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AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1920S:
ISOLATION OR INVOLVEMENT? A PROBLEM IN
INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING.

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AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1920s
ISOLATION OR INVOLVEMENT?
A PROBLEM IN INSTRUCTION
AND LEARNING

B. Spencer Culbreth

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
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for the degree Doctor of Arts

May, 1978

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1920s
ISOLATION OR INVOLVEMENT?
A PROBLEM IN INSTRUCTION
AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE 1920s ISOLATION OR INVOLVEMENT? A PROBLEM IN INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING

by B. Spencer Culbreth

Historians continually reinterpret the past in accordance with the prevailing climate of opinion and as new evidence is discovered. As with any time span in history, the 1920s present problems for the historian. Some historians have viewed American foreign policy in the 1920s as being "isolationist," while others have cast doubt on this generalization by emphasizing numerous examples of American involvement in international affairs. The conflict between the two views has both historical and pedagogical significance. An attempt to resolve it provides a useful intellectual exercise in the process of historical interpretation and in the teaching of historical generalizations.

Historical interpretations are especially difficult to formulate if there is some truth in two opposing generalizations. This paper examines the primary and

secondary sources, relevant to both the generalizations and the criticism of them, in the attempt to develop the most suitable generalization for describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. Using the college survey course in American history as a paradigm, various methodological approaches to the teaching of the problem are presented in the conclusion.

The procedures for collecting data conform to basic historical research methodology as depicted in works like Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher, and Wood Gray, Historian's Handbook. Historical research sources (such as the Harvard Guide to American History) and indexes (such as People's Index to Periodical Literature and the New York Times Index), as well as the bibliographies in the monographs, general works, and edited works, have been examined to obtain information for the study. A few of the monographic sources that have been scrutinized are Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, John Chalmers Vinson, The Parchment Peace, Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression, and George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy: 1900-1950. Journal and newspaper articles have been examined in the American Historical Review, Journal of American History, Foreign Affairs, Pacific Historical Review, History Teacher, Political Science Quarterly, and the New York Times. Although the bulk of the research has been confined to these and other

secondary sources, significant utilization has also been made of the major primary source, the Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States.

The evidence indicates that "involvement without commitment" is a more precise and meaningful generalization than "isolation" for describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. This is especially true if one interprets isolation to mean seclusion from, or complete abstention from and indifference toward, world affairs.

An examination of six selected textbooks utilized in the college survey course in American history indicates that most authors continue to use the term "isolation" but fail to provide a specific definition for it. Their explanations of American foreign policy in the 1920s, however, conform more closely to the generalization of "involvement without commitment."

The subject of American foreign policy in the 1920s is especially suitable for a problem solving, an inquiry, or a comparative approach in the teaching of history. Students can be encouraged to cite examples which either refute or support the idea that American foreign policy was isolationist in the 1920s. Such an exercise should encourage discussion and stimulate students to make comparisons with, and judgments about, contemporary foreign policy. The result should be a greater realization by the

B. Spencer Culbreth

students of the importance of exercising caution when making generalizations about any subject.

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The writer owes a heavy debt of gratitude to Dr. Ernest W. Hooper and Dr. Frederic M. Crawford for their many insightful suggestions during the preparation of this paper. Dr. Jack J. Turner and Dr. Wallace R. Maples have also provided invaluable assistance and guidance in this project. These four men have served as inspirational sources of teaching and scholarship for this writer.

The appreciation of this writer is also extended to Mrs. Kay Graham, Mrs. Billie Dupre, and Miss Darlene Rush for their assistance in typing the draft, and to Miss Janet Caruth for her aid in acquiring many of the sources utilized in this paper.

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PREFACE

Statement of the Problem

Historians continually reinterpret the past in accordance with the prevailing climate of opinion and as new evidence is discovered. As with any time span in history, the 1920s present interpretative problems for the historian. Some historians have viewed American foreign policy in the 1920s as being dominated by "isolationism," while others have cast doubt on this generalization by emphasizing numerous examples of American involvement in international affairs. The conflict between these two views has both historical and pedagogical significance. An attempt to resolve it provides a useful intellectual exercise in the process of historical interpretation and in the teaching of historical generalizations.

Historical interpretations are especially difficult to formulate if there is some truth in two opposing generalizations. This paper will peruse the primary and secondary sources, relevant to both the generalizations and the criticism of them, in the attempt to develop the most suitable generalization for describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. Using the college survey course in

American history as a paradigm, various methodological approaches to the teaching of the problem will then be presented in the conclusion.

The resolution of the problem raises two important questions: (1) What was the degree of isolationism in the 1920s? and (2) Does the evidence indicate that neither isolationism nor involvement in international affairs is an accurate description of American foreign policy in the 1920s? It is possible that there was significant involvement in international affairs but little or no commitment to the acceptance of international responsibilities. It is also conceivable that there is sufficient evidence to support both generalizations.

Basic Assumption

The major assumption of this study is that there is enough controversy as to whether American foreign policy was isolationist during the period 1921-1933 to justify an examination of the problem. History writing and teaching is not only storytelling but problem solving as well. Generalizations are embedded in the language of historians and it is important to develop expertise in recognizing those generalizations which have validity, and those which do not, and in helping students to make the distinction.

Collection of Data and Major Sources

The procedures for collecting data will conform to basic historical research methodology as depicted in works like Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher, and Wood Gray, Historian's Handbook. Bibliographies (such as the Harvard Guide to American History) and indexes (such as Poole's Index to Periodical Literature and the New York Times Index), as well as the bibliographies in the monographs, general works, and edited works will be examined to obtain sources for the study. A few of the monographic sources that will be scrutinized are Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, John Chalmers Vinson, The Parchment Peace, Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression, and George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy: 1900-1950. Journal and newspaper articles will be examined from the American Historical Review, Journal of American History, Foreign Affairs, Pacific Historical Review, History Teacher, Political Science Quarterly, and the New York Times. Although the bulk of the research will be confined to these and other secondary sources, significant utilization will also be made of the major primary source, the Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States.

Definitions of Terms

The formulation of a reasonable description of American foreign policy in the 1920s requires a definition for the terms "isolationism" and "involvement." The former is more difficult to define than the latter. Does isolationism mean nonentanglement, such as avoiding direct alliances or participation in political systems like the League of Nations? Or does isolationism mean seclusion and a reluctance to have any relations with foreign nations? Is nationalism an aspect of isolationism? During the 1920s people were often referred to as "nationalists" if they opposed the entry of the United States into the League of Nations, and "internationalists" if they favored it.

Historian Albert K. Weinberg has noted that "the classic definition of American isolation is that it is not a theory but a predicament."¹ Weinberg points out that isolationism actually comprises no less than eight distinct policies which are: (1) entangling alliances with none, (2) nonintervention, (3) noninterference and nonparticipation in European politics, (4) avoidance of joint action, (5) no entangling commitments, (6) nonlimitation by international

¹Albert K. Weinberg, "The Historical Meaning of the American Doctrine of Isolation," American Political Science Review 34 (June 1940):539.

organizations of the essential rights of sovereignty, (7) reluctance to accept the authority of any political "super-authority," and (8) insulation against entanglement.² Since isolation itself has often been accepted by historians as a definition, Weinberg contends that "the concept of isolation is useful only insofar as it indicates the misunderstanding of an ideology, serves as a point of departure for investigation, and contains in its connotation certain suggestive half-truths."³ Utilization of the term isolationism has, therefore, confused the discussion of American foreign policy in the 1920s.

Just as there are various degrees of isolationism, there are also degrees of involvement in international affairs. Involvement will be defined, therefore, as being sufficiently concerned to accept international responsibilities. Intervention in the affairs of other countries, whether military, diplomatic, or economic, will be considered as an example of involvement. The term "international affairs" will be used to describe the official political relations between national governments.

²Ibid., pp. 543-45.

³Ibid., p. 539.

Background of the Study

Although ideas do not submit to precise dating, the years 1921-1933 provide a convenient time frame for the diplomatic historian who proposes to study the idea of isolationism in the 1920s. This delineation is justifiable because it was a period of Republican political leadership sandwiched between two Democratic Administrations. The period is usually contrasted unfavorably with the eras preceding and following it. The preceding era offers such appealing subjects as Progressivism, World War I, and Woodrow Wilson, and the following era contains the New Deal, World War II, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. It has been traditional to view the intervening dozen years as a period of reaction and isolationism induced by the experiences of World War I. Recent historical writings have revised this viewpoint, however, and argued that involvement, and even interventionism, is a more apt description of American foreign policy in the 1920s. Have these "revisionists" merely replaced one questionable generalization with another that is equally disconcerting? It will be the task of this writer to examine the bases of both views and evaluate the merits of each generalization. A description of the problems encountered in making historical generalizations,

as well as an examination of the approach utilized by selected textbook authors in their treatments of American foreign policy in the 1920s, will also be presented. Although any of several methods might be suitable for teaching American foreign policy in the 1920s, a detailed explanation of the inquiry or problem solving method will be provided in the conclusion.

CHAPTER I

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY FROM THE INAUGURATION OF HARDING TO THE EVE OF THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

The Isolationist Interpretation Under Attack

In his book, The Twenties in America, Paul A. Carter astutely observed that "the grand simplicities of a text-book . . . break down before the problem of the Twenties. Every generalization one makes about the period has a disconcerting way of turning into its opposite."¹ Carter's statement has special significance for those who describe American foreign policy in the 1920s as being "isolationist." An important attack upon the isolationist theory was made in 1954 by William Appleman Williams. Williams suggested that the central theme in the history of American foreign relations was the expansion of the United States. In his view American foreign policy in the 1920s was characterized primarily by extended involvement with, and even

¹Paul A. Carter, The Twenties in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), p. 5.

intervention in the affairs of, other nations of the world. Williams concluded that "the widely accepted assumption that the United States was isolationist from 1920 through 1932 is no more than a legend."²

Although other historians have disagreed with his general theme of expansion, they have supported Williams's argument that isolationism is a questionable generalization for American foreign policy during the 1920s. Selig Adler believes "the postwar decline in internationalist zeal was relative rather than absolute."³ Burl Noggle contends that "the 'retreat to isolationism,' however it be defined, is a dubious characterization of American foreign policy in the 1920's."⁴

It is noteworthy that most politicians of the 1920s professed not to be isolationists. President Warren G. Harding declared himself an opponent of isolationism but a proponent of nationalism. Harding's Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, was opposed to isolationism.⁵ Even

²William Appleman Williams, "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's," in The 1920's: Problems and Paradoxes, ed. Milton Plesur (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 92.

³Selig Adler, "The House Divided," in The 1920's: Problems and Paradoxes, ed. Milton Plesur (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969), p. 75.

⁴Burl Noggle, "The Twenties: A New Historical-geographical Frontier," in American Themes: Essays in Historiography, eds. Frank Otto Gattell and Allen Weinstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 386.

⁵Ibid., p. 135.

the leader of the fight against the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, attacked the concept of isolationism. Lodge asserted that the United States was more active and influential in international politics between 1921 and 1924 than in any other period of its history.⁶

The United States has never been completely isolated from the rest of the world. The relative geographic isolation that the United States enjoyed in its early history was soon diminished by revolutionary changes in transportation and communication. The desire to expand foreign commerce, attract immigrant laborers, and export democracy to other nations also served as a counterpoise to isolationism. The acquisition of colonies and the tremendous growth in economic and naval power transformed the United States into a world power by the beginning of the twentieth century.⁷

The early American colonists and the Founding Fathers had no desire to cut America off entirely from the Old World. They remained bound to Europe by kinship and

⁶L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 32. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.) See, also, Henry Cabot Lodge, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921-1924," Foreign Affairs 2 (June 1924):525-39.

⁷Manfred Jonas, Isolationism in America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 2.

cultural ties. Although George Washington in his Farewell Address urged the United States to steer clear of permanent alliances, he did not advocate isolationism. Washington merely wanted the United States to avoid foreign alliances and entanglements. Manfred Jonas wrote of the address that, "far from committing the new nation to permanent isolation, it merely sought to endow the United States with the ability to chart its future foreign policy on the basis of unilateral decisions."⁸ Washington wanted to secure freedom of action in foreign affairs in order to defend American independence and national sovereignty against more powerful European states.⁹

The United States Government acted with this same spirit throughout the nineteenth century. President Thomas Jefferson's famous Embargo Act of 1807 was not designed to isolate America by terminating trade with Europe. Its purpose was to force Great Britain and France to recognize American neutral rights through the application of economic pressure. The Monroe Doctrine, which announced that the Western Hemisphere was closed to intervention and colonization by European powers, was also a reflection of the desire to maintain freedom of action in foreign policy. The Mexican War, interest in the European Revolutions of

⁸Ibid., pp. 7-10.

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

1830 and 1848 (especially Louis Kossuth's Hungarian rebellion), the Spanish-American War, and World War I were other examples of involvement in world affairs.¹⁰

Foreign Policy Formulation During the
Harding Administration

Numerous factors influenced President Harding and Secretary Hughes in the formulation of foreign policy-- namely, public opinion, the press, Congress, and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.¹¹ Dexter Perkins, an American diplomatic historian, contends that the subordination of the professional diplomat was even more complete in America than in Europe during the 1920s. Perkins notes that the general sentiment or mood of the people has influenced foreign policy to a greater extent in America than in Europe. He believes the balance of influence in the United States "is always tipping, now this way or that, now to the executive, now to the legislature, and rarely to the professional diplomat."¹² Perkins states that, although some secretaries of state have been policymakers, "the one thing that is certain is that no definite and fixed role can

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 11-13.

¹¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 50.

¹²Dexter Perkins, "The Department of State and American Public Opinion," in The Diplomats, 1919-1939, eds. Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 282-83. (Hereafter cited as Perkins, "The Department of State.")

be assigned to the Secretary under our constitutional system."¹³

Cabinet responsibility within the European parliamentary system fosters a cooperative relationship between the government and its majority in parliament. The American constitutional system, however, does not ensure harmony between the executive and the legislature. The opinions of the chairman of the powerful Senate Committee on Foreign Relations must also be considered while formulating foreign policy. Occasionally, influential under-secretaries of state can also affect American foreign policy. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes appointed three different ones during his tenure of office--Henry P. Fletcher, William Philips, and Joseph C. Grew.¹⁴ Although Hughes heeded their advice, he dominated policy formulation within the State Department.¹⁵

Throughout most of the decade the balance of power in the American Government rested with Congress. This handicapped presidents and secretaries of state in the development and application of foreign policy.¹⁶ Concentration of powers in the executive branch during World War I led to a congressional reaction. Despite this

¹³Ibid., pp. 283-84.

¹⁴Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 55.

¹⁵Perkins, "The Department of State," p. 286.

¹⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 38-39.

handicap, Perkins contends that "Hughes often succeeded in by-passing the legislators, and in shaping policy by his own personal force."¹⁷

The Senate represented a major challenge for Hughes. The Senate's Republican "irreconcilables" (those solidly united against American membership in the League of Nations) were especially troublesome. Hughes could not afford to offend this group because they were powerful enough to veto the administration's decisions in both domestic and foreign policy. Although Harding left foreign policy matters entirely to Hughes, the President was unwilling to risk invoking the wrath of Congress if it opposed any of his or Hughes's policies.¹⁸

Hughes was aware of these limitations on policy formulation. With the exception of the Washington Conference, therefore, he confined his activities to a fairly restricted scope. He was generally able to overcome congressional opposition and Ethan Ellis credits him with being "the chief architect of the scheme of cooperation

¹⁷Perkins, "The Department of State," p. 286.

¹⁸John Chalmers Vinson, "Charles Evans Hughes," in An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), pp. 128-29. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, "Hughes.")

without involvement which could characterize American policy for some years."¹⁹

Hughes's approach to foreign policy was shaped primarily by his legal background. He obtained a law degree in 1884 and practiced law for several years before serving as Governor of New York and later as associate justice of the United States Supreme Court. John Chalmers Vinson believes it was inevitable that "Hughes would adopt a narrow, factual, and legalistic view of the office of Secretary of State. . . ." ²⁰ Vinson notes that Hughes utilized "the lawyer's methodical definition of problems" and relied heavily on "the rules of logic, law and precedent."²¹

Whereas Wilson had talked of universal ideals, Hughes was concerned with national interests. He, therefore, sought limited and obtainable objectives. According to Vinson, Hughes believed conferences succeeded "in direct proportion to the success in limiting the number of participants and the scope of the subject discussed."²²

¹⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 42-43, 63. Perkins believes Hughes was "one of the ablest men who ever held that office." See Perkins, "The Department of State," p. 286.

²⁰Vinson, "Hughes," pp. 131-32.

²¹Ibid., p. 132. George F. Kennan has been highly critical of this legalistic approach to diplomacy. See George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy: 1900-1950 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 91-103.

²²Ibid., p. 133.

Hughes relied heavily on logic in solving problems. He could simplify complex issues and display skill in executing ideas. He believed, however, that a Secretary of State should be a servant of the people and of Congress.²³

Disillusionment

The mood of the American public in 1920 was another factor influencing foreign policy formulation. Although there was general economic prosperity and a feeling of exultation with the end of the war, there was also disillusionment and reaction to Wilson's policies of extensive commitments with the rest of the world. Americans preferred to concentrate upon domestic rather than foreign matters.²⁴

Disillusionment with World War I and its effects became more evident throughout the 1920s. Robert E. Osgood, in his book, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations, noted that disillusionment was manifested by postwar "self-deprecation, withdrawal, nationalism, and the search for scapegoats."²⁵ According to Osgood, the idea "that the war had not been worthwhile, that American

²³Ibid., pp. 132-33.

²⁴Perkins, "The Department of State," pp. 284-85.

²⁵Robert E. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations: The Great Transformation of the Twentieth Century (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 329. (Hereafter cited as Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest.)

altruism had somehow been betrayed, took root in the public mind during the 1920's."²⁶ American altruism had brought neither material nor spiritual rewards. In Osgood's view, "peace not only failed to bring about a new era of international reform, it produced a harvest of social and political unrest, an armaments race, and a general revival of international tension."²⁷ Americans had viewed the war as a crusade to end all wars and to create a peaceful and democratic world. No wonder they now believed it had solved nothing.

Prior to World War I, interest in the study of international relations had been generated by the old nineteenth century peace movements. The early years of the twentieth century witnessed the creation of Ginn's World Peace Foundation and Carnegie's Endowment for International Peace. The scholars associated with international relations in those days believed elimination of war was a relatively simple matter. Democracy, international understanding, and arbitration were their recipe for peace. Lack of understanding and lack of procedures had caused wars in the past. The remedy was to provide forums for international intercourse.

William T. R. Fox noted that the pre-World War I years "were periods of great inventiveness in the area of

²⁶Ibid., p. 330.

