

\(^1\)Congressional Record, February 15, 1929, quoted in Congressional Digest VIII, 248.

\(^2\)Ibid.
friends of peace. Unconsciously, perhaps, the world's industrial and financial leaders shrunk from an unseen danger—a danger well expressed in the words of Charles A. Beard:

"Bolshevism waits around the corner for gentlemen who light-heartedly put the torch to modern civilization."  

There is no doubt that international business had given respectability to the movement for world friendship. This group advocated a small navy.

Both groups of citizens concede that a navy is necessary, since all true Americans want their country defended, but the difficulty has been to determine how large that navy should be. In a clever article entitled "Our Confusion over National Defense. Shall we Listen to the Pacifists or Admirals?", Mr. Beard has written very amusingly about this topic. He claimed that neither side gave a satisfactory answer as neither group could decide exactly what should be defended. Let us examine the methods used by the two groups in their attempts to influence their government's policy.

The Church and Peace Organizations

The advocates of peace believed that friendship and good will among nations would do away with the need for large war machines. Church groups, which had long been associated with peace movements in this country had been greatly encouraged by the disarmament movement and had given it vigorous support. They organized foundations with the help of a few far-sighted


philanthropists which made possible research and peace effort upon a salary basis. There was the "American Peace Society" with its headquarters at Washington and affiliated with all the State Peace Societies. This society had some very good workers including Dr. Trueblood, Edwin and Lucia Ames Mead, Charles E. Beals, William J. Bryan and Woodrow Wilson. Then there was the "New York Peace Society" with Andrew Carnegie as its head. This society, also, had illustrious members—Fred Lynch, Samuel Dutton, William Short, J. Seligman, Untermyer, McAdoo, Villard, Strauss, and Gould, just to mention a few. One million dollars, one-third of Ginn's wealth went to endow permanent peace foundations and Carnegie gave ten million to the Carnegie International Peace Society and two million to the Church Peace Union.5

In the summer of 1929, Captain Dudley W. Knox, United States Navy, retired, made a serious accusation against the Federal Council of Churches. He charged that the Federal Council was influenced by foreign propaganda when they tried to prevent additional naval building and that they were financed by Sir Henry Lunn, an English philanthropist. The Church Council emphatically denied the charges and invited Captain Knox to inspect their books at his own convenience. Dr. C. S. Macfarland, general secretary of the council, declared: "Not one dollar has ever come from Sir Henry Lunn, or from any fund created by him, or from any British source, or from any organization with any foreign membership."6

The Church Council received a commendation from the Secretary of


State:

"If the peace organizations and the churches are guilty of British propaganda, they are in harmony with the leadership of the highest officials in the United States government."

The plan of the Peace Societies was to educate the public in internationalism by sending ministers, university men, newspaper writers, teachers and other praise-worthy people to spread good will among the nations of the earth. They believed that if the peoples of the earth knew and understood each other, there would be no need for fear and suspicion. They approved of peace pacts and treaties and published documents about the costs of armies and navies. They tried to prove that great navies and great armies had never prevented great wars.

At one time arrangements had been made for eighty boys and girls around the earth to greet one another over the radio. One of them declared: "I think we can say the air all around the earth to-day is full of good-will greetings." 7

On October 21, 1931, a banquet was given at the Waldorf Hotel and attended by many well-known personages. The headlines in the New York Times describing it were, "Friendship Dinner. Goodwill, not Military Might". 7

In the article itself we read in part:

At ten o'clock the room was darkened in honor of Edison, and a pianist played softly "Lead Kindly Light". Then upspoke Sir William Robertson, chief of staff of the British army during a part of the World War, and said: "I want to submit now that another way can be found by which nations can live together without having periodical recourse as in the

past to butchery and barbarism. Give a will to peace in any way equal to the will to war which nations were too frequently taught to cultivate before 1914. When disputes arise, approach them in a just and friendly spirit, as gentlemen, not as brigands".8

The group that advocates a large navy include the naval officers, the patriotic organizations as the "Daughters of the American Revolution" and the Navy League, and the American commercial interests who thrive on naval construction. Naturally, people whose living is at stake will do all they can to increase naval building not decrease it. The methods they used were much more to the point.

The Naval Officers

The issue involves the pride and zeal of naval officials. They know from bitter experience that they are likely to be plunged into a war by an excited populace and still more excited politicians, and if they are not satisfactorily prepared, the result will be disastrous. They would not be human if they did not seek to secure all possible material support for any enterprise into which they may be hurled by the decisions of civilian authorities who do not have to risk their lives in combat. Besides this, naval officers have practical interests at stake; more ships, more posts, bigger ships and bigger posts, more prestige, honors, salaries, and stars. Said Congressman McClintic:

There are approximately six hundred naval officers in Washington; and all of these officers desire at some time to command a great, big, fine ship that has lovely and luxurious quarters. If I were in the Navy, to be perfectly fair and frank about it, I would want the same thing.9

8 New York Times, October 22, 1931.

9 Congressional Digest VIII, 248.
To show how the naval officers influence the increase of naval construction again we refer to Mr. McClintic:

It is known that the Navy already prepares practically all of the bills they desire enacted into law which relate to departmental matters. These are either given to the chairman or some member of the committee, who introduce same on the floor of the House; then they go back to the clerk of the committee, who refers them to the same source from which they originated, and a report is made. In many times the report is prepared ahead of the time the bill is introduced.\(^1\)

From this information it would seem that the navy officials should be able to carry through their own policies. In an interview at Geneva, when Admiral Hilary P. Jones was our delegate to the Geneva Arms Conference, September 13, 1927, he took exception to the term "big Navy Advocate as applied to naval officers and also to those members of Congress who are sincerely solicitous for the defense of our national interests".\(^2\) This white-haired, grim-visaged veteran went on to say:

There seems to be a very widespread opinion in our country that naval officers are fundamentally opposed to any movement looking to the reduction and limitation of armaments. Such an attitude of mind....is wholly unjust to naval officers and tends to discredit us in our earnest efforts to keep our national defense forces at the level that we honestly consider absolutely necessary for national security.

Nevertheless, we are anxious that that level be fixed by international agreement at the lowest point compatible with safety. We would be grossly negligent of our duty if we did not keep in mind always the defense of our country and its enormous commercial interests spread all over the seven seas, interests which now equal and soon will surpass those of other nations. We have an inalienable right to parity in naval armaments with the strongest sea power in order that we may not be placed in a position of inferiority to any nation.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) Ibid.  
\(^2\) Ibid.  
\(^3\) Ibid.
We can not doubt Admiral Jones' honesty but we can question the wisdom of sending him to the disarmament conference to agree on reduction when his opinion could not be shaken: "the navy insists that our right to equality with the strongest sea-power, in fact as well as in principle, shall be recognized sine qua non of such agreement."

Knowing that navy legislation originates with navy officials, it must necessitate these officers being very well informed. But often they were not as the following illustrates. On Thursday, April 17, 1930, Rear Admiral George H. Rock, Chief of the Bureau of Construction and Repair, appeared before the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives to support a proposition to modernize battleships. A member of the committee, Mr. Lankford, asked the Admiral if the battleships to be modernized were comparatively useless in modern warfare, to which the Admiral replied: "They are not as efficient as they should be."\(^\text{13}\)

Thereupon the following was said:

Mr. McClintic: "How many battleships did we use in the war?"

Admiral Rock: "We were ready to use all of them."

Mr. McClintic: "Did we fire a single shot from a battleship?"

Admiral Rock: "I think you are getting out of the line of my specialty. I am not a sea-going officer."

Mr. McClintic: "It is true that they did not fire a single shot in that war. Is it not true that most of them were put away in reserve?"

Admiral Rock: "There were no naval engagements on this side, but there were a good many shots fired during the last war on the other side."

Mr. McClintic: "We could have sent some battleships over there."\(^\text{13}\) Ibid.
Admiral Rock: "We did send some."

Mr. McClintic: "Battleships?"

Admiral Rock: "Yes, sir."

Mr. McClintic: "Where were they? Did they participate in any battle?"

Admiral Rock: "They were in the Grand Fleet, but whether they were in the Battle of Jutland, I do not remember."

The Chairman (Mr. Britten): "So far as that is concerned, Count von Luckner told me that the ship on which he was chief gunner went all through the battle of Jutland and never received a scratch."

The act to modernize the battleships was passed, although the information supporting it was not very expert.

At another inquiry, this time before a Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, in May, 1930, when the London Naval Treaty was up for ratification, Admiral Bristol of the Navy Board, after making it perfectly clear that he was opposed to the ratification of the treaty, went on to give his opinion about a possible war with Japan. He claimed that our interests in the Orient were great and that we ought to be prepared to defend our interests there against any power or combination of powers. He claimed that our navy should be able to wage an offensive war in Japanese waters, "on the principle that the best defense in the world is a decided offensive," and the fact that huge expenditures would be necessary did not appall him. Admiral Bristol's position was definitely imperialistic and contrary to the statement given out by President Hoover on Navy Day, October 27, 1931. The New York Times gave

14 This battle occurred in May, 1916, almost a year before the United States entered the war. Hearings before Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives, 1929-30, 2035.

15 Hearings before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May, 1930, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, 233.
the President's statement as follows:

The first necessity of our government is the maintenance of a navy so efficient and strong, that in conjunction with our army, no enemy may ever invade our country....

Ours is a force of defense, not offense. To maintain forces less than that strength is to destroy national safety; to maintain greater forces is not only economic injury to our people, but a threat against our neighbors and would be righteous cause for ill-will among them.¹⁶

Here was an example of a naval officer decidedly trying to undermine the efforts of the government in their plans for good-will between nations.

**Big Navy Propaganda**

A great number of people are connected in some way with industries that derive their profits from naval expenditure. Many are employed in the steel and armor plate manufacturing houses, in the ammunition plants and the shipyards. Some are employed by coal and oil companies who deliver their coal and oil to the ammunition houses and shipyards. Others deal in naval stores, some are merchants who thrive on the wages of the shipyard employees, and so on to any number of allied lines. All these people, in addition to the owners of the companies themselves and the investors who hope to make profits in these industries can not be expected to cooperate strongly in naval limitation. Since they advocate the opposite, they will read avidly about the naval increases that are necessary and it is surprising just how much literature of this type there actually is. In fact, whenever the question of naval limitation or any naval appropriations bill comes up for deliberation, the country is flooded with propaganda in favor of a big navy.

The Hearst papers carry daily articles about guns, tonnage, naval bases, trade routes and supremacy on the seven seas which are most impressive. The Chicago Daily Tribune, the Cincinnati Enquirer, the Seattle Times, and the St. Louis Star, to mention a few, overwhelm us with their professional knowledge.

For a time it was difficult to discover how and where this big navy propaganda originated or who financed it, but when a senatorial investigation revealed the character of the activities of Mr. W. B. Shearer at the Geneva Conference in 1927, who was a representative of shipbuilding corporations, a huge volume of testimony was produced bearing directly upon the subject of naval propaganda.17

The Shearer Case

Just who was William B. Shearer whose activities were investigated by the Senate? According to himself he was a patriotic exponent of sea power. In one of his letters he wrote:

I fight internationalism, pacifism and communism. I make many enemies and many friends. I hate pink, red, and yellow. Enthusiasts claim I am the best posted man in the United States on national defense. I claim nothing and expect less, but whatever I represent, it is all American--which seems to arouse suspicion as well as curiosity.18

Mr. Shearer won most of his notoriety through his work at the Geneva Conference where he mingled with newspaper men and naval advisers. Because of his forceful and evidently agreeable personality he frequently dominated the conversation in hotel lobbies and press rooms. His knowledge of marine matters appealed to journalists in search of a lead and he periodically

17 "Alleged Activities at the Geneva Conference", Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Naval Affairs, United States Senate, 71st Congress, 1st session, pursuant to Sen. Res. 114, Washington, 1930. Here cited as Senate Document
handed them mimeographed information sheets containing facts and interpretations, which were intended to be hostile to the success of the conference. Later, when he brought suit against three ship-building companies asking for the sum of $257,655 which he alleged was the balance due him for services rendered, it was discovered who his employers were.19

The fact that the three companies sued had been engaged in building United States warships, and that Mr. Shearer had been an active opponent of disarmament roused the attention of President Hoover who on September 6, 1929, issued a ringing statement calling upon the companies for an explanation, which read in part as follows:

This propagandist has, during the past few years, organized zealous support for increased armament and has been a severe critic of all efforts of our government to secure international agreement for the reduction of naval arms, which include activities at the Geneva Conference and opposition to the movement which I have initiated in the past three months. A part of this propaganda has been directed to create international distrust and hate....I am making this statement publicly so that there can be no misapprehension of my determination that our present international negotiations shall not be interfered with from such sources and through such methods.20

The vigorous and wholesale denunciation of the Shearer activities from the American press was "undoubtedly due to the specially dangerous character of his meddling", wrote the Nation and it further declared:

He was playing not merely with profits, but with countless human lives. Men can hardly embark on a more important enterprise than an international conference to reduce the horrors of war, and to poison the atmosphere of such a gathering is as serious a crime as anyone can commit.21

19 Senate Document, 662.


21 The Nation, 129, September 25, 1929, 316.
Analysis of Shearer Propaganda

In analyzing the information made public at the Shearer investigation, and recorded in the "Alleged Activities at the Geneva Conference", Hearings before a Sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, 1930, it is possible to divide Mr. Shearer's activities into four different types. The first was his promotion work in connection with merchant-marine and navy legislation in the fall of 1926. One of his employers, Mr. Wakeman, of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation testified that Mr. Shearer "was to write articles for the press, to make speeches, and to supplement the work the Shipping Board was doing in connection with the merchant marine". Another employer, Mr. Palen, of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, gave the following testimony:

After making one more address in New York, he (speaking about Shearer) expects to spend some time in Washington after the opening of Congress in order to get information on the probable attitude of Congress and the administration toward appropriations and backing for the navy and merchant marine, after which he will start on his speaking tour, and intends to cover the entire country, speaking before gatherings organized by the American Legion, the chamber of commerce and similar organizations that will cooperate with him in getting the necessary audiences.

Mr. Shearer himself testified that his contract called upon him to use my best efforts in the interest of the three-cruiser bill which was pending in Congress, as you know, and under the law unless sufficient money was appropriated the bill would die in June.

The second enterprise Mr. Shearer carried out for the associated

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22 Senate Document, 133ff.
23 Ibid., 134.
24 Ibid., 635.
25 Ibid., 465.
industries was his efforts to sabotage the Geneva Conference in 1927. For this undertaking he was paid $25,000. His employers were very hazy in their testimony as to just what Mr. Shearer was expected to do in Geneva. They claimed that his sole purpose was to have been "observing and reporting", but they denied that they had in view any kind of propaganda bearing on a big navy for the United States. They also testified that very few reports had come to their notice and to those that did they gave only a cursory glance. That may or may not be true, but they should have kept track of their employee's doings. They would have learned that he was very active in entertaining, giving out news stories, and advocating views favorable to the development of a large American navy.26

In 1928, he was reengaged to spread propaganda for the mercantile legislation before our Congress;27 and in 1929 "during the fifteen cruiser fight".28 This was after Mr. Bardo had sent him a formal note of dismissal, explaining that anything he had done in addition to "observing" at Geneva had been on his own responsibility.29 Mr. Bardo was one of the gentlemen who rehired Shearer in 1928.

A third type of propaganda was the sending out of propaganda papers under the patronage of the Republican National Committee Publicity Bureau. For this work funds were provided by Mr. Wilder of the American Brown Boveri

26 Ibid., 656ff.
27 Ibid., 652.
28 Ibid., 473.
29 Ibid., 654.
Company, of which the New York Shipbuilding Company was a branch.\textsuperscript{30} These pieces of literature were planned to discredit the patriotism and intelligence of peace advocates, to promote the demand for a big navy and merchant marine, to capture the Irish vote by criticism of Great Britain, and to take the towns, particularly Boston, which had shipbuilding yards.

To quote Mr. Shearer:

I went to Boston and the chairman, or the national committeeman, Mr. Liggett, who was running the Republican campaign in Boston, had been notified...that I was coming, and I presented myself and was received very graciously. I called on one or two of the newspapers. They had been notified that I would be there also. I went to all the Republican papers and all the Democratic papers, and they were fair. They each gave me very good publicity on the navy and merchant marine, and the fact that Boston was a seaport, and all the rest of it. They were interested naturally in the merchant marine. Then I went over to the Charlestown Navy Yard....I discussed the building of ships and the fact that ships would be built in Boston, possibly in navy yards. Bethlehem have a plant there at Fore River, and we have a navy yard at Boston....So I got a considerable amount of publicity.\textsuperscript{31}

Mr. Shearer's fourth type of propaganda was his work under Mr. Hearst from whom he received $2000 a month. He wrote articles, made speeches, organized the patriotic societies, principally against the League of Nations and the World Court.\textsuperscript{32} He declared:

So I immediately started to send out my bulletins to the patriotic organizations of the United States and they immediately started sending in their resolutions opposing the World Court.

As soon as the investigation began, all his employers and associates left him to his own resources. Mr. Shearer lamented to Senator Allen:

The minute you called this investigating committee, all my connections, social and otherwise, closed. I found myself walking the streets talking to myself.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 682.
\item \textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 514ff.
\item \textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 540.
\item \textsuperscript{33}Ibid., 540.
\end{itemize}
He also testified about his activities with the American Legion:

The former national commander of the American Legion--Commander Spafford, formerly of the United States navy, wrote a letter to John Thomas Taylor, who is the attorney representing the Legion here, saying: "You had better get Bill Shearer down there to post the new commander, McNutt, who is to make a speech at the Mayflower Hotel before the Sojourners." With that letter I came down to Washington, and I entered Commander McNutt's apartment and was with him until three in the morning, educating him, we will say, or posting him, or whatever you wish.... Therefore, I was pronounced by the national commander of the American Legion as the best-posted man in the United States on national defense. I have that letter.... The next night Commander McNutt made his famous speech. I had given him all the data that I thought was necessary to carry on the policy of the American Legion. When I returned to New York, I called up Mr. Willicomb, Mr. Hearst's private secretary, and said I had received a letter from Commander McNutt expressing himself not only for the navy, but opposed to the World Court, and if Mr. Hearst thought it was right, I believed that the patriotic organizations would take the same stand as the American Legion.34