²⁷Ibid.

pacific settlement of international disputes. The Department of State was run by lawyers; each dispute was regarded as a case."²⁸ The Hague Conferences and William Jennings Bryan's "cooling off" treaties exemplified this development. But these measures did not prevent war. In Fox's view, "four years of war disillusioned those who thought that peace was simply a matter of having available the right sort of procedures."²⁹

The traditional emphasis on international law was maintained during the post-World I period. Historical and international relations scholars began to search for the persons responsible for causing World War I and for the cause of war. According to Fox, this implied that "if the cause could be isolated, the cure could be prescribed."³⁰ The research on war guilt, in Fox's view, "seemed only to document the badness of the diplomats and their system and to contribute little to understanding the causes of war and conditions of peace."³¹

²⁸William T. R. Fox, "Interwar International Relations Research: The American Experience," World Politics 2 (October 1949):68-70.

²⁹Ibid., p. 70.

³⁰Ibid., p. 71.

³¹Ibid., p. 74. Fox believes "there was a tendency to equate 'peace' and 'government' on the one hand and 'war' and 'power politics' on the other." Research, therefore,

During the 1920s a growing number of publicists, journalists, and scholars attacked American intervention in World War I. They asserted that the evils of the war were the result of misguided idealism and that intervention could and should have been avoided. There was growing support for the belief that Germany was no more responsible for the outbreak of war than other nations.³²

Revisionism

One major reason for post-World War I revisionism was the unexpected opening of the diplomatic records by Germany, Austria, and Soviet Russia. The German and Austrian Governments believed they had little to lose by revealing their diplomatic secrets and the Russian Government was eager to expose the diplomatic intrigue of the capitalist powers. Oswald Garrison Villard, editor of

concentrated on international government. Subjects like disarmament, pacific settlement of disputes, collective security, and peaceful change were 'disproportionately over studied.'" The politics of the contemporary state system were neglected and the "hard intellectual task involved in discovering the conditions under which national interests could be harmonized was rarely undertaken" [pp. 71-76].

³²Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest, pp. 314-15.

the Nation, and Herbert Croly, editor of the New Republic, promptly printed the material. They were both disillusioned liberals who had formerly supported Wilson but had now turned against him. Their publications helped to discredit the motives of the British and French Governments.³³

The British and French Governments blundered by delaying the release of their war material. An English translation of the Austrian Red Book of 1919 was available by 1920. Neither the British nor the French published anything of major importance until the late 1920s. In the meantime, Germany was able to influence world opinion on the war guilt issue, especially in the United States where, according to Selig Adler, the historical profession was renewing its traditional ties with German scholars after having concealed its admiration for German scholarship during the war. French and British revisionists, however, exerted a greater influence on Americans, possibly because, when a British or French writer declared that his country had started the war, it attracted attention in America. As Adler noted, "when Jean Longuet, leader of the French moderate Socialists, called Poincaré and William II equally guilty, it was well noted in this country."³⁴

³³Selig Adler, "The War-Guilt Question and American Disillusionment, 1918-1928," The Journal of Modern History 23 (March 1951):1-3. (Hereafter cited as Adler, "War-Guilt.")

³⁴Ibid., pp. 2-7.

Primarily because of their common language, British revisionism had the greatest influence on Americans. The appearance of British antiwar literature coincided with the collapse of Wilsonian idealism and the combination of these two developments provided additional support for the revisionist movement.

Why were Americans attracted to revisionist ideas? The mood of disillusionment was one reason. Another factor, according to Adler, was because "revisionism formed part of the general revolt against the older nineteenth-century values."³⁵ A third reason was because the end of the war coincided with the growing popularity of weekly journals of opinion such as the Nation, the New Republic, the Freeman, and the Dial. Their liberal writers specialized in revisionism. They were disillusioned with Wilson's liberalism and they accused him of betraying his Fourteen Points at Versailles. They opposed the League of Nations because they considered it as part of a plot to perpetuate Anglo-French imperialism. Adler wrote, "thus the first purveyors of revisionism to the American people were journalists rather than historians . . ." and "revisionism was unquestionably one of the factors that led to an increase in the isolationist sentiment of the 1920s."³⁶

³⁵Ibid., pp. 8-10.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 10, 27.

Harold Stearns is representative of the early, liberal, and antiwar authors. Stearns had opposed intervention from the beginning of World War I. His book, Liberalism in America: Its Origin, Its Temporary Collapse, Its Future, was published in 1919. Stearns contended that, by entering the war, Wilson had actually negated the effectiveness of his ideals. He concluded that idealists should avoid all reliance upon war because force inevitably corrupts true idealism.³⁷

On 5 March 1920 a new magazine entitled the Freeman began publication. Its editor, Albert Jay Nock, called for a new understanding of the origins of World War I. His book, Myth of a Guilty Nation, originally appeared as a series of articles in the Freeman. Nock was among the first American writers to assert that German responsibility for the war was negligible and that much of the blame for it rested with France and Russia. No doubt many readers failed to realize that one-fourth of the book was based on material hand-picked by Junker propagandists from the Belgian archives.³⁸

In his book, Shall It Be Again? (1922), John K. Turner echoed the sentiments of Stearns and Nock. Turner's

³⁷Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest, pp. 314-15.

³⁸Adler, "War-Guilt," p. 12. Adler contends that Nock often quoted out of context and that his book was an example of poor historical scholarship.

book went through four printings and sold approximately 8,000 copies.³⁹ He dedicated it to "'the lads who will come under the next draft.'"⁴⁰ According to Adler, the 443-page book was a composite of "undigested half-truths" and, judged by the canons of historical method, the book is ridiculous."⁴¹ Turner blamed Wilson and Wall Street for leading the nation into the war for the purpose of economic profit and contended that the war had produced 21,000 new American millionaires. Turner believed, like Stearns, that Wilson's reasoning that the war was fought to promote peace and democracy was unjustifiable because these ideals were, by their very nature, incompatible with war.⁴²

Frederick Bausman, a British-born American jurist who disliked France, joined the revisionist authors in his book, Let France Explain (1922). He also believed that the war was caused by a Franco-Russian conspiracy and that American intervention was caused by idealistic illusions. A less radical, but nonetheless influential early "revisionist," writer was Lewis L. Gannett. A Quaker pacifist and associate editor of Oswald Garrison Villard's the Nation, Gannett wrote two articles for that magazine in

³⁹Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest, p. 315.

⁴⁰Adler, "War-Guilt," p. 12.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest, p. 315.

October 1922. In his articles, "They All Lied" and "Documents in Diplomatic Deceit," he placed major responsibility for the war on the Central Powers but stressed that the Entente diplomats and generals played their parts in causing the war with "'criminal casualness.'"⁴³

Only a few scholars urged moderation in treating the issue. Sidney B. Fay, in a series of articles in the American Historical Review, in 1920 and 1921, suggested that scholars reconsider the orthodox interpretation of war guilt but he urged caution and a more objective and scientific appraisal of the documents. Although Fay's conclusions were basically "revisionist," Adler notes that, in the early 1920s, "when revisionism was outrunning the documents, Fay tried to 'put on the brakes.'"⁴⁴ The works of two other historians, Charles A. Beard and Harry Elmer Barnes, nullified the efforts of Fay. Beard, in Cross Currents in Europe Today, and Barnes, in Europe Since 1870, placed heavy responsibility upon the French for the cause of World War I.⁴⁵

Although postwar revisionism had not yet matured, its embryonic form was evident during the period from the conclusion of the Peace of Versailles to the eve of the

⁴³Adler, "War-Guilt," p. 13.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 10-11.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 13-16; Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest, pp. 316-17.

Washington Conference. The movement was already formidable enough to contribute to the other forces of disillusionment, pacificism, and congressional resurgence, which, when combined, forced Hughes to adopt a policy of "involvement without commitment."

The Treaty of Berlin

When Charles Evans Hughes became Secretary of State on 4 March 1921, the United States was technically still at war with Germany, Austria, and Hungary. The Senate, having rejected the Treaty of Versailles and the League Covenant, passed a joint resolution, on 2 July 1921, which declared the war with Germany and its allies to be at an end. The resolution reserved for the United States all the benefits granted to the signatories of the Treaty of Versailles. But Hughes's legal training convinced him something more than a mere unilateral resolution was necessary to reserve all rights granted to the United States in the Treaty of Versailles. He, therefore, submitted to Germany a treaty which embodied the text of the joint resolution as well as selected sections from the Treaty of Versailles. The completed document was referred to as the Treaty of Berlin. It gave the United States all the rights and advantages stipulated in the Treaty of Versailles. It also exempted the United States from all obligations under specified sections of the Treaty of Versailles. Hughes wisely

excluded the war guilt clause from the new treaty and it was accepted by Germany in August 1921. A similar procedure was followed in concluding peace with Austria and Hungary.⁴⁶

The Senate approved the Berlin Treaty but insisted on a reservation preventing American participation in the work of the Reparations Commission. Diplomatic relations with Germany were given an economic emphasis with the exchange of ambassadors. A. B. Houghton, a Republican Representative and businessman, was sent to Berlin and Otto Wiedfeldt, a director in the Krupp organization, was sent to Washington, D.C.⁴⁷

The League of Nations

A less urgent, but more emotional problem, was the matter of the League of Nations. Although partisan politics was a major issue in the Senate's decision to reject the League, many senators had serious reservations about Article X of the Covenant, which was designed to prevent physical aggression and which obligated member states to preserve the

⁴⁶Charles Chaney Hyde, "Charles Evans Hughes," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, vol. 10: Bryan, Lansing, Colby and Hughes, ed. Samuel Flagg Bemis (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), pp. 225-28. (Hereafter cited as Hyde, "Hughes.")

⁴⁷Frank Spencer, "The United States and Germany in the Aftermath of War: 1-1918 to 1929," International Affairs 43 (October 1967):697. (Hereafter cited as Spencer, "The United States and Germany.")

territorial integrity and political independence of all members of the League.⁴⁸

A majority of the Senate was unwilling to accept the possibility that the United States might be forced to take action against an aggressor. This renunciation, however, did not imply total withdrawal of the United States from world affairs. As Perkins noted, it merely meant the "American mood was not one in which a sense of world responsibility played a dominant part."⁴⁹

In his views on the League, Hughes conformed to Republican orthodoxy. Although not a foe of the League, he was opposed to Article X because it contained the principle of common action against aggression.⁵⁰ Hughes did not believe this article could be reconciled with the Constitution.⁵¹ He hoped, however, that the League would be accepted with reservations.⁵² Hughes had actively campaigned for American participation in an international organization

⁴⁸Perkins, "The Department of State," pp. 284, 287.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 285.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 287. Prior to the 1920 election, Hughes had signed a statement, with thirty other distinguished Republicans, which supported a League with mild reservations. See Merlo J. Pusey, Charles Evans Hughes, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 1:404. (Hereafter cited as Pusey, Hughes.)

⁵¹Vinson, "Hughes," p. 133.

⁵²Perkins, "The Department of State," p. 288.

in 1916.⁵³ The 1920 Presidential election revealed, however, that most Americans attached little importance to the idea of collective security. James M. Cox had attempted to make the League the paramount election issue, but the Harding victory merely strengthened the hand of the League opponents. Ten of the Republican "irreconcilables," who had voted against the League in March 1920, were still in the Senate and two had been replaced by other Republicans. Most of the anti-treaty Democrats were also still in the Senate. Senator Frank B. Kellogg and other League senators advised Hughes there was little chance of obtaining a two-thirds majority for the covenant. As Hughes's biographer, Merlo Pusey noted, "a renewal of the struggle could result only in disaster for the Harding Administration without taking the United States any closer to the League."⁵⁴ In the face of this formidable opposition, Hughes concluded that the Senate would not agree to League membership and he, therefore,

⁵³Hughes stated that: "There is plain need for a league of nations in order to provide for the adequate development of international law, for creating and maintaining organs of international justice and machinery of conciliation and conference, and for giving effect to measures of international cooperation which from time to time may be agreed upon. . . . I perceive no reason why these objects cannot be attained without sacrificing the essential interests of the United States. There is a middle ground between aloofness and injurious commitments." Pusey, Hughes, 1:397.

⁵⁴Pusey, Hughes, 1:431-33.

dropped any plans to promote United States membership in a modified League of Nations.⁵⁵

Although some of his friends concluded that Hughes had lost his crusading zeal, he realized a fight was impossible without President Harding's support. George Wickersham, one of the thirty-one signatories of the "Republicans for the League" statement, accused Hughes of being unfaithful to his trust. In a confidential letter to Wickersham, Hughes defended his position:

The opposition was too determined and resourceful. They had decided that there should be no participation in the League on any terms. No matter what Mr. Harding had said as a candidate, or the Thirty-One had said, the President was required as a statesman to take account of this position . . . if he had proposed entry into the League with reservations, or modification of the Covenant, he would have wrecked the Administration by involving it in a most bitter fight and he would not have succeeded.⁵⁶

American refusal to ratify the Treaty of Versailles not only led to repudiation of the League but to nullification of the Anglo-French-American Treaty of Guarantee as well. At the Peace Conference of Versailles, the three powers had agreed that, in exchange for French abandonment of demands for an independent Rhine state, an inter-allied force would occupy the Rhineland for a fifteen-year period. The left bank of the Rhine, as well as a strip of land fifty kilometers east of the river, would be

⁵⁵Vinson, "Hughes," p. 135.

⁵⁶Pusey, Hughes, 2:433-34.

completely demilitarized. Furthermore, the United States and Great Britain agreed to aid France in the event of an unprovoked attack by Germany. It was stipulated that implementation of the Treaty of Guarantee would be subject to approval by each nation's respective governments and that it would be invalid unless both the British and American Governments approved it. Although ratified by Great Britain and France, the treaty was jettisoned by the American Senate's refusal to accept the Treaty of Versailles.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the Senate's rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and Harding's election, the Wilson Administration left eighteen League communications unanswered. American officials had been forbidden to attend the meetings of the Conference of Ambassadors and the "unofficial representative" on the Reparations Commission had been removed.⁵⁸ After 4 March 1921, however, Hughes reversed these decisions. He

⁵⁷ John W. Wheeler-Bennett and F. E. Langermann, Information on the Problem of Security, 1917-26 (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1927), pp. 18-22; J. Paul Selsam, The Attempts to Form an Anglo-French Alliance, 1919-1924 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), pp. 2-7. Frank Spencer contends that, at the time, American repudiation was welcomed by both Great Britain and France. The British believed the guarantee was an unnecessary and unwelcome obligation and the French believed they would now be free from American interference in strictly enforcing the Treaty of Versailles. Spencer, "The United States and Germany," p. 695.

⁵⁸ Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 1:2-6.

instructed the American Ambassador to Great Britain, George Harvey, to act as the President's representative on the Supreme Council. The American Ambassador in Paris resumed his status as an unofficial observer to the Conference of Ambassadors and Roland W. Boyden reoccupied his similar position on the Reparations Commission. Hughes eventually named unofficial observers to work with League committees on problems such as opium, anthrax, public health, antitoxin serums, traffic in women and children, relief work, customs formalities, and the control of traffic in arms.⁵⁹ Even this carefully controlled contact with the League led Senator William E. Borah to complain that the United States was involved in the League in everything but name.⁶⁰ Hughes was accused of violating the intent of the Treaty of Berlin which had a reservation to the effect that the United States should not be represented on any body, agency, or commission without specific authorization from Congress.⁶¹

Hughes's legal background, his passion for justice, and desire for peace made him a strong supporter of the Permanent Court of International Justice, but the revolt in the Senate against the League compelled Hughes to adopt a cautious approach. He, therefore, declined the World Court's invitation to nominate judges to the new

⁵⁹Pusey, Hughes, 2:434-35.

⁶⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 66.

⁶¹Pusey, Hughes, 2:443.

organization. His deep involvement in the Washington Conference also led him to postpone any campaign for joining the organization. After the conference, however, Hughes made a strong bid to win American adherence to the World Court.⁶²

Relations with Russia

Political realities, therefore, forced Hughes to adopt a posture, not of "isolationism" but of "involvement without commitment," in international organizations. A similar process was adopted by the United States Government in its relations with individual states. The Administration's policy toward Russia, for example, was based upon American reaction to the recent "Red Scare." Because of Russian sponsorship of subversive activities within the United States, Hughes supported nonrecognition of Russia. This policy was strengthened by Soviet repudiation of its foreign debts. This included \$187,000,000 the United States had loaned to the Alexander Kerensky Government. In addition, Russia had confiscated property belonging to American citizens. The Administration simply could not recognize a government that adopted repudiation and confiscation as policies.⁶³

⁶²Ibid., pp. 594-95; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 69.

⁶³Pusey, Hughes, 2:527; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 76.

On the other hand, Hughes did not isolate the United States from affairs that concerned Russia. When the Harding Administration assumed office, famine was sweeping across Russia. In order to alleviate the hunger, the American Relief Association provided approximately \$66,000,000 to the cause of famine relief in Russia.⁶⁴ The Russian economy was in a state of collapse and Hughes feared that Russia might lose Siberia to Japan. American occupation troops had been withdrawn in 1920 but the Japanese continued to hold strategic areas of Siberia. On 31 May 1921 Hughes sent a harsh note to Tokyo warning that the American Government would not recognize any action which might impair the territorial integrity of Russia. Although Russia was not invited to the Washington Conference, Hughes pledged American support of the "integrity of Russia" and assumed the role of protector of Russian interests and rights. By the time of the conference, the Japanese had promised to completely withdraw from Russian territory.⁶⁵

Relations with Latin America

With the exception of mediating a Costa Rica-Panama boundary dispute, Hughes's major efforts and activities in

⁶⁴Hyde, "Hughes," p. 280.

⁶⁵Pusey, Hughes, 2:523-25.

Latin America came after the Washington Conference.⁶⁶ The major opposition to the League in the United States had stemmed from the fear that the League Covenant would destroy the Monroe Doctrine and the League might interfere with United States policies in Latin America. Hughes subscribed to these anti-League theories and he demanded reservations to protect the Monroe Doctrine. In Vinson's view Hughes "was so ardently opposed to League participation in Western Hemispheric affairs that he prevented League observers from attending the 1923 Pan-American Conference."⁶⁷

On the other hand, Hughes opposed Theodore Roosevelt's "big stick" diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson's erratic interventions in Latin America. In many ways, his Latin American policy laid the foundations for the later "good neighbor policy." In adopting this approach, Hughes was heavily influenced by the chief of the State Department's Latin American Division, Sumner Welles. Welles immediately won the respect of Hughes, and his knowledge of

⁶⁶In August 1922, for example, Hughes mediated a dispute between delegates of Nicaragua, Honduras, and Salvador on board the U.S.S. Tacoma (in Fonesca Bay). From 4 December 1922 to 7 February 1923 Hughes participated in a conference of the Central American states in Washington, D.C. See Hyde, "Hughes," pp. 266-67.

⁶⁷Vinson, "Hughes," p. 145.