Mr. Shearer's complaint filed in his suit against the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, and the American Brown Boveri Electric Company, stated his activities very precisely. To quote:

Services rendered and performed by plaintiff relating and with respect to the shipbuilding industry, the business of shipbuilding, and the increase thereof, as affecting the business and financial interests and welfare of the defendants; service as representative of the defendants at Washington, D. C., Geneva, Switzerland, New York City and other places in connection with the matters above referred to; the preparation and distribution of literature, data, and information relating to the above mentioned and other matters; interviews and conferences with various individuals, including public officials and representatives of the press; the preparation and delivery of public addresses; the organization and conduct of a publicity campaign for the benefit of and aid of the business and financial interests of the defendants; consulting and advising with the defendants in relation to the above and other matters affecting their business and financial welfare; and generally aiding and assisting the defendants in the conduct and promotion of their business affairs.35

34 Ibid., 539.
35 Ibid., 662.
The testimony given at the investigation proved without a doubt that the three shipbuilding companies that were sued, at least, were guilty of trying to obstruct the work at the Geneva Conference, and of influencing federal legislation concerned with cruiser and merchant-marine bills. Their propaganda consisted of the employment of "experts", publishing political articles in the newspapers and magazines, and giving lectures and addresses before patriotic societies, civic organizations, the American Legion, and chambers of commerce.36

In explaining how he got in touch with the shipbuilding concerns that later hired him, Mr. Shearer testified:

I was approached by a man you have all heard of in his fight against the communists. He was then editor of the New York Commercial, a man by the name of Major Charles, of Military Intelligence, and, incidentally, the executive secretary of the American Defense Society, whom I know very well. They follow up the communist trend in this country.....He works very close to Military Intelligence. They incidentally gave me contacts with some people in Europe.....He introduced me to the subeditor ....(who) was acting as vice-president of a club called the Propeller Club of New York, which carries on the marine dinners. Once a year they give a great dinner to the entire marine industry.....That is the way I became the speaker of the marine dinner at the Waldorf.37

Possibly Mr. Shearer got the idea of tagging the odious name "communist" on to opponents of naval expansion from his friend Major Charles. Anyway, he used it. When he was in the employ of the shipbuilding corporations he wrote a masterpiece of propaganda with the title "Imperialistic for Peace" in which he definitely associated opposition to navy expansion with communism, conspiracy, and revolution.38

Of course, he could not mark with the red stigma, all advocates of

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36 Ibid., 635.
37 Ibid., 500.
38 Ibid., 599-600.
peace, as Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, Charles Evans Hughes, Frank B. Kellogg, and Henry L. Stimson; although he did go so far as to say that "our country was betrayed by Charles Evans Hughes" at the Washington Conference.39 He conceded that some were merely deluded or uninformed.

An interesting bit of information brought to light in the investigation was that Mr. Shearer had never filed an income tax return even though he had received about fifty-thousand dollars from his employers in 1926 and 1927. He treated it all as expenses, not income. "I was simply spending money to carry on a publicity campaign...."40

Robert S. Allen writing for The Nation magazine has given a vivid picture of the "fantastic tale". Of the executives who were called to testify he wrote:

As if they had rehearsed it beforehand, these mighty figures of America's shipbuilding business, the builders of the nation's merchant marine and fighting craft, all on the witness stand strove to portray themselves, apparently to avoid a far blacker suspicion, in the roles of fools and victims.41

There was no record on the books of the company of Mr. Shearer's employment or of his salary. It had all been paid through their lawyer, Henry C. Hunter, who did it as a personal favor. Apparently, too, Mr. Shearer had been hired without any investigation as to his character or fitness. In testifying about this Mr. Bardo, then president of the New York Shipbuilding Company, which helped to finance Mr. Shearer's undertakings, said, "I think

39 Ibid., 431.
40 Ibid., 545 f.
41 Robert S. Allen, Mr. Shearer Likes a Big Navy", The Nation, 129, October 9, 1929, 378-79.
my ordinary business judgment was disarmed by the familiarity Mr. Shearer showed with his subject."\textsuperscript{42}

"I was jazzed off my feet on that proposition" confessed Mr. Wakeman, vice-president of the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation, in his explanation of why no inquiries had been made about Mr. Shearer.\textsuperscript{43}

Mr. Allen was rather sarcastic in his report of Mr. Schwab's "pious testimony". Charles M. Schwab was Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and according to Mr. Allen he had

joyfully announced his willingness to scrap his vast armor plate and shipbuilding plants to bring peace on earth,... and in the next breath, admitted that although it had been brought to his attention that Shearer had been employed for such work ("interference") by his company he had done nothing about it except to remark that it was "most unwise".\textsuperscript{44}

In concluding his article Mr. Allen wrote:

The committee saw fit to give the shipbuilders the "break" on the story,... The muddling and inconsequential examinations of the witnesses by the chairman, Senator Shortridge, and the casual questions of Senator Allen, certainly lent color to the widespread comment in Washington that they were not too anxious to carry on vigorously.\textsuperscript{45}

\textbf{Mr. Shearer's Relations with Naval Officers}

The Senate Committee did not investigate what relations Mr. Shearer, as agent of shipbuilding concerns had with responsible officers of the United

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 378. Also Senate Document, 29f.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 378. Also Senate Document, 149.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 378. Also Senate Document, 93.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 379.
States Navy, but Mr. Shearer was quite frank in telling all. He declared that he had secured from the Navy Department a "more or less confidential" document prepared by it, dealing with navy statistics;\(^46\) that he had made contacts with "possibly ten or twelve admirals, and possibly a dozen or more captains, and every commander and lieutenant commander and lieutenant in the Navy Department".\(^47\) He explained that he had got information from or at least talked "to every naval officer other than Admiral Jones" while at Geneva\(^48\) and that Douglas M. Robinson, Assistant Secretary of the Navy knew by whom he was employed.\(^49\) All this was not proven, but it is a fact, at least, that the chief of the Naval Intelligence Office, considered him important enough to wire the American ambassador in Rome that Mr. Shearer would arrive at a certain time, and Ambassador Fletcher and the American attache received him and discussed the Mediterranean system with him.\(^50\)

There was of course, propaganda carried on not connected with Mr. Shearer, but the circumstances connected with his case were so flagrant, and the proof so conclusive that it has served well to illustrate how powerful naval propaganda was.

\(^46\) *Senate Document*, 498.

\(^47\) *Ibid.*, 499.


\(^49\) *Ibid.*, 471.

Moving Pictures as Propaganda

Merle Curti has called the movies a "blessing to the advocates of a big navy", and since such a large number of our citizens are movie enthusiasts, this type of propaganda would be sure to reach many more people than any other sort. Besides the newsreels showing the sailors and marines in their immaculate and attractive uniforms, there were many feature pictures romanticizing war. The government gave considerable aid in allowing pictures to be made of West Point and Annapolis, etc. Ten percent of all the pictures produced between 1920 and 1928 were war pictures with startling titles as "Tell it to the Marines" and "Hell's Angels".51

The Montauk Point Case

Representative Fred A. Britten, chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, was involved in this case of propaganda sponsored by the Transoceanic Corporation, which had been organized by Clinton Bardo and Lawrence Wilder, employers of Shearer, and the Montauk Point Real Estate Company. Britten arranged that the Atlantic fleet sail into the waters of Montauk Point bay in the summer of 1931, rather than going to Newport. Why should the fleet sail into this bay? The officers and the men did not like it. There was nothing to do at Montauk Point for it was really just an out-of-the-way village about 160 miles from New York. Britten gave as his reason that he wanted to "revive the patriotism" in the youth of Long Island by a

view of our majestic fleet. It seemed that Frederick J. Libby, of the National Council for the Prevention of War, had been making pacifist speeches on Long Island and Mr. Britten wanted to counteract this propaganda.

There were many who did not believe that Mr. Britten was only prompted by patriotism for it was discovered that he was a stockholder in the Montauk Point Development Corporation and also owned three and a half acres of land in Montauk.

The Montauk Point Development Corporation and the Transoceanic Corporation had great plans to use the bay as a port for ocean liners. By using this port the trip across the Atlantic could be shortened by twelve hours and these corporations planned to run a line of four-day vessels across the Atlantic, if they could get a substantial loan from the public treasury. The United States Shipping Board refused to grant them aid and they were left in an embarrassing financial state. Something needed to be done and fortunately for them, Mr. Britten could do something spectacular about it, since he was chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs.

H. K. Fleming discussed this situation in *The Nation* and he quoted Mr. Britten as saying that "Montauk Bay had unlimited possibilities". To prove to those people who thought the bay too shallow for a port of entry, the Congressman promised to have

a practical demonstration enacted by the United States navy. As chairman of the Committee of Naval Affairs I will guarantee to the sceptical minds that they will see one of the United States fleets using the bay....and when they see the huge battleships anchored in the bay they will agree with my contentions.52

52 H. K. Fleming, "Admirals See the Point", *The Nation*, 133, September 2, 1931, 228-29.
When the fleet did sail into this bay the following summer Britten's promise was remembered. No wonder his patriotism was under fire in the newspapers. It was preposterous to use the navy to popularize any money-making scheme or private citizens.

The Navy League

The Navy League is an association of citizens whose main purpose is to influence governmental policy. It was founded in 1902 to build up the navy, maintain its efficiency, and enlist popular support, all of which is perfectly legitimate. It insists that it is guided only by patriotism, and that it is working for a cause that is sacred to the overwhelming majority of American citizens—preparation for the protection of their heritage against foreign aggression; but, when it is discovered that the League is connected with those directly interested in the manufacture of war materials, its sincerity can be doubted. 53

The list of founders is not only impressive, it is enlightening. The Navy League Journal listed eighteen men and one corporation as "founders". The corporation was the Midvale Steel Company, makers of armor plate, with the United States Government their valued customer. Among the individual founders were Charles M. Schwab of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation; J. P. Morgan, of the United States Steel Corporation, controlling the Carnegie Steel Company; Colonel R. M. Thompson, of the International Nickel Company; B. F. Tracy, Secretary of the Navy under President Harrison, who later be-

came attorney for the Carnegie Company and the Harvey Steel Company; George Westinghouse, of wide affiliations; Clement A. Griscom, director of the United States Steel Corporation, the Cramp Ship and Engine Building Company; and S. S. Palmer, a director of the Lackawanna Steel Company.54

It is hard to believe that these men, who would directly profit from large appropriations for the navy, were actuated only by patriotism. It would be easier to place faith in the League if they were allied only with individuals and interests who received no financial benefits from its work and propaganda.

In 1930, the Navy League was opposed to the London Treaty. To quote from a news report:

A smashing attack on the London Naval Treaty was fired by the Navy League of the United States yesterday on the eve of the special session called by President Hoover to consider the Pact. Heretofore the League, reflecting the viewpoint of the high command of the American Navy, has withheld judgment on the treaty, merely urging that its consideration be postponed until next winter to allow the American people an opportunity to study it. The statement yesterday, however, issued by Walter Bruce Howe, chairman of the board, ripped into the treaty as jeopardizing American national security.55

Defeated in its efforts to prevent the ratification of the Pact, the League then turned its attention to propaganda designed to induce the United States to build up to the limits set by the document. In relation to this it is interesting to note that the British Navy League were in accord with our Navy League. In a cable dispatch from London, October 20, 1930, we read in the New York Tribune:

Strongly worded views concerning the present attempts to limit sea armaments are expressed in a statement sent to the newspapers of London

54 Navy League Journal, February 1904, 32.
55 Washington Herald, July 7, 1930
to-night by the (British) Navy League on the eve of Trafalgar Day.... "To Nelson", it says, "the pacifism that is fashionable to-day would have been as inconceivable as the pathetic trust in treaties unsupported by force.... It is the aim of the (British) Navy League, in days when the strength of the national navy has become a subject of political bargaining, to strive to keep alive the spirit which created and held our vast empire—the spirit that Nelson embodied. War is always hateful, but an empire dependent on the sea and unprepared to defend its vital arteries will sooner or later be dishonored and dismembered." ⑤6

From this it is learned that the British Navy League also proposes to demand a navy strong enough to perform a major operation in any waters of the world—and triumph over all possible foes. The logical interpretation from this would be that all nations build up their navies to overtop all others. But what an impossible situation!