Latin America proved an invaluable asset for policy formulation.⁶⁸

In accordance with this friendlier approach, Hughes attempted to clarify the Monroe Doctrine by declaring that it was a policy of self-defense. Hughes believed intervention in Latin America was justifiable if it were undertaken for the protection of the citizens of a nation. Hughes liked to refer to it as "nonbelligerent interposition." As Vinson has written, Hughes believed "intervention became unjustifiable when it degenerated into an aggressive use of military force for imperialistic purposes."⁶⁹ Hughes rejected any proposals, however, that the Monroe Doctrine be made multilateral. He reserved for the United States the right of definition, interpretation, and application of the doctrine.⁷⁰

War Debts and Reparations

At the Paris Peace Conference Wilson had argued in vain for an agreement on the establishment of a total amount of reparations to be paid by Germany. A Reparations Commission was established and a total sum of thirty-three

⁶⁸Jean Baptiste Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy of the United States, 1913-1945, trans. by Nancy Lyman Roelker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 162; Pusey, Hughes, 2:531.

⁶⁹Vinson, "Hughes," p. 146.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 147.

billion dollars was finally established on 27 April 1921. The German Government accepted this huge sum only after the Allies threatened to occupy the Ruhr. The British and the French pressed for the United States to reduce or cancel their war debts in order for them to reduce reparations demands on Germany. The American Government under Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover, however, refused to recognize any connection between war debts and reparations. Not until February 1922 did Congress establish a Debt Commission to negotiate allied payments.⁷¹ In the meantime, the Treasury Department, rather than the State Department, handled the debt problem.

Hughes and the State Department, however, were involved with the reparations issue. As mentioned earlier, the United States maintained an unofficial observer on the Reparations Commission. The German Government requested that Hughes mediate the issue. Hughes urged the German Government to make an offer for discussion, but its offer to pay fifty billion gold marks (at present value) was rejected by the European governments and Hughes's effort to solve the reparations question met with failure.⁷²

Although Hughes's initial moves in foreign policy had been cautious, he had not adopted a policy of

⁷¹Spencer, "The United States and Germany," pp. 696-98.

⁷²Perkins, "The Department of State," pp. 302-4.

isolationism. Hughes had been actively involved with Germany, the League, Russia, Latin America, and with the problem of reparations. This involvement seemed insignificant, however, until the movement for disarmament forced him to assume the leadership in trying to achieve this heretofore elusive goal.

CHAPTER II

PRELUDE TO THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

Origins of the Disarmament Movement

Citizens of the United States supported the government's quest for disarmament more enthusiastically than any other diplomatic effort of the 1920s. President Warren G. Harding and Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes believed that competition in armaments was a major cause of World War I. The congressional decision to reject the League of Nations, however, excluded the United States from participation in the major organization promoting disarmament. The Administration, therefore, devoted so much time and energy to disarmament matters that one historian contends that disarmament became "an American substitute for involvement in League Affairs."¹ Since American land forces had been liquidated after the war and were not deemed essential for national security, advocates of disarmament were concerned primarily with the navy. The issue received support not only from peace advocates but also from

¹Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), pp. 79-80. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

taxpayers who disliked supporting an expensive naval establishment.²

American naval development had proceeded slowly until the late nineteenth century. A war scare, associated with the controversy with Great Britain over the Venezuelan boundary in 1895-1896, stimulated sentiment for a large navy.³ Among the spokesmen for a larger navy as well as for a large imperial policy for the United States were Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt. They advocated American domination of both the Caribbean and the Pacific and the construction of an isthmian canal in order to defend the two American coasts more adequately.⁴ The correctness of their position appeared manifest with the American acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands as a result of the Spanish-American War of 1898.

The nineteenth century also spawned a peace movement which would eventually oppose the advocates of a big navy and a large imperial policy. As early as 1840 William Ladd

²Ibid., pp. 80-82.

³Benjamin H. Williams, The United States and Disarmament (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1931), p. 133.

⁴Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States, 5th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 443.

proposed a "Congress of Nations" to settle disputes peaceably. During the 1880s a large group of proponents of peace began lobbying in Washington, D.C. In addition to sponsoring peace and arbitration resolutions, they attempted to promote greater interest in the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conferences. Congressman Richard Bartholdt, for example, urged President Theodore Roosevelt to support compulsory arbitration, a more effective world court, periodic meetings at the Hague, and the limitation of armaments.⁵

By 1910 a major battle was developing for the control of Congress between two groups of peace societies. The more recently formed societies believed preparedness and arbitration should precede the eventual limitation of armaments, whereas the older peace societies favored immediate disarmament. The latter group appeared to have won a minor victory when Congress adopted a resolution in 1910 requesting President William Howard Taft to establish a five-member commission to investigate the feasibility of utilizing existing international agencies to limit armaments and to combine the navies of the world into an international force for the preservation of peace. Although Taft signed

⁵John Chalmers Vinson, The Parchment Peace: The United States Senate and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922 (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1955), pp. 7-9. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, Parchment Peace.) Vinson believes "the ideals which highlighted the Washington Conference, peace and the limitation of armament, emerged from the American peace movement of the nineteenth century" [p. 9].

the measure, it was never implemented--probably because Taft feared other nations would not respond and he wanted to avoid what might be interpreted as a humiliating diplomatic rebuff.⁶

Although temporarily frustrated, the advocates of disarmament refused to abandon their goal. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy from 1913 to 1921, periodically recommended a conference to formulate a plan for reducing armaments. His disarmament efforts were supplemented by the peacemaking policies of President Woodrow Wilson's first Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan. Bryan eventually negotiated twenty-two treaties of conciliation, known as "cooling-off treaties."⁷

Congressional interest in disarmament was rekindled in 1913 when Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, proposed a one-year naval construction holiday for Great Britain and Germany. Churchill's proposal inspired Congressman Walter Hensley of Missouri to introduce a resolution authorizing the President to cooperate with the British in the plan. Although his resolution passed, it was never implemented due to the inability of Great Britain and

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-12.

⁷Ibid., pp. 12-13. These treaties pledged the signatories to submit disputes to an international commission. The signatories agreed not to resort to force until the commission investigated the dispute and issued a report--a proceeding that must be completed within one year.

Germany to reach an agreement.⁸ The following spring Wilson assigned his advisor, Colonel Edward M. House, the task of trying to halt naval competition among the United States, Great Britain, and Germany but the outbreak of war made his efforts hopeless.

Although World War I interrupted the work of the disarmament and peace societies, another Hensley Resolution was attached to a naval appropriations bill in 1916. It authorized President Wilson, at the end of the war, to convene a world conference for the purpose of establishing a court of arbitration to settle disputes peaceably and provide for disarmament. This resolution revised the policy of immediate disarmament advocated in the resolutions of 1910 and 1913. The new resolution endorsed the program of the American Peace and Arbitration League which advocated eventual disarmament after the establishment of a successful world organization.⁹

The 1916 Naval Appropriations Act, to which the Hensley Resolution was attached, authorized the construction

⁸Ibid., pp. 13-15. On 8 December 1913 the Hensley Resolution passed the House by a vote of 317 to 11. Vinson notes that during the debates some "sort of record for borrowed eloquence was set by Representative Claude Weaver who in a single speech on the folly of war cited Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Tiberius, Gracchus, Homer, Tennyson, Gibbon, President Wilson and others."

⁹Ibid., pp. 17-18.

of 156 vessels.¹⁰ It permitted an increase in naval expenditures from \$155,029,000 for 1915-1916 to \$1,268,000,000 for 1917-1918.¹¹ The Act stipulated, however, that, if any international conference should make competitive armament unnecessary, the President could suspend construction.

The Allies preferred that the United States build destroyers for convoy and antisubmarine action instead of capital ships. The British were especially hopeful that America would adopt this course lest Great Britain lose its predominant naval position in the world. The United States did build 267 destroyers and by 1918 only one of the sixteen capital ships authorized by the 1916 legislation had been constructed.¹² Although the 1916 construction program was never completed, it was highly significant because it was

¹⁰The Battle of Jutland had just been fought and it seemed to prove that heavily armored vessels with large-calibered guns were the most effective naval weapons. The Naval Act, therefore, provided for sixteen capital ships--ten were battleships, each armed with twelve 16-inch guns, and six battle cruisers, each armed with eight 16-inch guns, and capable of thirty-four knot speed. The Naval Act also called for ten scout cruisers, 110 smaller combat craft, and twenty other auxiliary vessels. See Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 133-34.

¹¹Yamato Ichihashi, The Washington Conference and After: A Historical Survey (New York: AMS Press, 1969), p. 4. (Hereafter cited as Ichihashi, Washington Conference.)

¹²Thomas H. Buckley, The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), pp. 6-7, 21. (Hereafter cited as Buckley, United States and Washington Conference.)

the first time since the Napoleonic Wars that the British Navy had been threatened with a position of naval inferiority. The primary purpose of the construction program was to meet the German threat during World War I; however, the program was also an indication that the United States would no longer acquiesce in any wartime actions, such as naval neutrality violations, which restricted American trade.¹³

Meanwhile, the public demand for peace and disarmament had grown too strong for Congress to ignore. Between 1910 and 1916, Congress had adopted three resolutions which urged the limitation of armament and international organizations for the maintenance of peace. The next successful congressional disarmament resolution would be that of Senator William E. Borah in 1921.¹⁴

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance

World War I profoundly affected international politics. In Europe the prewar balance of power disintegrated. Great Britain, France, and Germany were weakened and the Austro-Hungarian Empire was destroyed. Russia was now a revolutionary, rather than a conservative, power. In the Far East China was undergoing a chaotic

¹³Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 134-35.

¹⁴Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 19.

revolution and Japan was developing into a major Pacific power. In the United States the Harding Administration needed to conclude separate peace treaties with the defeated European states, readjust relations with the Caribbean and Latin American states, and deal with the increasing American-Japanese tension in the Pacific.¹⁵

The irreconcilable bloc in the Senate, those who were opposed to American participation in the League of Nations in any form whatsoever, made a concerted effort to take control of foreign policy during Harding's Administration. They championed two causes that had wide public appeal: world peace and disarmament. The historian John Chalmers Vinson contends that Hughes attempted "to utilize the enthusiasm of the Senate without challenging its basic approach to foreign policy. While broadening policy enough to meet the issue concerned, he sought to achieve strictly limited objectives."¹⁶

The sentiments of the chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, William E. Borah, were especially important in foreign policy formulation. Borah, one of the leading irreconcilables, believed the United

¹⁵Charles E. Neu, The Troubled Encounter: The United States and Japan (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 102. (Hereafter cited as Neu, Troubled Encounter.)

¹⁶Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. ix, 1.

States should remain aloof from political arrangements with other nations because, as he stated, "political pacts foment war, they do not augment peace."¹⁷

Borah's beliefs conformed to the Senate's approach to foreign policy, which, according to Vinson, emphasized the maintenance of American sovereignty, settlement of international problems by conferences, maintenance of international law and world order by the power of public opinion and moral law, and the preservation of peace by disarmament. Although the Harding Administration agreed these principles should be preserved, there was disagreement over the procedures to be followed in adhering to these principles. In other words, should the United States follow the recommendations of the irreconcilables and continue in the traditional course of isolation from Europe or should the nation adopt a new strategy based on international cooperation?¹⁸

A major concern of both the Senate and the Administration was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Originally signed in 1902 and renewed in 1911, it was presumably due to expire in 1921. Under its terms, Great Britain and Japan

¹⁷Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁸Ibid., p. ix. Vinson points out that, "actually, the United States had been called on many times to choose between isolation or cooperation; and, while the official policy of the government was the former, a minority of its citizens had always advocated the latter" [p. 4].

were obligated to aid each other if either were attacked by another nation. Although the possibility was remote, it was conceivable that the British might aid the Japanese in a war against the United States. Actually, as Whitney Griswold has noted, "American mistrust of the alliance centered on its relation to Japanese imperialism rather than on the possibility that it might involve the United States in war with England."¹⁹

American fear of Japanese intentions in the Far East originated with the acquisition of the Philippine Islands. American mediation in the Russo-Japanese War, the Taft-Katsura Agreement, and the Root-Takahira Agreement were diplomatic examples of the attempt to provide security for the Philippines, Guam, and the Hawaiian Islands. During World War I Japan had presented China with "Twenty-one Demands" which violated Chinese sovereignty and the Open Door policy. Japan had worked with Great Britain in the takeover of Germany's Pacific possessions and spheres of influence. Japan occupied Shantung and the Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands. In addition, Japanese troops were occupying Siberia and Japan claimed Manchuria, as well as Yap, a strategic island seven hundred miles from the Philippines which served as a landing stage for one of two

¹⁹A. Whitney Griswold, The Far Eastern Policy of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), pp. 273-77. (Hereafter cited as Griswold, Far Eastern Policy.)

Pacific cables. Although Wilson was unable to break the Japanese hold over these possessions at Versailles, the Japanese Government did agree to accept the mandate system and not to erect nor fortify bases.²⁰

In July 1920, however, Japan adopted a naval armament program which created anxiety in American governmental circles. The new program was similar to the original eight-eight program adopted by Japan in 1914. The old program had been designed to give Japan eight battleships and eight cruisers by 1927, all of which would be less than eight years old.²¹ The new program provided for the construction of two capital ships each year for the next twenty-four years. The forty-eight ships were to be divided into three squadrons, each consisting of eight battleships and eight battle cruisers. By 1927 this program would have required an annual expenditure of \$400,000,000.²²

Not only Japanese construction, but American and British naval construction as well, posed a threat to world

²⁰Ibid., pp. 84-89.

²¹Ichihashi, Washington Conference, p. 4; Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 100.

²²Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 138. This meant the Japanese Government would be spending as much money on its navy as was the United States. This would have been an immense sum for Japan, considering its population was one-half that of the United States and its per capita income only twenty-nine dollars as compared to \$350 in the United States. See Raymond Leslie Buell, The Washington Conference (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1922; reprint ed., New York: Russell and Russell, 1970), p. 139.

peace. The Anglo-American naval race emerged from the wartime debate over neutral rights. During World War I, the British refused to recognize American demands for freedom of the seas. The British Government argued that, being an island empire, British national interests required naval supremacy. The American Government, however, would not agree to British naval supremacy unless the latter recognized freedom of the seas. The stalemate merely encouraged naval competition because the nation with the largest fleet could enforce its view of international law. This is why the British were so concerned with the American Naval Appropriations Act of 1916.²³

Fearing the loss of their naval supremacy, the British opposed the second of Wilson's Fourteen Points-- freedom of the seas. They refused to accept it as a basis for an armistice or for inclusion in the peace treaty.²⁴ At the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the British representatives threatened to withdraw support for the League of Nations unless Wilson acquiesced in British demands for naval supremacy. Wilson countered by threatening to outbuild the British Navy if the British Government did not support the League.²⁵

²³Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 25-26.

²⁴Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 21.

²⁵Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 26.

On 10 April 1919 a confidential memorandum was exchanged between Colonel House and Lord Robert Cecil. Cecil indicated the British would support both a League of Nations and an amendment by Wilson excluding the Monroe Doctrine from League jurisdiction. In return, House indicated Wilson would postpone the construction of vessels not yet completed by the 1916 Naval Act--thereby agreeing not to seek naval parity with the British. But the House-Cecil Memorandum proved to be only a temporary truce. When it became obvious that the United States Congress would reject the League, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels announced he would submit a proposal for a second three-year naval construction program.²⁶ A major factor which influenced his decision to increase naval construction was the increasing Japanese-American tension in the Far East.

²⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 8, 22-23. According to the General Board of the United States Navy, in December 1921 the naval strength of Great Britain, the United States, and Japan was as follows:

	Capital Ship Tonnage (battleships and cruisers)	Tonnage Ratio (capital ships)	Total Military Tonnage	Ratio for all Tonnage
Great Britain	1,015,825	13.9	1,753,539	13.5
United States	728,390	10	1,302,441	10
Japan	494,528	6.8	641,852	4.9

If the proposed American and Japanese construction programs were completed by 1928, the tonnage ratio for capital ships would be 10.6 (Great Britain), 10.0 (United States), and 8.7 (Japan). See pp. 23-24.

Japanese imperialism posed a threat to China's territorial integrity and political sovereignty. Japanese soldiers occupied portions of Shantung, Manchuria, and Eastern Siberia.²⁷ Throughout 1921 telegrams from American diplomats in China indicated that Chinese governmental authority was virtually nonexistent and that financial bankruptcy was imminent.²⁸

Japan and the United States had emerged as world powers at approximately the same time--Japan after its victory over China in 1895 and the United States after its victory over Spain in 1898. Japanese prestige had been enhanced by the 1902 alliance with Great Britain.²⁹ The British Government believed the alliance reduced the likelihood that Japan would ally with Germany or Russia and thus force the British to maintain a large navy in the Pacific. But the Japanese used the treaty to make gains in

²⁷Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 24-25. In his book, The Washington Conference and After, Ichihashi argues that there was a degree of hypocrisy among Western nations that criticized Japanese imperialist activity in China. According to Ichihashi, "Japan was severely criticized by her Western colleagues for doing what they were doing; she was vehemently charged with violating the sacred open-door principle. In short, she was made the scapegoat for all the ills of the Sick Man of the Far East" [p. 341].

²⁸See Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 1:499, 510.

²⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 26, 75-76.

East Asia. They believed their interests in the Asiatic mainland were justifiable due to economic and population pressures at home.³⁰ The British Government condoned, and even encouraged, Japanese imperialism in Manchuria in order to direct the Japanese away from the more important British interests in South China, Tibet, Burma, India, New Zealand, and Australia. In October 1921 the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon of Kedleston, suggested to V. K. Wellington Koo, the Chinese Minister in London, that China permit the Japanese to expand into Manchuria since it was not part of China proper and was outside the more important Chinese industrial areas.³¹

Utilizing the protective umbrella of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan embarked upon an expansion program: Korea was annexed in 1911, Japanese economic interests entered Manchuria shortly thereafter, German economic interests in Shantung were taken over by Japan in 1914, Japan attempted to convert China into a virtual satellite-state by imposing a list of "Twenty-one Demands" upon China in 1915, Japan absorbed Germany's Pacific Islands during World War I and later received them as League Mandates, and Japanese troops occupied Siberia in 1919. Although the

³⁰Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, pp. 84-89.

³¹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 27.

United States had given tacit recognition to Japanese ambitions in the Taft-Katsura (1905), Root-Takahira (1908), and Lansing-Ishii (1917) Agreements, the American Government had protested against the Twenty-one Demands, increased its naval program in 1916, and stationed a powerful fleet in the Pacific after World War I.³²

By 1921 many American diplomats believed the United States should focus its diplomacy on East Asia.³³ The chief of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs, John V. A. MacMurray, argued that America's primary task was "restoring the equilibrium in the Far East which has been so dangerously upset by Japan's process of aggrandizement."³⁴ Harding and Hughes concurred with MacMurray's view and decided that the first step in curbing Japanese hegemony in East Asia should be the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. American policy makers argued that the alliance sanctioned Japanese imperialism in China and prevented Anglo-American cooperation in East Asia.³⁵ In their opinion, British attempts to channel Japanese expansion into Manchuria violated the Open Door policy of the United

³²Ibid., p. 76.

³³Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 103.

³⁴Akira Iriye, After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 14.

³⁵Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 103.

States. As Thomas H. Buckley notes in The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922, "British policy was in the tradition of the balance of power and spheres of influence; the Open Door policy had evolved, by 1921, into a stand against balances and spheres."³⁶

As early as 1904 American military strategists had devised contingency war plans against several other nations. A color of the rainbow designated each nation, and orange denoted Japan. The Orange Plan concluded that the Philippine Islands would be Japan's first objective and that it would be exceedingly difficult for the United States to hold them. A dispute over whether a strong base should be constructed in Guam or the Philippines and Congressional promises of independence for the Philippines only complicated the issue.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Japanese Government became resentful of American immigration policies, which discriminated against its nationals, as well as American attempts to break up its alliance with the British. Equally disconcerting to the Japanese was the growing number of American battleships in the Pacific.³⁸ Japan's "National Defense Policy" designated the United States as its major potential enemy

³⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 27.

³⁷Ibid., p. 81.

³⁸Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, pp. 84-89.

and called for a naval policy which would maintain parity with the United States. When the United States Navy surpassed Japan in naval construction during World War I, Japan decided to abandon parity and strive to maintain a 7:10 ratio with the United States. Even this plan proved expensive, however, and the Japanese Government feared Great Britain might decide the growing Japanese fleet constituted a threat to New Zealand and Australia. This could lead to the creation of an Anglo-American combination against Japan. The Japanese naval ministry, which was aware of this possibility, hoped to reach an agreement with the United States which would prevent an Anglo-American alliance against Japan and leave Japan dominant in the Western Pacific.³⁹

The Japanese-American naval race prompted speculation among certain journalists that war between the two rivals was imminent. In 1921 a British armaments critic, Hector C. Bywater, wrote Sea-Power in the Pacific. Bywater foresaw an impending war between America and Japan and advised the United States to construct defenses on Guam in order to protect the Philippine Islands. A former Tsarist general, Nikolai Nikolaevich Golovin, also predicted a Japanese-American war in his book, Problem of the Pacific in the Twentieth Century (1922). Golovin believed Japan

³⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 79-80.

would lead the yellow-skinned populations and the United States the white-skinned populations in a gigantic racial war. He concluded that naval disarmament would neither delay nor prevent the war because it was inevitable.⁴⁰

The British were perplexed by American opposition to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. The British neither wanted involvement in a war with the United States nor abandonment of the alliance with Japan. The British Government, therefore, hoped to exclude the United States from the alliance provisions when the treaty came up for renewal in 1911. The Japanese Government proved uncooperative, however, and refused to endorse any exceptions to the alliance.⁴¹

Meanwhile, during and after World War I, American naval construction continued to threaten Great Britain's naval supremacy. In December 1920 the United States

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 76-77.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 28-29. The British wanted to insert an article in the 1911 renewal treaty which would exempt either Great Britain or Japan from an obligation to go to war against a third power if either party had an arbitration treaty with that power. A general arbitration treaty between the United States and Great Britain, signed on 3 August 1911, failed to pass the United States Senate. A modified treaty (one of the Bryan "cooling-off" treaties), however, was signed on 15 September 1914 and it was ratified by the Senate. The British Government notified Japan that it regarded the modified arbitration treaty as exempting the British from an obligation to go to war with the United States under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Buckley notes, however, that "The Japanese government never accepted this technical evasion as a definitive interpretation of the treaty" [p. 29].

Department of the Navy recommended a three-year building program which included the construction of eighty-eight additional naval vessels.⁴² That same month the Standing Defense Subcommittee of the British Cabinet met with Prime Minister David Lloyd George to discuss the naval situation. Lloyd George warned that an Anglo-American naval race might bring economic ruin to Great Britain--especially if the country had to repay its war debt to the United States prior to starting construction. Unable to devise a suitable alternative, the British Admiralty announced in March 1921 a building program designed to keep step with American growth.⁴³

The Borah Resolution

Public sentiment for disarmament grew stronger as the naval race progressed. There was a growing conviction that armament competition had been the primary cause of World War I. If complete disarmament could be achieved, therefore, perhaps wars could be prevented.⁴⁴

⁴²Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 43.

⁴³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 23, 25. Sir Arthur Willert, correspondent for the London Times, suggested that Great Britain, Japan, and the United States sign a tripartite agreement because "when the British had a bad elephant in India they 'put him between two good elephants to behave'" [p. 30].

⁴⁴Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 45. According to Vinson, "the popular attitude toward the relation of armament and wars was well expressed in an epigram 'Big warships meant big wars. Smaller warships meant smaller wars. No warships might eventually mean no wars.'"

Proponents of disarmament argued that another beneficial result of their movement would be tax reduction. The cost of battleship construction had risen from five million dollars in 1900 to forty million dollars in 1920. In December 1920 Senator Porter J. McCumber, chairman of the State Finance Committee, announced that, unless government spending was reduced, the deficit would be as high as two billion dollars by July 1921. Letters from public citizens to congressmen indicated there was a significant demand for converting military expenditures and the tax structure to a peacetime basis.⁴⁵

During the 1920 fall meeting of the League of Nations, V. K. Wellington-Koo of China said disarmament was hampered by the failure of the United States to join the League. It was impossible for the nations within the League to disarm unless the United States was also bound to do likewise. Similar accusations were made by the Japanese delegates who argued that American failure to join the League made increased armament the only path to security.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 45-46. The public demands for disarmament proved embarrassing to those Republican senators who had opposed American entrance into the League of Nations. Wilson had warned that rejection of the League would lead to greater expenditures for armament. Several senators and representatives, therefore, began to search for a means of achieving disarmament even though the United States remained outside the League of Nations. Vinson notes that, by late 1920, "disarmament had become a part of the politician's standard campaign equipment, along with devotion to mother, the home, and American ideals" [pp. 46-47].

The result of these observations was a League invitation for the United States to participate in consultations relative to limitation of armament. According to Vinson, "this invitation by the League served as the final catalyst which transferred the disarmament problem from the realm of discussion to that of action."⁴⁶

Doubts concerning the Senate's wisdom in rejecting the League increased and petitions deluged the Senate demanding international peace, armament limitation, and tax reduction. In Vinson's view the "Senate was being condemned because all three aims seemed beyond the reach of the United States, yet within the grasp of the nations belonging to the League."⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Wilson declined the offer for the United States to participate in League disarmament discussions. In defense of his position, Wilson declared that he supported disarmament; however, until Congress recognized the wisdom of League membership, he believed disarmament was impossible for the United States. Wilson's statement was a clever political maneuver because the burden of responsibility for disarmament now rested upon the shoulders of the Senate.

On 11 December 1920 Senator Thomas J. Walsh of Montana responded to Wilson's challenge by introducing a resolution requesting the President to appoint a delegate to

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 47-49.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 48.

the League commission on armament limitation. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, succeeded in delaying its passage, however, when he moved that the Walsh Resolution be submitted to his committee for further study. Walsh reintroduced his resolution in the next two sessions but was unable to extract it from the committee for a vote. Meanwhile, an alternative solution had been offered by the British press. In December 1920 the British periodical, Round Table, suggested a conference be convened to discuss disarmament, modification of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and Far Eastern issues.⁴⁸

The Walsh Resolution considered the League as the only agency which offered an apparatus for armament reduction. By contributing to the defeat of the resolution, the anti-League and pro-disarmament senators left themselves open to criticism from those who were primarily interested in disarmament. Vinson contends, therefore, that "it was perhaps more than mere coincidence that the next proposal in the Senate for limitation of armament came from one of the most irreconcilable foes of the League, Senator Borah."⁴⁹

Borah decided to by-pass the League and introduce a resolution which called for an independent course of

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 47-50.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 51.

action for the United States. On 14 December 1920 he introduced a resolution calling for the President to convene a tripartite conference among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan to reduce naval expenditures by fifty percent of current estimates over a period of five years. The Borah Resolution also provided for Congress to curtail military appropriations should the conference agree to limit naval armament. Vinson notes that Borah's proposal evoked "an instant and enthusiastic response from the American public."⁵⁰

Borah's Resolution was an attempt to achieve a compromise between the choices posed by the Wilson Administration--either League membership or an extensive program designed to achieve naval supremacy. The New York World, under the editorship of Herbert Bayard Swope, conducted a campaign to arouse public support for the resolution. Borah's irreconcilable colleague, Republican Senator Hiram Johnson, as well as Generals Tasker H. Bliss and John J. Pershing, supported the movement. Additional support was rendered by the Women's Peace Society and the Women's Committee on World Disarmament.⁵¹

President-elect Harding and his Congressional supporters did not share the enthusiasm of the advocates of

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 52-53.

disarmament. Harding, who had supported a large navy while a senator, believed Borah's Resolution represented usurpation of executive authority and that the establishment of naval supremacy should precede disarmament discussion.⁵² He recommended that the 1916 construction program be completed before calling a disarmament conference. If the United States disarmed before its completion, the American fleet might remain inferior to the British. Neither Great Britain nor Japan, therefore, would need to attend a disarmament conference. On the other hand, the Administration would encounter less difficulty in negotiating disarmament when it could offer a limitation of the American Navy to countries with navies of comparable size.⁵³

President Wilson also opposed the convening of a disarmament conference. He was opposed to disarmament while the United States was not a member of the League. The Republican Party leaders believed nothing should be done until Harding assumed office. Most Republicans in the House of Representatives disagreed with Borah's Resolution and preferred to give Harding an opportunity to formulate disarmament policy. The Republican opposition was so strong

⁵²Ibid., pp. 54-55, 61.

⁵³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 16.

that the House passed a naval appropriations bill on 15 February 1921 without any qualifying resolution.⁵⁴

The debate in the Senate was devoted to the proper relationship between the President and Congress in the conduct of foreign affairs. Several Senate Republicans wanted to provide Harding with an opportunity to exert strong leadership. They maintained that the President should be independent of the Senate in calling international conferences. Borah disagreed with this approach. He believed the Senate, rather than the President, should assume leadership in the matter. By employing a filibuster, Borah was able to block passage of the naval appropriations bill in the Senate. His task was made easier because there were four disarmament resolutions, in addition to his, before the Senate. When Harding assumed office in March 1921 neither the naval appropriations bill nor any resolutions supporting disarmament had passed Congress. In Vinson's view, "it appeared in March that Congress would continue to delay, unless forced to take action in response to presidential leadership or popular demand."⁵⁵

President Harding, however, gave little indication of enunciating a bold and decisive policy. According to Vinson, "the public's understanding of Harding's foreign

⁵⁴Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 58-62.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 64-68.

policy was almost as muddled on the eve of his inauguration as it had been before the President-elect began 'clarifying' it."⁵⁶ About all that was known was that Harding opposed joining the League but supported world peace through an association of nations. He wanted the United States to engage in international affairs but only for the purpose of finding solutions for specific American problems and only by the conference method.⁵⁷

It became increasingly apparent, however, that public opinion believed disarmament should precede the establishment of an association of nations. It would take time to form an association of nations, but disarmament could be achieved in one conference. Harding was inundated with petitions demanding immediate disarmament. On 19 April 1921, for example, Harding was host to representatives of six pro-disarmament organizations--the Women's Committee for World Disarmament, the League of Women Voters, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Consumer's League, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Women's

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 73.

⁵⁷Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 15. In a private letter to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge on 29 December 1920, Harding had written, "I am quite as convinced as the most bitter irreconcilable that the country does not want the Versailles League. I am equally convinced that the country does wish us to do some proper and helpful thing to bring nations more closely together for counsel and advice."

Christian Temperance Union.⁵⁸ Much of the credit for mobilizing public opinion, however, must be given to Borah. His resolution, according to Vinson, "captured the public's imagination and crystallized the people's desire for disarmament."⁵⁹

On 11 April 1921 Congress convened in a special session to deal with the Naval Appropriations Bill and disarmament. Harding and his supporters in both houses opposed the Borah resolution. The Administration continued to prefer naval supremacy first and disarmament second. The House passed the appropriations bill but defeated all resolutions, including Borah's, which called for disarmament. The Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, however, was more accommodating to the Administration's position. It recommended that the Naval Appropriations Bill just passed by the House be increased by \$100,000,000.

⁵⁸Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 79, 82. Although the work of the above mentioned organizations was valuable, Vinson believes that, "numerically speaking, the greatest force was exerted by the churches of the United States." Vinson contends that Harding attempted to cope with the demands for disarmament by displaying "agreeable evasiveness." But "the task was too great--even for one with his outstanding talent in obfuscation. . . . The President and to a lesser degree the Senate now became the objects of renewed and vigorous attacks by the advocates of disarmament" [pp. 82-83].

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 79. Borah gave numerous public addresses and interviews on the subject and received hundreds of letters approving his efforts for the limitation of armament. Vinson believes "Borah's leadership encouraged various national groups to oppose officially the continued building of naval armament" [p. 80].

Encouraged by these events, Harding announced publicly on 3 May 1921 that he opposed the Borah Resolution.

Harding's announcement was not well received. The advocates of disarmament launched a campaign in support of their cause. More than five hundred petitions for disarmament were recorded in the Congressional Record between 5 May and 22 June 1921. The Women's Committee on World Disarmament, which eventually became known as the Washington Committee, proclaimed a National Disarmament Week for 22-29 May. Supporters in thirty-three states united for observance of the occasion and groups of women, known as the "Women's Flying Squadrons for Disarmament," made tours and attempted to arouse demands for a conference. Although disarmament was their professed goal, a study of the petitions reveals that most people were primarily interested in defeating two ancient enemies--war and taxes.⁶⁰

The rising tide of public opinion created a shift in senatorial opinion. A deal appears to have been made whereby Borah and his supporters dropped their opposition to the generous Naval Appropriations Bill and the Administration removed its opposition to his resolution. The Naval Appropriations Bill, along with the Borah Resolution, was passed by Congress on 12 July 1921.⁶¹

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 82-91.

⁶¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 91-92; Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 104.

It is interesting to speculate on whether the Harding Administration would have agreed to a disarmament conference without the pressure from Borah, the press, and the advocates of disarmament. Was the Administration's opposition to the Borah Resolution merely a tactical device designed to gain time in order to solve complex diplomatic problems?⁶² Whitney Griswold contends that "whether or not the honor of first putting the idea of a disarmament conference into practical diplomacy belongs to Senator Borah, his resolution establishes him as one of the first to have done so."⁶³ This implies that pressure from Borah and his supporters was instrumental in effecting the Administration's change in policy. On the other hand, Vinson concludes that Secretary of State Hughes "had gained control of the movement for naval limitation and rescued the executive prerogatives so completely that when Harding announced the forthcoming conference the press described him as a farsighted statesman."⁶⁴

It is plausible that both interpretations are valid. Borah's resolution was in response to public demands from

⁶²Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 97.

⁶³Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, p. 283.

⁶⁴John Chalmers Vinson, "Charles Evans Hughes," in An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), pp. 138-39. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, "Charles Evans Hughes.")

taxpayers, advocates of pacifism and disarmament, and those elements wishing to make amends for American rejection of the League. The Borah Resolution also represented an attempt by certain senators to seize the initiative in foreign policy. Harding and Hughes realized they must yield to public opinion, negotiate a workable program for disarmament, and avert a power struggle with Congress without sacrificing their control of foreign policy. Although they avoided making a public confession, Harding and Hughes believed the United States should atone for its sin of having rejected membership in the League by taking some initiative in world affairs. They decided, therefore, to expand the proposals of Borah and other advocates of disarmament. Whereas Borah and his supporters had advocated only naval reduction, Harding and Hughes believed any successful conference must also deal with Pacific and East Asian problems. The Administration fought a delaying action, therefore, in order to lay solid diplomatic foundations with the English in order to ensure that a disarmament conference would be successful.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 104-5.

Pre-conference Diplomacy

During 1919 and 1920 rumors reached the United States Government indicating that Great Britain and Japan might renew their alliance before it expired in 1921.⁶⁶ The United States Department of State suggested that, in renewing the treaty, the British Government respect the principle of equal opportunity in China and include a statement indicating the treaty was not aimed at America. In June 1920 the British Government assured the American Ambassador, George Harvey, that equal opportunity in China would be considered and that if the alliance were renewed it would not be directed at the United States.⁶⁷

The growing antagonism between the Japanese and American Governments, as well as the persistent demands in the American press that the alliance not be renewed, were sources of apprehension to the British Government.⁶⁸ The British decided, therefore, to counter American objections to renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance by suggesting

⁶⁶ Charles Nelson Spinks, "The Termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," The Pacific Historical Review 6 (November 1937):324.

⁶⁷ Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 2:680-82.

⁶⁸ Spinks, "The Termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," p. 236.

a tripartite agreement that would include the United States.⁶⁹ A positive indication that the British were willing to reach an understanding with the United States was manifest by the appointment of the pro-American, Lord Lee of Fareham, as First Lord of the Admiralty on 22 February 1921.⁷⁰ Lord Lee suggested in a speech before the members of the American Institution of Naval Architects that Great Britain might agree to naval parity with the United States. On 22 April 1921 in an interview with Adolph Ochs, publisher of the New York Times, Lee declared that naval armament reduction might permit the establishment of a joint Anglo-American hegemony over the seas with Great Britain policing the Atlantic and the United States the Pacific. This was an interesting proposal from a partner in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁷¹

The issue of naval disarmament, as well as the question of renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, also affected the British dominions. Canada, for example, was

⁶⁹Ira Klein, "Whitehall, Washington, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, 1919-1921," Pacific Historical Review 41 (November 1972):462. (Hereafter cited as Klein, "Whitehall.")

⁷⁰Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 103. Lord Lee was married to an American, had served with Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders in Cuba, and had been a professor of Military Science and Tactics at the Royal Canadian Military Academy. See Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 94.