President Hoover did not trust the propaganda agencies during preparations for the London Conference. According to the New York Evening Post, the government had warned American societies, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, that their alleged connection with the anti-disarmament agencies will be ruthlessly investigated by the Department of Justice should they attempt to interfere with proceedings in London. All "big navy" propaganda agencies in the United States are said to have been similarly warned....To the shipbuilding interests which employed Shearer it has been intimated that President Hoover has legal power to withhold further contracts from private shipyards and that the President will not hesitate to exercise his power at the slightest sign of defeatist agitation. Finally, the United States navy itself has been reminded that the President is commander-in-chief and that his decision regarding future policy must override the opinions of admirals.⑤7

Whether this report was accurate or not, for a time at least, war ship builders were extremely wary about exerting themselves against the disarmament movement at London.

⑤6 New York Tribune, October 21, 1930.

⑤7 New York Evening Post, November 22, 1929.
The Hoover Naval League Battle

Training its heavy guns on the White House, the Navy League drops three screaming shells at the President's feet: "Abysmal ignorance!" "Starving the Navy!" "Bigger and bloodier wars!" The President answers, "Untruth and distortion of fact!" "Indirect campaign of misinformation."

Thus began an article in the Literary Digest entitled "Hits and Duds in the Hoover Navy League Fight".

The trouble between the President and the Navy League began when President Hoover requested the navy to cut its budget in the autumn of 1931. The Navy League issued a vitriolic attack upon the President's proposals and upon him personally, in a fourteen page statement issued by Mr. Gardiner.

"The entire statement" declared the New York Herald Tribune correspondent, giving us the high lights of it, pointedly sought to picture President Hoover as giving way to European and Japanese demands to further his hopes for reduction in armaments. "It" unreservedly opposed the Administration's naval policy from the earliest proposal to make food supplies immune from interference in time of war to the latest decision to agree to a general one-year construction holiday. "Such a holiday proposed by the League of Nations, would weaken us further, relatively in auxiliary craft, making us third instead of on a parity with England" declared Mr. Gardiner.

Assailing the President's efforts "to restrict, to reduce, and to starve the United States Navy", Mr. Gardiner hit the high spot of his attack when he turned to Mr. Hoover's proposal....to immunize food supplies from attack in war:

It would be difficult to express too much regret that the most humanitarian of pacific intentions had led President Hoover into exhibiting the

58"Hits and Duds in the Hoover Navy League Fight", Literary Digest.
abysmal ignorance of why Navies are maintained and of how they are used to accomplish their major mission. For acceptance of his suggestion would have worked not only diametrically counter to the interests and weights of the United States in world affairs, but, in effect, would have made for bigger and bloodier wars.59

Mr. Gardiner accused President Hoover of having reached secret agreements with Ramsay MacDonald when Britain's Prime Minister visited the United States in 1929 and that the Administration intended to discontinue the construction of cruisers already begun.

In short Mr. Gardiner charged President Hoover of starving the navy and deliberately and knowingly betraying his country by placing its interests below those of other nations.60

These were serious accusations for a patriotic organization to bring against the President of the United States, and President Hoover felt bound to make an issue of the indictment. He issued a formal notice that:

In order that the country may know the untruth and distortion of fact in Chairman Gardiner's recent pronouncement, I will appoint a committee, including members of the Navy League, to whom agencies of the Government will demonstrate these untruths and distortion of fact. Such an inquiry will absolve the members of the League who have not participated in this statement. Upon its completion, I shall expect Mr. Gardiner to make a public correction of his misstatements and an apology therefor.

It is desirable for the public to know the character of this indirect campaign of misinformation to defeat the efforts of the high officials of the Navy Department and the Administration for the reduction of Federal expenditure... in order that we may avoid increased taxation of the people in these times.61

On November 6, 1931, the committee appointed by the President made a full report on specific points and came to the unanimous decision that the

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59 Ibid., 8-9.
60 New York Times, October 29, 1931.
61 Ibid.
statement of the Navy League's president "contains many inaccuracies, false assertions, and erroneous conclusions and that his assumption as to the President's attitude toward the navy is wholly unwarranted".

The specific points the committee reported upon were as follows:

1. The committee denied that President Hoover had entered any secret agreement with MacDonald prior to the London Treaty.

2. (The committee denied) that the Administration had refused to let an executive committee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations see the full accord of the negotiations and possible commitments preparatory to the London Naval Treaty.

3. (The committee denied) that President Hoover in 1929 had held up construction of five cruisers pending the outcome of the London Conference. The committee said only three cruisers had been held up.

4. (They denied) that President Hoover in accepting the League of Nation's proposal for a one year naval building truce had intended to surrender American rights to build up to treaty strength or to stop construction of any eight-inch gun cruisers or other vessel under construction.

5. (They denied) that the President's economy program would impair efficiency despite the fact that it reduced personnel and warships in full commission.

One result of the Navy League attack upon the President was a flood of criticism against the League. Honorable Burton L. French, chairman of the naval subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, issued a statement in which he said:

Having in mind the sound policy of the President and the reasonable naval construction that is going forward, the issue right now becomes larger than the Navy League and resolves itself into whether or not the country shall have regard for actual naval needs and for the burdens of taxation that rest upon the people, as the President insists, or ignoring national welfare, turn the federal Treasury over to the exploitation of

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those who have personal ends to serve--navy yards and shipbuilders, aircraft and munition manufacturers--and to some extent officers who are blinded by personal interests in seeking their own ends. .... When an organization that prates patriotism sinks to the level of issuing the type of propaganda that the Navy League has issued, faith in any legitimate reason for its existence is challenged. 63

At the same time, the declaration by Mr. French was supplemented by a statement from Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas in which he said:

We have understood all the time that the Navy Department is in accord with the President's program; the attack of the Navy League was not justified in any degree.