⁷¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 94. Ochs immediately reported Lee's ideas to the American Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby.

concerned lest her soil become the battleground if a British-American confrontation occurred because of British treaty obligations to Japan. Whitney Griswold, author of The Far Eastern Policy of the United States, believed that immigration problems in British Columbia paralleled those of California in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Canadian Government endorsed American limitation of Japanese immigration, and in 1908 the Canadian Commissioner of Labor and Immigration, MacKenzie King, publicly thanked President Theodore Roosevelt for sending the American fleet to the Pacific. Griswold contends that "from that time on Canadian apprehensions of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance had varied directly with American."⁷²

On the other hand, it appeared that the security of Australia and New Zealand was dependent upon maintaining friendly ties with Japan. In order to achieve an agreement with their dominions, the British scheduled an Imperial Conference which convened on 20 June 1921. Historians have developed contrasting views concerning the role played by the dominions in the termination of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In his book, North Atlantic Triangle, Bartlett Brebner wrote that the Canadian Prime Minister, Arthur Meighen, was influential in convincing the British to substitute a multi-power accord for the alliance. Brebner

⁷²Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, p. 286.

interpreted it as a victory by Meighen over the opposition of Prime Minister William M. Hughes of Australia.⁷³

Griswold also believed that American attempts to have the alliance terminated were rejected until Meighen

. . . succeeded virtually single-handed in bringing the conference to accept the idea of relinquishing the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in favor of a general understanding . . . on Pacific affairs between the United States, Great Britain, China, and Japan.⁷⁴

John Chalmers Vinson has presented a contrary viewpoint. He argues that "Great Britain and all the dominions declared many times in 1920 and 1921, both in public and in confidential statements, an intense desire to cultivate America's friendship."⁷⁵ Vinson believes that the Australian Government was willing to accommodate American wishes in regard to the alliance and that Prime Minister Hughes did not "believe the Anglo-Japanese Alliance to be an indispensable part of his nation's policy."⁷⁶ Furthermore, Vinson contends that Prime Minister Hughes, rather than Prime Minister Meighen, was the influential spokesman for the dominions at the conference. Prime Minister Hughes believed the Imperial Conference should not begin work until

⁷³Klein, "Whitehall," p. 464.

⁷⁴Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, p. 288.

⁷⁵John Chalmers Vinson, "The Imperial Conference of 1921 and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance," Pacific Historical Review 31 (August 1962):257. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, "Imperial Conference.")

⁷⁶Ibid.

provided with a statement of the American Government's objections to the alliance.⁷⁷

On 23 June 1921 Sir Auckland Geddes, the British Ambassador in Washington, requested that the American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes, inform the British as to the American position on the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Geddes learned that the American Government's major objection to the alliance was the tacit support it gave to Japanese imperialism in the Far East. Secretary of State Hughes stated that both the Congress and American public opinion strongly opposed renewal of the alliance in any form. Geddes replied that Great Britain could not abrogate the alliance too hastily lest it anger Japan.⁷⁸ He believed the alliance would probably be continued, therefore, for one additional year beyond 13 July 1921--the generally accepted date of expiration.⁷⁹ Hughes responded with the threat that Congress might be forced to support a pending resolution for the recognition of the Irish Republic if the Anglo-Japanese Alliance were not terminated.⁸⁰

The British Ambassador then suggested that a tripartite pact be formed to replace the alliance. Hughes

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 261-62.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 262.

⁷⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 95.

⁸⁰Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921, 2:315-16.

accepted this proposal but insisted that his approval remain highly confidential and that any new tripartite agreement must include no commitments nor obligations. Vinson has argued that, five days before the Imperial Conference began serious debate, the United States Government had agreed to a three-power pact as a substitute for the alliance. The fate of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, therefore, was not decided by the debates in the Imperial Conference, but rather through British-American diplomatic activity.⁸¹

Another historian, Ira Klein, concurs with Vinson's interpretation. Klein contends that the British leaders, Prime Minister David Lloyd George and Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon of Kedleston, had decided "more than a year before" the convening of the Imperial Conference to bridge Japanese-American differences by a tripartite agreement.⁸² Klein believes that "Washington's desire to see the alliance weakened or ended was felt at Whitehall as forcefully as the opinions of the Dominions."⁸³ The major roles in the redirection of British alignments, therefore, were played by Whitehall and Washington rather than the dominions. In addition to dominion interests, British leaders considered equally the impact of the alliance on Anglo-American

⁸¹Vinson, "Imperial Conference," pp. 262-63, 266.

⁸²Klein, "Whitehall," p. 462.

⁸³Ibid., p. 468.

relations, on the security of such British colonies as Malaya, Hong Kong, and India, on the balance of power in Asia, on the prospects of Soviet aggrandizement in the Far East, on the Open Door in China, and on Anglo-Japanese rivalry in the Yangtze region and elsewhere.⁸⁴

The British leaders wanted to retain close cooperation with the United States, but prevent an abrupt rupture with Japan. A hasty abrogation of the alliance might incur Japanese enmity and threaten British interests in the Far East.⁸⁵ All the conferees at the Imperial Conference agreed the alliance should be modified some time during the coming year in a conference of the Pacific powers--Great Britain and its dominions, the United States, Japan, and China.⁸⁶ The British were fortunate because dominion leaders, like Prime Minister Meighen and Hughes, were willing to accept a Pacific conference. This enabled the British Government to obtain both its objectives--a temporary continuation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and negotiations for a multiple agreement.⁸⁷ On 2 July 1921 the Imperial Conference formally called for a conference to

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 461-62.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 468.

⁸⁶Vinson, "Imperial Conference," p. 265.

⁸⁷Klein, "Whitehall," p. 472.

discuss Far Eastern issues with a view toward achieving disarmament and the elimination of naval warfare.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, on 29 June 1921 Congress had adopted the Naval Appropriations Bill with the Borah Resolution which called for a tripartite conference among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan for the purpose of achieving disarmament. Secretary of State Hughes recognized the need for the United States to seize the initiative in calling a conference. Unless disarmament became the primary reason for calling a conference, there would be little possibility of Senate approval for a conference.

The British Government also recognized the need for American initiative in calling for a conference in order to silence anti-English elements in the American population. If the British initiated the conference, it might anger anti-English elements in the American population and incur Japanese wrath by making it appear that Great Britain was anxious to abrogate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁸⁹ The British were primarily interested in a conference whose chief purpose would be to protect their interest in the Pacific and Far East. The issue of disarmament was of secondary importance to them. In his book on the Washington Conference, Thomas H. Buckley has noted that "naval

⁸⁸Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 110-11.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 110, 113.

limitation was only a door through which the British might enter into negotiations with both the United States and Japan."⁹⁰

On 8 July 1921 Hughes dispatched cables to Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy asking if they would consent to a conference on armament limitation to be held in Washington. Each of the governments gave their consent while the British suggested that Far Eastern matters also be discussed. Hughes agreed, and on 11 August formal invitations were extended to the aforementioned nations as well as China, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Portugal.⁹¹

Prior to the convening of the conference, which opened in November 1921, Hughes rejected persistent British demands for a preliminary Anglo-American conference on Far Eastern issues. Hughes argued that American public opinion would disapprove because it would appear that the major issue of disarmament had been sidetracked. On 20 July 1921 Hughes emphatically declared to the British Government that "opinion in the United States is decisive against a preliminary conference at London. . . . This must be regarded as this Government's final attitude."⁹²

⁹⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 34.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁹²Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1921, 1:28, 37-38.

Hughes also successfully resisted efforts by the Japanese to limit the scope of the conference. The Japanese government officials expected the conference to confine itself to a discussion of armament limitation.⁹³ They were surprised to discover that Far Eastern and Pacific matters would also be included in the conference agenda. Having been excluded from preliminary planning, the Japanese believed they were being summoned to a conference by Anglo-Americans. They delayed in accepting the invitation, therefore, while they attempted to confine conference discussions to disarmament matters.

Another reason for Japanese hesitation was related to an internal power struggle within the Japanese Government. Both the Satsuma Clan, which controlled the navy, and the Choshu Clan, which controlled the army, opposed the conference. Naval reduction might destroy the Satsuma's power, and army reduction would weaken the Choshu Clan. Both groups mistrusted the government of the United States because of its failure to join the League of Nations and because they did not believe America was wholeheartedly committed to disarmament.⁹⁴

⁹³Ichihashi, Washington Conference, p. 13. Ichihashi believes Japan had been severely criticized because she was a new international power. He believes "her activities had been looked upon with suspicion. Her recent blunders had been magnified beyond their merit. In short, Japan had been made the 'goat' of all international ills in the Pacific region. . . ." [pp. 20-21]

⁹⁴Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 99-100, 113.

The liberal civilian party, led by Prime Minister Hara Kei and Foreign Minister Yasuya Uchida, disagreed with the Satsuma and Choshu Clans. The liberals advocated improved relations with the United States. The Foreign Office even suggested that Japan end its spheres of influence in China. But most Japanese regarded Southern Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia as vital areas for the Japanese future. The task of the liberals was aided, however, by a postwar economic depression which created discontent over domestic inequities and continued naval expansion. Even the Satsuma and Choshu began to realize that Japanese-American cooperation was a prerequisite to economic recovery.⁹⁵ In addition, popular approval of the conference in Japan was so overwhelming that the Japanese Government was forced to accept the conference.⁹⁶

Planning the Conference

Secretary of State Hughes and President Warren G. Harding were now confronted with the problem of selecting delegates to the conference. Any agreements in the form of treaties would require the approval of two-thirds of the Senate. During the pre-conference preparations, therefore,

⁹⁵Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 106-7.

⁹⁶Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 113. Vinson contends that "throughout the world plans for disarmament were welcomed with more enthusiasm and relief than any event since the signing of the armistice" [pp. 113-14].

Vinson contends that "almost as much care was devoted to the demands of the Senate as to the demands of some of the foreign countries represented at Washington."⁹⁷ As soon as it learned about the impending conference, the Senate began debating the issue of secret diplomacy. Senator William E. Borah believed the adoption of closed door sessions was a major cause of the inadequacies in the Treaty of Versailles. A resolution was adopted, therefore, which requested the American delegation to discourage censorship and encourage admittance of the press to all proceedings.

Borah also opposed the inclusion of France and Italy in the conference as well as any discussion of Far Eastern issues. Borah believed the French would wreck the conference because they would be satisfied with nothing less than a guarantee of France's borders against aggression. Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Hiram Johnson agreed with Borah's conclusion that expanding the conference would only entangle the United States in numerous international problems. It seemed prudent, therefore, for Hughes and Harding to select senators as official representatives to the conference.⁹⁸

Hughes believed confidence in America's leadership ability had been shattered after the rejection of the Treaty of Versailles and that another failure at a peace conference

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 115.

⁹⁸Ibid., pp. 116-17, 123, 127.

would be catastrophic.⁹⁹ He wanted to avoid antagonizing the Senate while selecting a team of cooperative delegates. Hughes decided against selecting Borah as a delegate because of Borah's penchant for maverick exploits and allergy to team effort. Instead of Borah, Hughes selected the Senate's majority and minority leaders, Henry Cabot Lodge and Oscar W. Underwood, and former Secretary of State Elihu Root.¹⁰⁰ By consulting the two Senators on all important decisions Hughes weakened the possibility of effective Senate protest. Hughes hoped to demonstrate at the Washington Conference that the United States could participate in international diplomacy and draft agreements acceptable to the Senate.¹⁰¹

Hughes recognized that public opinion represented the balance of power in the Administration's contest with the Senate for control of foreign relations. He decided, therefore, to appoint an Advisory Commission to act as a liaison agency between the public and the government. The committee was composed of well known figures representing commerce, finance, labor, agriculture, and religion and was under the directorship of former Senator George Sutherland. A subsidiary committee, known as the Committee on General Information, was created to receive information from the

⁹⁹Vinson, "Charles Evans Hughes," p. 139.

¹⁰⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 100.

¹⁰¹Vinson, "Charles Evans Hughes," p. 139.

public and the press relative to the conference. This subcommittee was soon deluged with petitions demanding disarmament and a reduction in taxes. By skillfully utilizing this source of information, Hughes was able to secure Senate approval for the agreements made at the Washington Conference.¹⁰²

Hughes realized that naval disarmament was the major concern of Congress and the general public. The Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby, was instructed to prepare a plan of naval armament limitation. Denby requested the General Board of the Navy to advise him in this matter. The members of the General Board were opposed to any limitation of naval armaments.¹⁰³ They were especially fearful of Japanese intentions in the Pacific. The Board recommended that the size of the American Navy should be equal to the British and double that of Japan if the United States intended to protect its traditional policies of no entangling alliances,

¹⁰²Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 130-31. See Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 1:308-10, for a complete list of the members of the Advisory Committee.

¹⁰³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 50. The General Board of the Navy consisted of the following members: Rear Admirals William L. Rodgers (chairman), Harry P. Huse, Robert M. Jackson, William V. Pratt, Harry S. Knapp, and Robert E. Coontz and Captain Frank H. Schofield. The Board sent questionnaires to twenty-six naval officers. Their replies reflected the same suspicion of the Japanese. Three of the officers were willing for the British to have greater naval power than the United States, but the majority wanted equality with the British.

the Open Door in China, exclusion of Asiatic immigrants, and defense of the Western Hemisphere.¹⁰⁴

The extreme position taken by the General Board completely ignored public opinion and alienated many governmental officials. Hughes did not heed its advice.¹⁰⁵ Instead of increasing naval armaments, he adopted what became known as the "stop-now" proposal. In October 1921 Hughes decided that the United States, Great Britain, and Japan should scrap their entire building program and establish a respective ratio of 5:5:3 in capital ship displacement tonnage. Hughes believed this ratio would encourage the Japanese to make Far Eastern concessions because the American fleet would not be large enough to threaten Japan. The General Board opposed the plan because it believed it would leave the United States too weak and vulnerable to attack. Hughes refused to alter his plan which was not divulged to anyone outside governmental circles until the conference convened.¹⁰⁶

Hughes also received conflicting advice on how to plan for a Far Eastern diplomatic settlement. The Division of Far Eastern Affairs, for example, displayed an anti-Japanese and pro-Chinese orientation. The head of the

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Nue, Troubled Encounter, p. 108.

¹⁰⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 53-54.

division, John V. A. MacMurray, as well as the special consultants he employed during the Washington Conference, Tyler Dennett and Stanley K. Hornbeck, were all sympathetic to China. They believed Japan was an aggressor and advised Hughes to demand that Japan return Shantung to China, withdraw from Siberia, and abandon her spheres of influence throughout the rest of China. They also strongly defended the Open Door policy and stressed the importance of American-Chinese friendship.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, the Treasury Department and the Bureau of the Budget urged Hughes to avoid an expensive arms race. The Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, suggested that America should cultivate the friendship of Japan because it might be a promising area for economic development. Even the Division of Far Eastern Affairs admitted that Japan might resort to war if backed into a corner. This interpretation was supported by Leonard Wood, governor general of the Philippine Islands. Wood was sent on a special mission to Japan to assess the situation. In his conversations with War Minister Tanaka Giichi, Wood discovered that Japan believed its prosperity was dependent upon hegemony in southern Manchuria. Wood informed Hughes that Japan would probably defend her special position in China with force. According to the historian Charles E. Neu, "Wood's report must have confirmed Hughes' impression

¹⁰⁷Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 108-9.

that a direct attack on Japan's spheres would wreck the conference."¹⁰⁸

Hughes informed the American delegation to the Washington Conference that the United States would never declare war on Japan for its aggressions in China. Hughes believed, however, that American sacrifices in naval construction and the pressure of world opinion would extract diplomatic concessions from Japan. Hughes hoped the result would be an end to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, curtailment of the Japanese presence in China, and a pledge from Japan to respect the Open Door policy as well as Chinese territorial and administrative integrity. By reducing naval armaments, Hughes believed the United States would be sacrificing little because Congress would probably not vote funds for naval construction anyway.¹⁰⁹

Although the British and the Japanese Governments were also devising pre-conference strategies, they expected the United States to formulate a proposal that would form a basis of negotiation. The Japanese Government developed two plans. One plan proposed that naval disarmament be postponed until 1924. This would permit the completion of the 1921 programs and would favor both the Japanese and the Americans who had larger fleets under construction than the

¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 109-10.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., pp. 110-11.

British. A second Japanese plan called for spreading the 1921 program over twice the time planned. These plans indicate the Japanese were apparently eager to reduce naval expenditures because of the severe economic recession which enveloped their country in 1921.¹¹⁰

Prior to the conference, the British Government had decided it could accept naval parity with the United States. Nonetheless, the British hoped to maintain naval superiority even though they would talk of equality. The British Admiralty believed the best approach would be to limit the number of capital ships. But the Admiralty believed the Royal Navy needed three capital ships for every two similar Japanese ships in order to maintain ample sea power in the Pacific. The British hoped the Americans would accept this ratio, especially if a tripartite pact were substituted for the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. In any event, the British Government decided to call for a paper program of naval construction to be used as a bargaining device at the conference.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 57-59. The General Board of the United States Navy estimated that 32 percent of Japan's national budget went for naval expenditures in 1921-1922, whereas the comparable American figure was 12 percent. See page 59.

¹¹¹Ibid., pp. 60-62. The British also called for an international guarantee of the status quo in the Pacific in order to prevent the Japanese from developing a base south of Formosa. The British Government did not want to permit the Japanese to interfere with the British development of Hong Kong and Singapore. See page 60.

On 10 November 1921, the night before the opening session of the conference, Arthur Balfour, the British delegate to the conference, suggested to Hughes that the United States and Great Britain should agree on a joint policy with which to confront Japan. Balfour suggested that a tripartite treaty, designed to maintain the status quo in the Pacific, replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Balfour specifically requested, however, that China be excluded from the status quo agreement. Hughes objected to the use of the words "treaty" and "alliance" and suggested that the less provocative term, "arrangement," would be more acceptable to the United States Senate.¹¹²

Each of the three major naval powers arrived in Washington with plans to end the naval race. The United States possessed an unfinished capital ship construction program that was probably facing further congressional budget reductions. Hughes hoped to turn this liability into an asset by making a bold disarmament proposal. The Japanese wanted to reduce naval construction in order to

¹¹² John Chalmers Vinson, "The Drafting of the Four-Power Treaty of the Washington Conference," Journal of Modern History 25 (March 1953):42-43. Hughes suggested using the Root-Takahira Agreement of 1908 as a model. This Agreement was not a treaty but merely an administrative pledge to maintain the status quo in the Pacific and support the administrative independence and territorial integrity of China as well as the principle of economic opportunity for all nations in China. Japan's "special position" in Eastern Asia, however, was given recognition by the United States in the 1908 Agreement. See Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:1-2.

cope with an economic crisis at home. The British also favored naval reductions and hoped to channel Japanese interests away from British spheres of influence in the Far East. The problem would be to formulate a balance of naval power that each country could accept without damaging its own national interests.¹¹³

It is difficult to isolate the major reason for the convening of the conference. Thomas H. Buckley believes the chief factor that produced the Washington Conference was the old rivalry between Great Britain and the United States which threatened to erupt again at the conclusion of World War I. He also believes public support, the activities of Senator Borah, and America's embarrassment over the rejection of the League of Nations were important influences. Buckley concludes that, "important though these influences were, however, the conference was precipitated by events taking place not in Washington, but in London."¹¹⁴

Aristide Briand, the French Foreign Minister, concluded that the major cause of the Washington Conference was American domestic politics. He believed it was primarily the result of an attempt by the Harding Administration to lighten taxes and acquire prestige.¹¹⁵ Charles E. Neu

¹¹³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 62.

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 18-20.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 105.

contends it was "the danger of a postwar naval race between Great Britain, Japan, and the United States that dominated the public's attention and provided the immediate impetus for the Washington Conference."¹¹⁶ Neu believes that the British wanted a conference to ease naval competition with America and that the initiative for calling the Washington Conference "lay jointly with Great Britain and the United States."¹¹⁷ John Chalmers Vinson is probably more accurate when he concludes that all the aforementioned causes are important and that "the conference was the result of the fortunate coincidence of the divergent aims of all of these indispensable factors."¹¹⁸

By the eve of the Washington Conference there was ample evidence that the United States Government was heavily involved in international affairs. Ethan Ellis, author of Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, is correct when he concludes that in the 1920s America exhibited "very real willingness to participate in international action."¹¹⁹ In their preoccupation with the League issue many historians

¹¹⁶Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 103. According to Neu, "the American people and Congress wanted peace and government retrenchment, not huge naval appropriations and a continuance of international tensions" [pp. 103-4].

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 105.

¹¹⁸Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 114.

¹¹⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 34. See, also, Ronald J. Caridi, 20th Century American Foreign Policy: Security and Self-Interest (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974), pp. 102-3.

have overemphasized the isolationist impulse of the period. It is obvious that, although the American Government avoided commitments, by late 1921 a significant degree of international cooperation had occurred. The term "isolationism" should be adjusted to conform to these circumstances.

"Involvement without commitment" appears to be a far better characterization of the first year and a half of the 1920s.

CHAPTER III

THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

Procedure

The Washington Conference, which met from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922, was the first of three important post-World War I conferences to deal with disarmament. The Geneva (1927) and London (1930) Conferences, however, were less spectacular attempts to make adjustments to decisions reached at Washington. The Washington Conference primarily concerned three powers, the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, while China, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal occupied secondary positions of importance at the conference.

The Washington Conference was also the first major international conference to meet in the capital of the United States. According to the historian, Thomas H. Buckley, "the conference served as a belated indication of the American desire to take a serious part in international relations."¹ Meeting in the Pan-American Building, the

¹Thomas H. Buckley, The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), p. 63. (Hereafter cited as Buckley, United States and Washington Conference.)

conference was dominated by lawyers who, along with military men, constituted a majority of the delegates. The American delegation consisted of Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Oscar W. Underwood, and former Secretary of State Elihu Root. Among the other representatives were Great Britain's Arthur J. Balfour and Lord Lee of Fareham, France's Aristide Briand and Jules Jusserand, Italy's Carlo Schanzer and Vittorio Rolandi-Ricci, China's Sao-Ke Alfred Sze and V. K. Wellington-Koo, and Japan's Baron Tomasaburō-Katō and Prince Iyesato Tokugawa.² Hughes focused public interest on the conference by devoting opening day to the burial of the unknown soldier at Arlington Cemetery. The day, 11 November 1921, was proclaimed a national holiday and speechmakers in numerous meetings throughout the United States denounced the arms race.³

The following day the delegates assembled for the opening speech by Hughes. During the preliminary activities

²Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 1:307. (Hereafter cited as Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922.) For a complete listing, consult pages 306-8.

³John Chalmers Vinson, The Parchment Peace: The United States Senate and the Washington Conference, 1921-1922 (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1955), pp. 134-135. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, Parchment Peace.)

William Jennings Bryan provided some comic relief by attempting to take a bow for applause that was actually directed toward the French delegate, Aristide Briand.⁴ Only nine men, including President Warren G. Harding, knew the contents of Hughes's speech. Hughes feared a leak might occur and that Senator William E. Borah might learn about Hughes's proposal and offer a resolution similar to it in the Senate. Secrecy was maintained, however, and Hughes was able to drop a verbal bombshell on the conference.⁵

First, Hughes proposed that the conference consider limitation of arms immediately and leave Far Eastern problems to committees.⁶ He then shocked the delegates by proposing that all capital shipbuilding programs, either actual or projected, should be abandoned, that further reductions should be made by scrapping certain older ships, and that capital ship tonnage should be used as the measurement of strength for navies.⁷ Hughes also proposed a ten-year naval holiday on replacement tonnage

⁴L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 104. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

⁵Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 138.

⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 71.

⁷Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:319. The ton agreed upon at the Washington Conference was the long ton of 2,240 pounds.

construction, a 10:10:6 ratio in capital ships for the United States, Great Britain, and Japan, no additions of vessels with more than 10,000 displacement tons, and with guns larger than eight-inch bores, and the establishment of a maximum total tonnage for capital ships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers.⁸

Hughes's bold plan would leave the United States with eighteen capital ships equal to 500,650 tons. Great Britain with twenty-two capital ships equal to 604,450 tons, and Japan with ten capital ships equal to 299,700 tons. Replacement tonnage would be permissible after ten years but limited to a total maximum capital tonnage of 500,000 tons for the United States and Great Britain and 300,000 tons for Japan, which is a ratio of 10:10:6.⁹

According to observers, the British delegation looked visibly shocked by Hughes's speech. The Japanese

⁸Ibid., 1:319-21. If agreed upon, Hughes's proposal meant the United States would scrap fifteen capital ships under construction and fifteen older battleships for a total of 845,740 tons. Great Britain would stop construction on four battleships and scrap nineteen others for a total of 583,375 tons. The Japanese would not begin construction on eight capital ships and would scrap seventeen others for a total of 448,928 tons. Hughes believed that paper programs should not be counted, but only ships already constructed or upon which money had been spent.

⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 73.

remained expressionless but must have been apprehensive.¹⁰ The author, William Allen White, later wrote that Hughes's speech was the most dramatic talk he ever witnessed. Senator Borah declared it a splendid beginning and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., said it was one of the great documents of American history.¹¹ One commentator, Colonel Repington of the London Times, remarked that "'Secretary Hughes sank in 35 minutes more ships than all the admirals in the world have sunk in a cycle of centuries.'"¹² Stories were circulating which implied that American naval officers could be heard paraphrasing the greeting of the Roman gladiators: "'We who are about to be abolished salute you.'"¹³

The historian, John Chalmers Vinson, attaches great importance to Hughes's opening speech. It made Hughes a national hero and aroused public opinion which, according to Vinson, "was vital in shaping the attitude and determining the policy of the Senate."¹⁴ When defending the work of the

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 72-73. For an excellent contemporary account by an eyewitness to the conference, consult Mark Sullivan, The Great Adventure at Washington: The Story of the Conference (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1922).

¹¹Ibid., pp. 73-74.

¹²Ladislav Farago, The Broken Seal: The Story of "Operation Magic" and the Pearl Harbor Disaster (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 25. (Hereafter cited as Farago, Broken Seal.)

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 139.

conference, Hughes was able to remind the Senate that the public supported disarmament. Vinson concluded, therefore, that "the Senate from the start of the conference was outmaneuvered by an administration which had won the implicit trust of the public."¹⁵ There was some speculation that the actual purpose of the conference was to launch President Warren G. Harding's "Association of Nations." Alarmed by this prospect, the irreconcilable senators, led by William E. Borah and Hiram Johnson, stated they would oppose United States membership in any permanent international organization. Hughes and Harding decided, therefore, to omit the "Association of Nations" from the conference agenda and thus avoid antagonizing the Senate. Vinson believes Senate opposition to the "Association" was one of the most significant results of the conference because "it indicated the extent of the growth of isolationism which had steadily developed since the close of the First World War."¹⁶ Vinson also believes this opposition "established definite limits to American cooperation in international affairs, making most difficult future enforcement of any agreement adopted at the conference."¹⁷

¹⁵Ibid. Vinson contends that "seldom had a Secretary of State, in peace time, been able to mobilize and utilize so well the force of public opinion toward the solution of the problems in diplomacy."

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 141-46.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 147.

The conference was concerned with two issues which, though related, required separate investigation and discussion. These were (1) the limitation of armament and (2) Pacific Ocean and Far Eastern problems. Two committees were established to discuss the issues. One committee was composed of the five powers most concerned with armament limitation--the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy. Another committee contained representatives from each of the nine powers--the United States, Great Britain, Japan, France, Italy, China, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal--and was devoted to solving Pacific and Far Eastern problems. The work of the two committees proceeded along parallel lines and their progress was reported periodically to the conference in plenary sessions. Seven plenary and public sessions were conducted, at the last of which, on 6 February 1922, the treaties approved by the conference were signed. Although the sessions of the committees were conducted in secret, a complete record was maintained of all the proceedings.¹⁸

The Five-Power Naval Treaty

The Japanese delegation provided the initial opposition to Hughes's proposal when it demanded a 10:10:7 rather than a 10:10:6 ratio. The Japanese also wanted to

¹⁸Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922,
1:311-12.

retain one of the ships, the Mutsu, which Hughes wanted scrapped. The United States Government was aware that the Mutsu was about ninety-eight percent completed but requested Japan to sacrifice it because two American ships which were earmarked for scrapping were about ninety percent completed. The Japanese delegation responded that the Mutsu was a source of pride to the Japanese people because it had been constructed partially from contributions of Japanese school children.¹⁹

Balfour argued that the British should be permitted to build two ships if the Japanese retained the Mutsu and if the United States increased its fleet. Both Hughes and Katō resisted Balfour's proposal because the British Admiralty argued that the two new battleships should be approximately 50,000 tons each. This was 15,000 tons more than the maximum established by Hughes's proposal.²⁰

Some observers were predicting that the conference would fail because of the uncompromising position taken by the United States Government.²¹ Fearing such an occurrence, the British Government decided to support the American Government's ratio demand. Foreign Minister Yasuya Uchida

¹⁹Ibid., 1:321, 324; Benjamin H. Williams, The United States and Disarmament (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1931), p. 144.

²⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 88.

²¹Farago, Broken Seal, p. 25.

now recognized that Japanese demands for a 10:10:7 ratio could create unpopularity for Japan in the world press. He and Katō agreed, therefore, on 28 November 1921 to accept the 10:10:6 ratio in exchange for an agreement to freeze insular fortifications west of Hawaii.²² Uchida and Katō believed that, if the British and Americans could be prevented from improving their Pacific Island fortifications, Japan would still remain dominant in the Western Pacific with a 10:10:6 ratio.²³ On 11 December 1921 Prince Tokugawa publicly announced that Japan would accept the 10:10:6 ratio.²⁴

The final agreement stipulated that Japan could retain the Mutsu, but must scrap an older ship, the Settsu, and permit the United States and Great Britain to construct two new ships. This meant the United States could retain two battleships under construction but must destroy two of its oldest ships, the North Dakota and the Delaware, which under the original plan were to have been retained. The British could also construct two new ships and, upon their completion, scrap four older ships which would otherwise

²²Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 84.

²³Charles E. Neu, The Troubled Encounter: The United States and Japan (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 111. (Hereafter cited as Neu, Troubled Encounter.)

²⁴Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy: A History (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1969), p. 572.

have been retained. This was an important concession by the British because they also agreed to limit the two new ships to 35,000 tons each rather than the 50,000 tons which they originally planned to build.²⁵ In this way the 10:10:6 ratio was preserved but with the addition of 25,000 tons, for the United States and Great Britain, and 13,600 tons, for Japan. The modified plan left the United States with 525,850 tons, Great Britain with 558,950 tons, and Japan with 301,320 tons.²⁶

²⁵Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:324-
 25. The United States would scrap thirteen of the fifteen ships under construction and seventeen, instead of fifteen, of the older ships. The total American tonnage to be scrapped was reduced from the 845,740 tons originally proposed by Hughes to 820,540 tons. Great Britain would scrap twenty-three ships which represented an increase in Hughes's proposal of 583,375 tons to 605,975 tons. Japan's total tonnage to be scrapped would be reduced from the original proposal of 448,923 tons to 435,328 tons. See pages 129-30.

²⁶Ibid., p. 325; Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 89. The numbers and tonnage of capital ships to be retained by each of the powers was eventually fixed as follows:

COUNTRY	NUMBER	TONNAGE
United States	18	525,850
Great Britain	20	558,950
Japan	10	301,320
France	10	221,170
Italy	10	182,800

The tonnage left to the powers did not correspond entirely to the ratios agreed upon. The tonnage of the United States, for example, was 33,100 tons below that of Great Britain. According to the historian, Benjamin H.

In his book, The Broken Seal, Ladislas Farago contends that this diplomatic victory was the result of Hughes's diplomatic skill and the code-breaking skill of Herbert O. Yardley. In July 1919 John Van Antwerp MacMurray, Chief of the Far Eastern Affairs Division of the State Department, asked General Dennis E. Nolan if the Japanese code could be broken. Nolan assigned the task to Yardley who was placed in charge of a small and secret group of code-breakers known as the "Black Chamber." By 1920 Yardley had cracked the code.²⁷ Although the Japanese

Williams, "the reason for this discrepancy was that the British vessels retained were slightly older than those left to the United States. With the larger tonnage given to Great Britain it was estimated that the two fleets of capital ships were of about the same strength." After 1931, when capital ship replacements were permissible, the tonnage of the five powers was expected to fall in line with their respective ratios until in 1942 when they would be exactly in accord with their allotments. Their strength in 1942 would be as follows:

COUNTRY	NUMBER	TONNAGE
United States	15	525,850
Great Britain	15	525,000
Japan	9	315,000
France	5	175,000
Italy	5	175,000

See Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 144-46.

²⁷Farago, Broken Seal, pp. 19, 22. Farago also contends that the Harding Administration conceived the idea of holding the conference in Washington after reading secret British dispatches that had been decoded by Yardley in the summer of 1921. The dispatches revealed that Lloyd George's Government was preparing to convene a conference in London in order to forestall the costly competition engendered by the naval armaments race. Yardley's work enabled Harding and Hughes to call for a conference before the British. See page 27.

Government changed codes prior to the Washington Conference, Yardley had broken the new code by October 1921. It was the sixteenth Japanese code Yardley had broken since January 1920. Each day during the conference a courier arrived from New York (the location of the Black Chamber) with a diplomatic pouch which was presented to MacMurray. The Office of Naval Intelligence, acting on the groundwork laid by Yardley, discovered that Japan would probably accept Hughes's proposal because of the heavy financial burden that the naval armaments race had imposed upon the Japanese economy. Token resistance would be offered, however, in order to placate the navalists in Japan. By refusing to yield to the opposition of the Japanese delegation, Hughes gained its acceptance of his ratio proposal. According to Farago, Yardley regarded himself as the chief architect of this great American victory.²⁸

Hughes had not won a total victory, however, because he agreed that the United States would not fortify nor establish additional naval bases in the Pacific Ocean. Prior to the conference, some observers had speculated that the United States might increase its fortifications in Guam and the Philippines.²⁹ A United States Naval Advisory Committee had concluded, however, that, even if the United

²⁸Ibid., pp. 25-31.

²⁹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 151.

States built expensive naval bases in the Western Pacific, it was questionable whether these posts could be held in the event of a war with Japan. This was true because the former German Islands that Japan had received as League mandates-- the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas--virtually surrounded the Philippine Islands and Guam. Lodge and Underwood also advised Hughes that Congress would not consent to spending huge sums for fortifying Guam or the Philippine Islands. On 15 December 1921, therefore, Katō, Balfour, and Hughes announced they had agreed to maintain the status quo on their Pacific fortifications and naval bases.³⁰

Some pre-conference consideration had been given to the naval strength of France and Italy. The United States

³⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 91, 95. The United States was required to maintain the status quo in the Philippines, Guam, American Samoa, and the Aleutian Islands. The Pacific possessions of the United States which were exempt from this provision were those possessions adjacent to the United States coastline, Alaska, the Panama Canal Zone, and the Hawaiian Islands. The Hawaiian Islands would be the furthestest fortified western base of the United States.

Great Britain was required to maintain the status quo in Hong Kong and all other insular possessions in the Pacific, east of the meridian of 110 degrees east longitude. Exempted from this provision were the British possessions adjacent to the coast of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia and its territories, and New Zealand. The line drawn at 100 degrees east longitude also excluded Singapore from the provisions of the treaty.

A lengthy discussion developed over the exact definition of what islands constituted "Japan proper." It was finally agreed that Japan would maintain the status quo in the Kurile Islands, the Bonin Islands, the Loochoo Islands, Amami-Oshima, Formosa, and the Pescadores Islands. See Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:323; Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 151-52.

experts had suggested 175,000 tons of capital ships (a ratio of 1.75 in relation to the British-American ratio of 5:5) as a proper figure for each power.³¹ When the conference convened, however, the French demanded 350,000 tons and Italy demanded parity with France.³² The major objective of the French Government at the conference was to acquire security against Germany. The French hoped to obtain a treaty of assistance from the British and American Governments against possible German aggression. In return the French would agree to a reduction in land armaments.³³

Excluded from the early negotiations, the French apparently expected that the British and the Americans would deadlock on limiting naval armaments enabling the French, when they were admitted to the discussions, to raise the question of land armaments and to offer to reduce land armaments in return for a treaty which would guarantee Germany's borders. The French were amazed, therefore, when the British accepted the principle of naval parity with the United States.³⁴

When land armaments were discussed, there were some indications that the Japanese Government might have been

³¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 117.

³²Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:326.

³³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 104.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 104-5.

willing to limit its army and that the British Government was willing to sign a treaty of guarantee if the United States would follow suit. As Buckley indicates, however, "at no time did the American Government appear willing to guarantee French security. Nor would a reduction of the American Army have brought a large saving or evoked as dramatic a response as naval limitation."³⁵ The French Government was the only power with economic or political reasons for supporting land disarmament and its bargaining power at a conference on naval affairs was very weak.

Fortunately for Hughes, the Italian Government indicated it would not quibble over its total tonnage figure as long as Italy secured parity with France. The British Government, however, insisted that its naval strength equal that of the French and Japanese combined. The French possessed 164,500 tons of capital ships in 1921. The existing ratio between Great Britain and France was 6:1. If the French would accept the American proposal of 175,000 tons, however, the ratio would be reduced to 5:1.75, the same as in 1914. The French would not be required to scrap ships while the British, Americans, and Japanese were scrapping more vessels than there were in the entire French fleet.³⁶

³⁵Ibid., p. 106.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 108-10.

Hughes was able to obtain Italian, British, and Japanese acceptance of 175,000 tons of capital ships for France and Italy. Hughes drafted a note to Briand indicating that criticism of France and perhaps failure of the conference would result if France did not also accept the tonnage figure. In Buckley's opinion, "Hughes planned to make sure that the responsibility for the failure of the conference would accrue to the French."³⁷ Briand yielded and the French Government accepted the quota of 175,000 tons. The French delegates were able to force a compromise, however, when they won acceptance for their demand that no limits be established on submarines and auxiliary ships.³⁸

Although Hughes did not mention submarines in his opening speech, copies of the American proposals for all ship quotas were circulated after the speech. The proposals assigned 90,000 tons of submarines to the United States and Great Britain and 54,000 tons to Japan. No figures were listed for France and Italy.³⁹

Balfour, recalling the devastating destruction of submarines during World War I, announced that the British preferred that submarines be abolished. The French

³⁷Ibid., pp. 111-12.