It should be understood and remembered that the Navy League includes in its membership those who sell steel, others commercially interested in the armament building. These have a selfish interest to override their loyalty to their country and their own regard for the truth. The fact is, we have had this same kind of fight from the Navy League--false statements, misconstructions of government reports, half truths hooked up with barefaced falsehoods--every time we have tried to hold down expenditures for the navy to a reasonable limit. .... The pity of it is that in the past the Navy League has imposed on the public, especially along the seaboard, as a patriotic organization. The country should be grateful to President Hoover for having torn off its mask and shown it to us as the greedy commercial organization it is--seeking to make excessive profits from the government for steel and ship-building companies under the plea of super-patriotism. 64

The Navy League got support from Honorable Fred A. Britten, but since he was in disrepute because of the Montauk Point circumstances, it did the League little good. 65

Since republics are as likely to be destroyed by a corruption of morals within as by attacks from without, every person, private and official, who writes and speaks about naval expansion or reduction should be above

63 New York Times, November 9, 1931.
64 New York Times, November 7, 1931.
65 New York Times, November 1, 1931. Mr. Britten said he would introduce a bill providing for the spending of $150,000,000 on naval craft.
suspicion as to interested motives. Armament and shipbuilding men should not make the decisions, nor should the naval officers do so. They have too much personal interest to be able to see the case in its entirety. It is a problem for the disinterested citizens.
Conclusion

In determining the naval policy of the United States, it is necessary to decide what is to be defended. Should the people and land of this continent be preserved? Every one will agree that the answer to this question is yes, at all costs! Should the Western Hemisphere be protected? Undoubtedly, the people of the United States would support the government in its attempt to uphold the Monroe Doctrine, which is the government's announcement that it will regard as unfriendly any endeavor on the part of any European power to annex additional territory in this hemisphere.

Should Samoa and the Philippines be defended? The answer to this is given in the Four Power Treaty of the Washington Conference whereby American Possessions in the Far East are not to be fortified. To adequately defend these, it would be necessary to create an immense naval base at the Philippine Islands and then station enough ships of war in those waters to win a victory over Japanese plus British fleets. By our agreement concerning the ratio with Japan, Japan is to be secure against aggression in her home waters as the United States is in the American waters.

Should American commerce be protected in all waters of the world? By accepting parity with Great Britain, the United States has renounced the right to build a navy that would be able to defeat the British navy in its own waters and our ratio pledge with Japan has made it impossible to do so in Japanese waters. Evidently then, American commerce was not to be defended in all waters of the world in the sense that our navy was to be kept large enough to be able to be victorious against any or all powers outside
American waters.

These limitations are a part of our public policy and from these it can be assumed that fundamentally the naval policy of the United States is but twofold. First, the maintenance of a navy strong enough to defend continental United States, which was summed up simply and clearly by President Hoover in a statement made on Navy Day, October 27, 1931, as follows:

The first necessity of our government is the maintenance of a navy so efficient and strong that, in conjunction with our army, no enemy may ever invade our country. The commanding officers of our forces inform me that we are maintaining that strength and efficiency.

Ours is a force of defense, not offense. To maintain forces less than that strength is to destroy national safety; to maintain greater forces is not only economic injury to our people but a threat against our neighbors and would be righteous cause for ill-will among them.66

The second point of our naval policy is the enforcement of our Monroe Doctrine.

At the conclusion of the London Conference there is no doubt that relations between the United States and England were at a friendly stage, particularly because of Prime Minister MacDonald. Our relations with Japan, also, were amicable. The New York Times believed that Japan wanted to be "on good cooperative terms with the United States", and saw in Japan's agreement a "proof that a policy sagacious for Japan and friendly toward the United States had been decided upon".67

We had reached a point where we hoped that our navy was to be a shield not a sword, but as early as 1931 we could see the beginning of the end. In our own country the London Limitations Treaty was interpreted by the big navy men like Fred A. Britten, as an agreement for expansion programs.

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Japan planned for replenishment programs and a new naval race darkened the skies.

The political settlement reached at the Washington Conference was ended when Japan launched her military campaign against Manchuria in September 1931, altering the status quo in the Far East. This was the first major blow at the new system of limitation and prevention built up by the weary nations which had suffered in the World War. The strength of the naval pact was spent, its repute gone and there was no principle on hand except peace by force. We live now under dreadful forebodings—all Europe in turmoil, the Far East in turbulence, our own four-billion dollar naval appropriations bill—where can it all end? We had hoped for so much, now we despair. Yet, the vital energy which has caused man to overcome barbarism in the past will still seek civilized methods. The ten year period 1920 to 1930 has shown a way. For a time only, ideals are at an end and we recall those words in which so sophisticated a statesman as Mr. Balfour described the overwhelming effect of the speech with which Mr. Charles Evans Hughes opened the Washington Conference:

I listened to a speech which I thought eloquent, appropriate, in every way fitting to the work of the Conference which was about to open, or which indeed had been opened by the President, without supposing that anything very dramatic lay behind. And suddenly I became aware, as I suppose all present became aware, that they were assisting not merely at an eloquent and admirable speech, but at a great historical event. It was led up to with such art, the transition seemed so natural, that when the blow fell, when the speaker uttered the memorable words which have now gone round and found echo in every quarter of the civilized world, it came as a shock of profound surprise; it excited the sort of emotions we have when some wholly new event suddenly springs into view and we felt that a new chapter in the history of world reconstruction had been worthily opened.

That chapter opened so auspiciously must wait to be continued.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY
For information on the United States Naval Policy, 1919-1931, there are three good source materials. First the documents, second, the newspapers and periodicals of the period, and third, the books written by contemporary writers, including the speeches of prominent men.

Documents

Indispensable to an understanding of the subject are the Congressional Records published in Washington by the Government Printing Office. Beginning for the year 1920, use was made of the Congressional Record of the 66th Congress, 3rd Session, Volume 60, and of the Senate Document No. 428 of the same Congress and Session which was entitled Navy Yearbook. The Yearbook gave a resume of the annual naval appropriations from 1883 to 1921 inclusive, including statistics of foreign navies. A record of the work of the Washington Conference is found in Senate Document 126, Volume 10, The Conference on the Limitation of Armament, Washington, D. C., November 12, 1921-February 6, 1922 with the report of the American Delegates at the end of the volume. The report of the American Delegates was printed as a separate volume, also, Document 125, Volume IX.

For the developments of the naval policy 1922 to 1927, the Congressional Record of the 68th Congress Volume 65 was helpful as well as Sundry Legislation Affecting the Naval Establishments 1927-1928 which was found in the Congressional Record of the 70th Congress.