³⁸Ibid., p. 113.

³⁹Ibid. When the Washington Conference convened, Great Britain had 82,464 tons of submarines, the United States 50,522, France 28,826, Italy 20,108, and Japan 12,990 tons. See pages 114-15.

delegates, whose pride had been injured by the niggardly 1:75 ratio in capital ships, blocked reduction plans and insisted their nation could not go below 90,000 tons for submarines and 330,000 tons for auxiliary craft (cruisers and destroyers).⁴⁰ The French Government made the demand for substantial submarine tonnage the price of final acceptance of what they considered to be a humiliating capital ship allowance.⁴¹

⁴⁰Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 148-49.

⁴¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 121. Defeated in its attempt to apply submarine quotas, the United States delegation tried to humanize submarine warfare through a series of resolutions. Drafted by Elihu Root, these resolutions required that submarines must visit and search merchant ships in the same way as surface raiders. This meant that submarines must fire a warning shot in order to halt an enemy merchant ship and could, then, visit and search the ship. Sinking of the merchant ship was permitted only if provision were made for the safety of the passengers and the crew. If a submarine attacked a merchant ship without following these traditional procedures, it was to be considered an act of piracy and the commander would then be tried as a pirate.

The problem with the Root resolutions was that merchant ships were often armed. The supporters of submarine warfare argued that, if it were legal to arm a merchant ship, they could not agree to visit and search because a surfaced submarine was highly vulnerable. Thin-skinned submarines could easily be blown up by disguised armed merchant men.

Although a treaty embodying the Root resolutions was adopted, the French Government refused to ratify it. Even the British Government hinted it might be forced to abrogate the Root resolutions during wartime. The attempt to reduce and limit submarine activity, therefore, was a failure. See Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 117-18.

The original American plan envisioned assigning tonnage for auxiliary craft in the same ratio as capital ships. The proposal allotted 450,000 tons for Great Britain and the United States and 270,000 tons for Japan.⁴² Due to the French refusal to limit submarines, the British Government refused to accept limitations on the construction of destroyers, which were the chief threat to submarines. The British position on destroyers meant that the limitation of cruisers, the nemesis of destroyers, was in turn impossible.⁴³

In order to prevent nations from building auxiliary craft that would be capital ships in everything but name, Hughes proposed that cruisers not exceed 10,000 tons and not mount guns of greater than 8-inch caliber.⁴⁴ His suggestion was accepted with little discussion but acute cruiser rivalry later developed and tonnages and gun calibers became hotly debated issues.⁴⁵

⁴²Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:326.

⁴³Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 149-50. Williams suggests that the British delegates were secretly pleased that there would be no limitation of auxiliary craft. They were equally pleased that they could escape criticism by blaming the breakdown in auxiliary craft negotiations on France's refusal to limit submarine construction. See page 150.

⁴⁴Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 118-19.

⁴⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 120.

The fate of one other important naval vessel at the Washington Conference needs to be examined--the aircraft carrier. Although the debate was lengthy, the discussion created less controversy than the issue of capital ships and the delegates eventually agreed to limit aircraft carriers to 27,000 tons and 8-inch guns. The United States and Great Britain were assigned a maximum of 135,000 tons, Japan 81,000 and France and Italy 60,000 tons.⁴⁶

Hughes regarded the completed Five-Power Naval Treaty a success. It is true, however, that the United States did not achieve parity in practice with Great Britain because the latter maintained a superior number of capital ships throughout the 1920s. It is also true that there was no ten-year holiday because all nations could continue to build ships. On the other hand, the United States did not scrap all fifteen of its unfinished capital ships because it received permission to complete two of them and transform two others into aircraft carriers. In addition, the naval

⁴⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 119-20. The United States received permission to convert two uncompleted battle cruisers, which had been listed for scrapping, into aircraft carriers of 33,000 tons apiece. Although this violated the 27,000 ton limit for single carriers, the United States built its other carriers smaller in order to avoid exceeding the overall limit of 135,000 tons. This proved to be a wise move because two carriers, the Lexington and the Saratoga, performed well during World War II. The British were also given permission to convert two of their projected super Hoods into aircraft carriers; however, they chose to convert two smaller vessels instead. See pages 120-21.

situation in the Pacific became defensive due to the restrictions placed upon the offensively oriented capital ships. The war talk diminished and Japan began an era of cooperation with the United States and Great Britain. Regardless of the shortcomings, the treaty, in the words of Buckley, changed the naval race "from a fast gallop to a slow trot."⁴⁷

Other categories of arms limitation involved aircraft and poison gas. At the time of the conference, the French possessed the largest air force with 1,722 military planes. France was followed by Great Britain with 1,048, the United States and Japan with 537 each, and Italy with 494 military planes. The General Board of the United States Navy had recommended retention of aircraft as legitimate weapons of war. The General Board concluded that there was no practical measurement, such as tonnage, for utilization as a yardstick in limiting aircraft production. The British Government, however, believed the French were aiming their large air force at the British Isles and the British wanted some restriction on aircraft in peacetime.

A subcommittee of military aviation experts from each nation held twelve meetings concerning the issue of aircraft limitation. The subcommittee noted that commercial aircraft was easily convertible to military aircraft. The

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 89.

same factors which constituted high military performance--speed, range, capacity, and altitude--were also desirable in civilian aircraft. The subcommittee members had no desire to deprive the world of the new method of transport and communication offered by commercial aviation. They concluded that it was impossible to restrict commercial aircraft with the single exception of lighter-than-air craft.⁴⁸

The General Board of the United States Navy and the Special American Advisory Committee advised the American delegates to support prohibition of gas warfare. The United States War Department, however, believed gas was an acceptable weapon of warfare and should only be prohibited for use against noncombatants. The American members of the Subcommittee on Poison Gas, Professor Edgar Smith and General Amos Fries, agreed with the conclusion of the War Department. Smith argued that gas was a better weapon than explosives because the latter killed twenty-four percent of all men it hit during World War I, whereas the former killed only two percent of those it hit. Hughes decided to conceal the views of Smith and Fries from the public and support the decision of the majority of the members of the subcommittee to adopt a resolution calling for a prohibition of poison gas.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 121, 521.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 123-25.

The statesmen at the Washington Conference were unable to limit two weapons that were to play a key role in World War II--aircraft and submarines. These weapons, along with the aircraft carrier, displaced the battleship as the chief offensive weapon during the interwar period. An abortive attempt was made at the Geneva Conference, in 1927, to apply the capital ship ratio to auxiliary ships and submarines. British-French antagonism doomed the conference to failure, however, and only a guarantee of French security from the United States would have caused the French to yield.⁵⁰ The United States Government was unwilling to accept that type of commitment.

The Four-Power Treaty

A consistent aim of the United States diplomacy in the post-World War I era was the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Hughes faced virtually insurmountable obstacles in achieving this goal. The Japanese Government wanted to retain the alliance and reach a separate agreement with the United States regarding Pacific and Far Eastern issues. The United States was not a party to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and thus could not directly call for its abrogation. The British Government was willing to cooperate with the United States but wanted to replace the old

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 125-26.

alliance by including the United States in a new three-power alliance". Public opinion and the United States Senate were adamant in their opposition to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, but they were equally opposed to United States collaboration in any type of alliance.⁵¹

Prior to the Washington Conference Hughes informed the British Ambassador, Sir Auckland Geddes, that the United States opposed the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Two days before the conference opened, a Canadian member of the British delegation, Robert Borden, informed Lodge that the Australian Government was the main obstacle to overcome in abandoning the alliance because it was fearful of Japanese aggression. Recognizing the unpopularity of the treaty in the United States, Balfour presented Hughes with a draft of a tripartite treaty which called for the maintenance of the status quo in East Asia and the Pacific. Hughes objected to Balfour's draft because it did not cancel the Anglo-Japanese Alliance. Hughes preferred a broad, general agreement which would replace the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, the Root-Takahira Agreement, and the Lansing-Ishii Agreement.⁵²

On 26 November 1921 the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Baron Kijuro Shidehara, presented Hughes with

⁵¹John Chalmers Vinson, "The Drafting of the Four-Power Treaty of the Washington Conference," Journal of Modern History 25 (March 1953):40. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, "Drafting the Four-Power Treaty.")

⁵²Buckley, United States and Washington Conference pp. 128-30.

a Japanese draft treaty. It differed from Balfour's treaty only in that it covered both the territorial rights and the vital interests of the three powers. Hughes opposed Shidehara's draft for the same reasons that he opposed Balfour's--it did not abrogate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and it was tripartite in scope.⁵³

It was now Hughes's turn to submit a draft treaty. One of the most noticeable differences between the draft of Hughes and that of Balfour and Shidehara was the reduction in the area to which the treaty would apply. Hughes's draft applied only to what he termed as each power's insular possessions and dominions in the Pacific Ocean. Each party was bound to respect the rights of the others and conduct a conference in the event of a controversy.

Another equally noticeable difference in Hughes's proposal was the inclusion of France in the treaty. Hughes believed a four-power treaty would be more general in scope and would, therefore, be more acceptable to the Senate. The addition of France could conceivably prevent the two former allies, Great Britain and Japan, from outvoting the Americans at a conference. It is highly probable that Hughes's decision to include France in the treaty influenced the French Government's decision to agree to the capital ship quota. When Hughes presented his draft to the French

⁵³Vinson, "Drafting the Four-Power Treaty," p. 44.

delegate, René Viviani, the latter was so delighted he proceeded to kiss the startled Hughes.⁵⁴

Conversations concerning the Four-Power Treaty were conducted simultaneously with the discussions on the Five-Power Naval Treaty. Hughes believed his Four-Power Treaty draft would enhance the chances of Japan's accepting the 10:10:6 ratio because it offered security to Japan.⁵⁵ Hughes excluded the Chinese mainland from the agreement but intended for the term "insular possessions" to include League mandates as well as the main islands of Japan. The Japanese Government did not believe Japan's home islands should be considered in the same category with other insular possessions. The homeland of the other powers was excluded simply because they were not islands in the Pacific.⁵⁶ Uchida feared the other signatories might use the treaty as an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of Japan.⁵⁷ It was finally agreed that the term "insular possessions and insular dominions," in its application to Japan, would include only Karafuto, Formosa and the Pescadores, and the Japanese mandates.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 133-34.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 135.

⁵⁶Vinson, "Drafting the Four-Power Treaty," p. 45.

⁵⁷Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 136.

⁵⁸Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:46.

An analysis of the Four-Power Treaty must also include the connected issue of Yap Island. The Japanese and British Governments had agreed, in a secret pact of 1917, to split German possessions in the Pacific at the equator. Japan was to receive those to the north and Great Britain those to the south. Although the Supreme Allied War Council, on 7 May 1919, awarded Japan the islands of the Carolines, Marianas, Marshalls, and the Bismarck Archipelago, the Wilson Administration protested against the inclusion of Yap within the Japanese mandates. Yap was located in the western portion of the Carolines, nine degrees north of the equator, 1,200 miles from Manila, and approximately 500 miles from Guam, Menado, and Shanghai.⁵⁹ The Wilson Administration wanted the island internationalized because it served as a landing stage for Pacific radio-telegraphic cables.⁶⁰ The Japanese Government

⁵⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 141-42.

⁶⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 85, 88. One reporter wrote an article, entitled "Yap for the Yappers," in which he ridiculed the American demands concerning the island. He suggested the following song to support the United States point of view:

"Give us Yap! Give us Yap!
The Yanks have put it
The Yanks have put it
The Yanks have put it
on the map."

See "Yap for Yappers," The Nation 109 (6 September 1919): 328.

finally agreed to the internationalization of Yap Island, for cable purposes, and in return the United States recognized Japan's control of the League mandates north of the equator.⁶¹

The settlement of the Yap Island controversy removed the last obstacle in concluding the Four-Power Treaty. It was signed on 13 December 1921. The four powers, Great Britain, France, Japan, and the United States, agreed to consult each other regarding any controversy and to respect each other's rights and insular possessions and dominions in the region of the Pacific. The treaty would remain effective for a minimum of ten years. A signatory could drop out of the pact, however, provided it gave a twelve month notice of this intention. After ratification of the treaty by the contracting parties, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance would terminate. In his defense of the treaty, Lodge was careful to note that there was no provision for the use of force to fulfill the provisions of the treaty and that "no military or naval sanction lurks anywhere in the

⁶¹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 142-43. The United States received equal cable rights with the Japanese and ownership of three cables was to be divided among the United States (Yap to Guam), Japan (Yap to Naba to Shanghai), and the Netherlands (Yap to Menado). See Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:31-33, for the complete contents of the Yap Island agreement.

background or under cover of these plain and direct clauses."⁶²

Three other nations also wished to be included in the Four-Power Treaty--Italy, Siam, and the Netherlands. Italy and Siam were turned down because they did not own any insular possessions in the Pacific. The Netherlands owned Pacific islands, however, and wanted to join this formal recognition of the status quo in the Pacific. John MacMurray, Chief of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs, reminded Hughes that inclusion of the Netherlands would widen the scope of the treaty to include numerous other trouble spots in the Far East such as Tibet, Siam, Korea, and Siberia. Hughes concluded that the United States could not accept responsibility for respecting territorial rights in these areas. Although the Netherlands was excluded from the Four-Power Treaty, the signatories presented identical notes to the Netherlands stating they would respect the country's rights in relation to its insular possessions in the Pacific.⁶³

The Four-Power Treaty was in essence the result of the work of Hughes. His purpose had been to gain support for American opposition to Japanese expansion in the Orient.

⁶²Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922,
1:336, 338.

⁶³Ibid., 1:45; Vinson, "Drafting the Four-Power Treaty," pp. 46-47.

By terminating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Hughes had made Great Britain an opponent rather than a partner of Japanese expansion. Hughes's consummate diplomatic skill enabled him to conclude the treaty without offending Japan and without assuming heavy obligations for the United States. Hughes was aware that the absence of machinery for application of either economic or military enforcement of the Four-Power Treaty was a major weakness. He justified it as being the best possible substitute in view of the unwillingness of the United States to support its diplomacy in the Pacific with a large navy.⁶⁴

The Nine-Power Treaty

China was the locus of United States-Japanese disagreements during the first half of the twentieth century. Around the turn of the century, great numbers of Americans did much writing and even more talking about the future importance of China as a market for American goods.⁶⁵ In order to ensure that other foreign powers did not usurp or monopolize trade with China, the United States championed an "Open Door" policy with that country. In 1899

⁶⁴Vinson, "Drafting the Four-Power Treaty," pp. 47-48; Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 143-44.

⁶⁵Paul A. Varg, "The Myth of the China Market, 1890-1914," American Historical Review 73 (February 1968):742. Varg notes that American trade with China was always smaller than trade with Japan.

Secretary of State John Milton Hay circulated a note to several foreign powers in which he attempted to obtain an international agreement supporting free competition for the trade of China. In a second note, during the Boxer Rebellion, Hay attempted to forestall a possible partition of China by calling for the preservation of China's territorial and administrative integrity as well as safeguarding commercial equality in all parts of the Chinese empire.⁶⁶

The United States Government considered Japan as the major threat to the Open Door policy. During World War I Japan had occupied the German sphere of influence in Shantung and had confronted China with the "Twenty-one Demands," which infringed upon China's territorial and administrative integrity. After the war Japan had obtained Germany's former Pacific possessions and Japanese troops occupied Manchuria and Siberia.⁶⁷ On the eve of the Washington Conference, Stanley K. Hornbeck, member of the State Department and later Chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs, noted that some nations had either misunderstood the Open Door policy or had chosen to deliberately disregard it.

⁶⁶Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 145.

⁶⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 84-85.

Reuben Clark, special counselor to the State Department, believed the United States should attempt to prevent the rise of any single great Asiatic power. Clark advocated a policy based upon a balance of power, rather than the Open Door, to forestall the rise of the Japanese to Asian dominance. Although Chinese independence would promote a balance of power, he believed the United States Government should recognize that the United States had a special relation with China. Clark noted that, while building a railroad in China might be just another commercial venture for Americans, it would be economic survival for the Japanese. The United States could afford to lose its small trade with China but the Japanese could not. Clark believed the United States should oppose political-military activities, such as Japanese occupation of Shantung, but should not attempt to prevent economic ventures, like the building of railroads.⁶⁸

In the 1920s China was a nation divided by civil war. Two rival governments, one at Peking and the other at Canton, competed for power. The situation was further complicated by the power wielded by local warlords. The constant warfare impaired Chinese sovereignty, devastated the countryside, and depleted the national treasury. The Peking Government, which was generally recognized as the

⁶⁸Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 147-48.

legitimate one, had defaulted on a foreign loan on the eve of the Washington Conference. Despite these weaknesses in its political structure, the Peking Government hoped the Washington Conference participants would abolish the extraterritorial rights of foreigners in China. The conferees did agree to abolish foreign post offices in China but little or nothing was accomplished in achieving tariff autonomy for China or in relinquishing extraterritorial rights.⁶⁹

The Japanese delegation to the Washington Conference preferred to keep Chinese topics off the agenda. If the matter of Japanese activities in China were raised, they planned to counterattack with charges of racial discrimination as exemplified by western economic restrictions against Japanese trade and by immigration quotas established by the United States. This tactic had proved successful at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. The Japanese believed their special interests on the Chinese mainland had already been recognized by the Lansing-Ishii agreement of 1917.⁷⁰

Japan became an American ally when the United States entered World War I in 1917. A joint statement was needed

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 167-69. Although China achieved tariff autonomy in 1930, it was not until World War II that the leading western nations, including the United States, surrendered their extraterritorial rights in China.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 149.

in order to reconcile the diametrically opposed objectives of Japan and the United States in China. Secretary of State Robert Lansing and Viscount Kikujiro Ishii struggled for weeks with the problem of defining Japan's "special interests" in China in a manner not contrary to the Open Door policy.⁷¹ The result was a wartime attempt by the United States and Japan to persuade each other to make an undesirable commitment.⁷²

Lansing wanted to confine Japan's imperialism in China to the economic realm. He defined "special interests," therefore, as a status growing out of geographical propinquity but which did not give one nation more rights than those belonging to another nation. Ishii rejected this narrow definition of "special interests." The impasse was overcome by adopting Lansing's definition but keeping it from the Japanese people by putting it in a secret protocol. It stated that the governments of Japan and the United States would "not take advantage of the present conditions to seek special rights or privileges in

⁷¹John Chalmers Vinson, "The Annulment of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement," Pacific Historical Review 27 (February 1958):58.

⁷²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 125-26.