The ill-fated Geneva Conference is reported in a Senate Document No. 55, 70th Congress, 1st Session, designated as Conference for Limitation of Naval Armament. Records of Conference held at Geneva June 20-August 4, 1927
The United States Naval Proceedings Volume 55, 1929, 71st Congress was used for information on the progress of the expansionists in the year 1929. The next effort of the opposing group was the London Conference and the official record of this can be found in the following: Proceedings of the London Naval Conference, 1931 publication, the United States Congressional Record, Senate, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Volume 72, and for the Special Session, Volume 73, which gives the arguments against ratification. The Hearings before Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, May 1930, was essential. The treaty itself is called Senate Document No. 141, 71st Congress, 2nd Session.

For the scandalous Shearer case, the facts are given in Alleged Activities at the Geneva Conference, Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, 1930.

There were still other government publications that were helpful, including the Annual Reports of the Secretaries of the Navy and of the Treasury, U. S. Delegation to the Naval Conference, London 1930, and the London Naval Conference, Speeches and Press Statements by Members of the American Delegation January 20-April 29, 1930, Conference series 3, Publication 67 of the State Department. Authentic figures about the navy are to be found in a Senate Committee Print Navies of the World, prepared for the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs by the Chairman Frederick Hale, 1928.

Newspapers

were referred to for the Chicago newspapers, while advantage was taken of the library at the University of Chicago for the Washington Herald and Washington Post as well as the English newspaper Manchester Guardian. The Navy League Journal was found at Crerar. In the exciting years, as far as the naval policy was concerned, 1921-22, 1927, 1929-30, there were almost daily notations and press comments to be found in the newspapers of the country.

**Periodicals**

The articles printed in the magazines of the period are innumerable. Reference to the Reader's Guide will give valuable leads. The following are some worth reading:

Hard, W., "God and Chess at the Washington Conference", *Asia*, 21, October, 1921, 827-32.

Hard, W., "Give and Take at the Washington Conference", *Asia*, 21, November, 1921, 950-55.


The Congressional Digest IV and VIII were very valuable aids giving speeches by the authorities from several viewpoints.


The Literary Digest is of great service in supplying surveys of newspaper opinions. It had articles for the years 1921, 1922, 1927, 1929, 1930 that were found to be of value.

There were also many articles in The Nation. Some interesting ones are listed below:

"Disgraceful Naval Bill", 112, June 15, 1921, 836.
"Price of Peace", 113, September 21, 1921, 310-11.
"Mr. Shearer Likes a Big Navy", 129, October 9, 1929, 378.
"Billions to Reduce", 130, May 21, 1930, 589.
"Not a Dollar", 132, February 25, 1931, 205.
"Admirals see the Point", 133, September 2, 1931, 228-29.


In addition the following magazines were used and found valuable for the public opinion of the time:

Commonweal
Contemporary
Fortnightly
Living Age
New Republic
North American
Outlook
Review of Reviews
Saturday Evening Post
World's Work

Books Written by Contemporaries

At the Washington Conference the diplomacy was the new American style—open and newspaper reporters were welcome as well as others interested in the work of the delegates. Several books have been written by persons present daily and are listed as follows:

Ichihashi, Yamato, *The Washington Conference and After*, Stanford University Press, Stanford University, 1928. Mr. Ichihashi was secretary and
interpreter of the late Viscount Kato, Japan's senior delegate to the Washington Conference. When he wrote this book, he was professor of Japanese history at Stanford University. This book follows the result of the Conference with its far reaching effects upon the diplomatic situation in the East, down through 1928. It is a scholarly and impartial view of the accomplishment of that and subsequent conferences.

Tarbell, Ida M., *Peacemakers--Blessed and Otherwise*, Macmillan Company, New York, 1922. This is a book of impressions set down each week of the first two months of the conference. It reflects the atmosphere of the conference and gives the public feeling toward it, from the cynicism of pre-conference days giving way to the evident sincerity. The closing chapter is an attempt to measure the results of the conference. It is a vivid and intimate account.

Sullivan, Mark, *The Great Adventure at Washington*, Page and Company, Garden City New York, 1922. Mr. Sullivan's account is optimistic and picturesque. It has distinct appeal and charm for it is kindly and humanly written. He gives word pictures of the delegates.


Secondary References


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Bywater, Hector, *Navies and Nations*, Houghton Mifflin and Company, Boston, 1927. A valuable contribution is made by Mr. Bywater to the movement for naval limitation as well as to the history of international relations. It is replete with technical data and political interpretation. His standing as an expert makes his facts unimpeachable and lends weight to his deductions. It is free from bias. He has also written a second authoritative book entitled *Sea Power in the Pacific*, London Constable and Company, 1934.

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Cooke, R. J., *The Church and World Peace*, Abingdon Press, New York, 1926;

Gulick and MacFarland, *The Church and International Relations*, Missionary Educational Movement, 1917, and

Curti, Merle, *Peace or War--The American Struggle*, W. W. Norton and Company, New York, 1936. This last mentioned book is a well balanced account
of the movements against war, in America from colonial times to the present. It is a sympathetic history of American pacifism.

Fox, Sir F., The Mastery of the Pacific: Can the British Empire and the United States Agree? John Lane, The Bodley Head, London, 1928. Sir Frank Fox sets out to explain American Foreign Policy to the British and to the American people as well. He sees the United States succeeding or supplanting Great Britain as bearer of the White Man's Burden. His plea is for cooperation to preserve the status quo in the Pacific.

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Patterson, Ernest M., *The World's Economic Dilemma*, Whittlesey House, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1930. Increasing economic interdependence of all countries not merely of a few—is the big fact that has emerged since 1914—is Mr. Patterson's basic idea in this book. Professor Patterson surveys the economic situations in the leading countries of the day and the difficulties that confront each. Valuable material.

Shillock, J. C., *Postwar Movements to Reduce Naval Armaments*, Carnegie Endowment for international Peace, 1928. This book has been written to clarify the situation by presenting the basic principles of naval reduction. It is a genuine contribution—well ordered information.


The thesis, "The Naval Policy of the United States, 1919-1931", written by Lilliam Ruth Nelson, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Dr. Kiniery

Father Goodwin

September 24, 1940