China which would abridge the rights of the subjects or citizens of other friendly states."⁷³

In order to further safeguard the Open Door policy, Lansing insisted on a significant change in what was to be the published note. In the line reading "'Japan and the United States oppose the acquisition by any other government of any special rights or privileges that would affect the independence or territorial integrity of China,'" Lansing omitted the word "other," thereby making the agreement apply to Japan and the United States as well as other nations.⁷⁴ The Japanese agreed to sign the public agreement in the form suggested by Lansing. No public announcement of the secret protocol, however, was made until 1935.⁷⁵ Ethan Ellis, author of Republican Foreign Policy, refers to the agreement as "an exercise in semantics which afforded both nations verbal satisfaction and left each confident that it had contained the other, but offered neither a permanent solution to the problem of Japanese rights on the Asiatic mainland."⁷⁶ Buckley's assessment is more blunt. He

⁷³Vinson, "The Annulment of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement," p. 58. According to Ethan Ellis, this was the first secret protocol signed by the United States in the history of American foreign policy. See Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 126.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁷⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 126.

describes it as "a classical example of diplomatic mumbo jumbo."⁷⁷

Lansing's diplomatic efforts failed to halt Japanese expansion in China. The Japanese merely interpreted the Lansing-Ishii agreement as though the secret protocol was nonexistent. They translated the phrase "special interest" as "special position" or "special influence." The Chinese believed the United States had betrayed them. Although the Wilson Administration sought to restrain Japan, the inability to publicize the secret protocol weakened the effort.

When Secretary of State Hughes assumed office, he endeavored to cancel the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. Hughes wanted to accomplish this prior to the convening of the Washington Conference but British efforts to conduct a preliminary conference on Far Eastern issues postponed the problem. As long as a preliminary conference was possible, Hughes could not deal directly with the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. When the Washington Conference convened, Hughes hoped to quietly abrogate the agreement and allay any suspicion that the United States recognized Japan's "special interests."⁷⁸

⁷⁷Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 150.

⁷⁸Vinson, "Annulment of Lansing-Ishii Agreement," pp. 59-60.

Hughes decided to postpone the China issues until the latter stages of the conference. By that time the Japanese were willing to discuss issues in a spirit of conciliation lest they jeopardize the Five- and Four-Power Treaties.⁷⁹ The result was the Nine-Power Pact which was signed by the United States, Great Britain, Japan, China, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Portugal. The first four clauses in the treaty were largely the handiwork of Elihu Root and are often referred to as the Root Resolutions. Utilizing traditional Open Door policy language, the signatories agreed to respect the sovereignty, the independence, the territorial, and the administrative integrity of China. They promised to support Chinese efforts to maintain a stable government and uphold the principle of equal commercial opportunity in China.⁸⁰

These first three resolutions were restatements of former policies and were designed to undergird the Open Door policy. The fourth resolution, however, contained a clause which was an attempt by the United States Government to rectify the damage of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. Root convinced Hughes that the entire text of the secret protocol should be incorporated in the fourth resolution. It stated

⁷⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 150.

⁸⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 125. For the contents of the Nine-Power Treaty, see Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:276-81.

that the nine powers would refrain from seeking special rights or privileges that might abridge the rights of the citizens of friendly states and they would refrain "from countenancing action inimical to the security of such states."⁸¹ Although this irritated the Japanese, no protest was made. The American Government concluded that the Lansing-Ishii Agreement and the secret protocol were rendered null and void by the Nine-Power Treaty.⁸² This final security clause was never explained to the conference. Hughes and Root reasoned that, since the secret Lansing-Ishii Agreement had failed to halt Japanese imperialism, perhaps a public document would curtail Japanese expansionism in China. As Ellis notes, "the end was laudable and the method adroit--it cancelled the protocol without public acknowledgment of its existence."⁸³

The Japanese historian, Sadoa Asada, contends that the Japanese leaders believed the fourth clause contained a tacit recognition of Japan's special position in Manchuria and Eastern Inner Mongolia. The Japanese Government believed those areas were now excluded from the Open Door policy and that Japanese security would take precedence over pledges to respect the integrity of China. In his book, The

⁸¹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 152.

⁸²Vinson, "The Annulment of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement," pp. 60-61.

⁸³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 126.

Troubled Encounter, Charles E. Neu contends that the Japanese Government signed the Nine-Power Treaty because Root assured them it would not disrupt their position in Manchuria and Mongolia. Root did not believe the treaty applied to these areas nor that it voided earlier agreements with Japan in regard to China. Root believed the treaty was designed to meet future developments and did not pertain to past events.⁸⁴

Asada claims that a United States governmental note of 16 March 1920, which used the phrase "refuse their countenance to any operation inimical to the vital interests of Japan," had recognized the Japanese position. According to Asada, Root had deliberately misled the Japanese when he added to the fourth clause the phrase "from countenancing action inimical to the security of such states." Buckley contends that, if Asada's interpretation is correct, "what the first part of the fourth clause of the Root resolutions gave, the second part took away."⁸⁵ It is true that Root was less suspicious of the Japanese than his colleagues and that he did not believe the United States had vital interests in China, whereas the Manchurian-Mongolian area was vital to Japan. Buckley contends, however, that there is no indication in the American archives that such an

⁸⁴Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 113.

⁸⁵Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 152-53.

understanding was reached with the Japanese. According to Buckley, "if so, such an agreement went undetected and unsupported by the rest of the American delegation or the conference record; moreover, it conflicts with other clauses."⁸⁶ Buckley's research leads him to conclude that, "if the agreement existed at all, it existed in the minds of the Japanese and not the Americans, and even that is questionable."⁸⁷

Support for Buckley's interpretation is provided by Hughes, who later argued that the Root Resolutions ended the Lansing-Ishii Agreement. Hughes was amazed when the Japanese Government replied that it did not believe the two agreements conflicted. When it finally agreed to the cancellation of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement in 1923, the Japanese Government announced it was doing so with the understanding that its action was not an indication of a change in the position of Japan relating to China.⁸⁸

In an article on the Lansing-Ishii Agreement, John Chalmers Vinson contends that

. . . these protracted negotiations cast much doubt on the Hughes' thesis that the Washington Conference had halted Japanese imperialism and substituted for hostility and suspicion a new spirit of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Japan.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 153.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 154.

⁸⁹Vinson, "The Annulment of the Lansing-Ishii Agreement," p. 69.

The Nine-Power Pact had not reconciled the conflicting positions of the two nations. The two nations had merely traded positions. As Vinson concludes,

. . . the American Government seemed to give open endorsement to Japanese policy in 1917 but nullified it with a secret protocol. In 1923 the Japanese publicly approved American policy but privately held reservations as to the future.⁹⁰

Future developments indicated that Japan's geographical position and economic aspirations could not be altered by signing treaties.

The remaining provisions of the Nine-Power Treaty did not occasion as much controversy as did the fourth Root Resolution. The final draft contained the Root Resolutions, a pledge to uphold the Open Door policy, a promise not to create exclusive spheres of influence, an agreement by China not to discriminate against specific foreign powers on its railroads, a pledge to respect China's neutral rights in the event of a war, and a promise by the nine nations to communicate if a dispute arose.⁹¹ Buckley concludes that

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 155. In order to counter any criticism that the Nine-Power Treaty might be construed as an alliance, Hughes inserted the following statement: "This involves no impairment of national sovereignty, no sacrifice of national interests, no provision for agreements reached apart from the constitutional methods of the respective Powers, but a simple opportunity for a consultation, examination, and expression of views whenever any question under the specified stipulations of the Treaty may arise." See Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:345.

the Nine-Power Treaty was the weakest of the Washington Conference treaties because American statesmen did not elucidate the limitation of the Open Door policy and they refused to adopt a more realistic policy. Within the United States, the Open Door policy was regarded as having prevented the partition of China, whereas, in actuality, China had been saved by the balance of power in the Far East.⁹²

Shantung and the Chinese Sovereignty Problem

Two other aspects of the China problem concerned the delegates at the Washington Conference. One was the Sino-Japanese dispute over Shantung and the other was the Chinese Government's attempt to regain sovereign control over its internal affairs. The origin of the Shantung issue can be traced to the year 1898 when the Chinese Government gave Germany a ninety-nine year lease on a naval base at Kiachow Bay and permission to expand economically in the peninsula later served by the Shantung Railway. In order to maintain a balance of power in the area that same year, the British Government forced China to give it a lease on Weihaiwei, a naval base in the same area.⁹³

⁹²Ibid., pp. 155-56.

⁹³Ibid., p. 157.

During World War I, the Japanese Government, acting in its capacity as an ally of Great Britain, demanded that Germany surrender the Kiachow territory to Japan. When Germany disregarded the ultimatum, the Japanese Army captured the city of Tsingtao, the entire leased territory of Kiachow, and the German-owned Shantung Railway. Recognizing that the European War left them with the freedom to create a new order in Asia, the Japanese presented the Chinese with "Twenty-one Demands," in January 1915. The demands were designed to make China a virtual Japanese protectorate. China finally acquiesced and signed the Twenty-one Demands on 25 May 1915. Among other things, the Chinese Government agreed that the entire Kiachow Bay would be opened as a commercial port under Japanese jurisdiction and China assented to

. . . all matters upon which the Japanese Government may hereafter agree with the German Government relating to the disposition of all rights, interests, and concessions which Germany, by virtue of treaties or otherwise, possesses in relation to the Province of Shantung.⁹⁴

By the end of World War I, Japan had extended its control into the interior along the entire Shantung Railway. Japan also concluded secret agreements with the French, Russian, and British Governments in which they promised to support a Japanese claim to Shantung at the Versailles Peace Conference. By signing the Twenty-one Demands, China had

⁹⁴Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:339.

unwillingly given away its future claims in Shantung by agreeing to recognize any arrangements that might be made between the Japanese and German Governments regarding Shantung. The Japanese Government did agree to return the leased territory to China, but only after Japanese economic interests had been recognized in the province.

Japan's occupation of Shantung conflicted directly with the Open Door policy of the United States. In 1915 Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan had refused to recognize any treaty emanating from the Twenty-one Demands. Wilson reversed this position at Versailles, however, when, in order to gain Japanese membership in the League of Nations, he agreed to the allocation of Germany's interests in Shantung to the Japanese Government. Anti-League senators accused Wilson of abandoning the Chinese and the Shantung provisions contributed to the defeat of the Versailles Treaty in the United States Senate.

The Chinese Government was also highly displeased with the Versailles Treaty. The Chinese had entered the war on the side of the allies in the hope of regaining Shantung as a reward for their efforts. The Chinese Government, therefore, refused to sign the Versailles Treaty. Although the Japanese offered to negotiate the Shantung issue, the Chinese refused to discuss an issue based on treaties they did not recognize.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 158-59.

Hughes realized that the Senate might not support the Washington Conference treaties unless the Shantung issue was solved. Hughes advised the Chinese to avoid public discussion of the problem because seven of the nine conference participants had signed the Versailles Treaty and undue publicity might make the Japanese more intransigent. Hughes concluded, therefore, that bilateral negotiations between China and Japan offered the best chance for a settlement.⁹⁶ Arthur J. Balfour, head of the British delegation, concurred with Hughes's opinion. Balfour and Hughes conducted separate meetings with China's Sao-Ke Alfred Sze and Japan's Baron Tomasaburō-Katō in order to convince the two powers of the need for direct negotiations to settle the Shantung problem. Sze and Katō agreed to use the "good offices" of Hughes and Balfour in order to settle the issue. The talks began on 1 December 1921. The Chinese and Japanese would negotiate in the presence of American and British observers who would not participate in the proceedings unless so requested. From 1 December to 31 January 1922 thirty-six conversations were conducted on the Shantung issue.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 160.

⁹⁷Russell H. Fifield, "Secretary Hughes and the Shantung Question," Pacific Historical Review 23 (November 1954):377. (Hereafter cited as Fifield, "Hughes and Shantung.")

By 20 December the Chinese and Japanese representatives had reached preliminary agreement on everything except the 290-mile-long Tsingtao-Tsinanfu Railroad. A deadlock developed when China refused to accept Japan's proposal for a joint enterprise. The Japanese then offered to return the railroad to Chinese control provided the Chinese pay for the railroad by accepting from Japanese financiers a fifteen-year, long-term loan. Japan would retain technical experts on the railroad until the loan was paid. The Chinese delegates insisted that China be permitted to pay cash immediately for the railroad. The Japanese refused this offer because they were not willing to gamble on the value of Chinese currency or immediate Chinese control. The talks were suspended and the first serious threat to negotiations had developed.⁹⁸

Hughes and Balfour conducted separate interviews with the Japanese and Chinese in order to break the deadlock. Hughes's position on the issue even caused dissension among his Far Eastern advisers and led to unofficial Chinese charges of pressure tactics. Stanley K. Hornbeck and E. T. Williams were two Far Eastern experts who advised Hughes to pressure Japan rather than China. They had opposed Wilson's position on Shantung at Paris and were considered pro-Chinese in their outlook. In his reply to

⁹⁸Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 162.

their criticism, Hughes stated that unless China compromised she might never regain Shantung. China was not strong enough to force Japan out of the region and the United States would not engage in a war to force Japan to return Shantung to China. Hughes's argument was reenforced by Elihu Root who assumed a pro-Japanese stance during the controversy.⁹⁹

At one point during the negotiations Hughes arranged an interview between Sze and President Harding. Harding informed Sze that the Chinese Government would be making a colossal blunder if it did not compromise. Otherwise, China might lose the province forever. The Japanese also recognized that the other conference treaties might be endangered when they discovered that Senator Thomas J. Walsh had stated that the Senate would not ratify the Four-Power Treaty until the Shantung issue was settled. Balfour applied pressure to both parties and assisted progress toward a settlement when he announced that Great Britain would surrender its lease on Weihaiwei.¹⁰⁰

The Chinese finally yielded to joint Anglo-American pressure and agreement on the Shantung issue was reached on 31 January 1922. On 4 February 1922 the Chinese and

⁹⁹Fifield, "Hughes and Shantung," pp. 380-83.

¹⁰⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 163-64. Weihaiwei, however, was not officially restored to China until 1930.

Japanese signed the Treaty for the Settlement of Outstanding Questions Relative to Shantung. In essence, Japan agreed to a solution under which it would probably lose its position in Shantung in five years.¹⁰¹ Japan agreed to restore Kiachow to China and transfer the Shantung (Tsingtao-Tsinanfu) Railway to China. The value of the railway property had already been assessed by the Reparations Commission at approximately 54,000,000 gold marks. A special commission would determine the exact amount and China was required to pay this value to Japan with Chinese Government treasury notes secured on the properties and revenues of the railway. Payment would extend over a fifteen year period but the notes were redeemable either in whole or in part at any time after five years from the date of payment. In the meantime, China agreed to employ a Japanese subject as traffic manager and a Japanese subject as one of two joint chief accountants under the authority of a Chinese managing director of the railway.¹⁰²

The settlement of the Shantung issue was quite an achievement for Hughes. By suggesting separate negotiations, Hughes and Balfour made certain Japan would suffer no humiliation. The progress in the other negotiations relating to the Pacific undoubtedly contributed to the

¹⁰¹Fifield, "Hughes and Shantung," p. 385.

¹⁰²Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 122, 1:341.

willingness of the Japanese to compromise. The Chinese representatives proved to be the greatest obstacle to the negotiations. As the historian Russell H. Fifield has noted, China

. . . . agreed to the proposed compromise only under heavy American and British pressure. In the final catalytic agent, in the settlement of the Shantung question, the question.¹⁰³

Another possible controversial problem that Hughes had included on the Washington Conference agenda was the Japanese occupation of Siberia. Both the United States and Japan had stationed troops there in 1918 in order to protect Allied supplies. Russia had concluded a separate peace with Germany and was in the throes of a civil conflict occasioned by the Bolshevist Revolution. United States troops had left in 1920 but Japanese soldiers remained. The Japanese Government defended its prolonged occupation on the ground that a considerable number of Japanese had been lawfully residing in Siberia long before the Bolshevist eruption. Baron Kijuro Shidehara noted that prior to the joint American-Japanese military enterprise there were 9,717 Japanese living in Siberia. Shidehara declared that these residents needed the Japanese Army to protect their lives and property from either Bolshevist or Korean attacks.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 165; Fifield, "Hughes and Shantung," p. 385.

¹⁰⁴Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:364-65.

Shortly after the opening of the Washington Conference, however, Shidehara amazed skeptics when he announced that Japanese troops would withdraw from Siberia as soon as possible. Shidehara's promise was fulfilled shortly after the conference, but only after the application of diplomatic pressure from the United States.¹⁰⁵

The Senate and the Four-Power Treaty

The attitude of the United States Senate toward the Washington Conference agreements was of vital importance. Would the Senate withdraw into a shell of isolationism and vote against ratifying the treaties or would it accept greater involvement in international affairs? Few senators dared to oppose the popular naval treaty or the agreements pertaining to China.¹⁰⁶ The Nine-Power Treaty received unanimous Senate approval and only one vote was cast against the Five-Power Treaty.¹⁰⁷ The more controversial Four-Power Treaty, however, encountered strong Senate opposition.

The opponents of the Four-Power Treaty could not believe that Japan and Great Britain would surrender the advantages of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance for the new quadruple agreement. Further suspicion was aroused by

¹⁰⁵Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 165-66.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 172.

¹⁰⁷Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 116-17.

Harding's refusal to submit to the Senate the conference records on the treaty. Many of the same irreconcilables who had opposed American entry into the League of Nations spoke against the Four-Power Treaty.¹⁰⁸ The debate revealed that the irreconcilable senators would not approve an agreement which carried any obligations that might limit the sovereignty and independence of the United States. Senator James A. Reed, for example, believed the secret conversations indicated the Four-Power Treaty was actually an alliance and was, therefore, "treasonable and damnable." Senator Robert M. LaFollette said the treaty had "'all of the iniquities of the League of Nations, with none of the virtues claimed for the document.'"¹⁰⁹

In the opinion of Senator William E. Borah, the Four-Power Treaty was actually an alliance which was as dangerous as the Versailles Treaty because it would make Japan the most powerful nation in the Pacific.¹¹⁰ Borah

¹⁰⁸Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 172, 179.

¹⁰⁹Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 160-62, 211-12. Vinson believes American fear of alliances was stronger in the early 1920s than at any other period in United States history. He contends that "this phobia was compounded of reverence for the precepts of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, the desire for complete independence in the management of foreign affairs, and the fear that alliances would draw the United States into war. . . ." [p. 109]

¹¹⁰Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 138. Borah declared that "'if I were the only man in the state of Idaho that was opposed to it, I would oppose it to the end.'" See Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 180.

believed the secret proceedings had resulted in a betrayal of the real wishes of the people and that more complete disarmament would have occurred if the conference had been open to the public. Borah also contended that the Four-Power Treaty was actually an alliance and that alliances inevitably produce counter-alliances. He believed moral force alone would not contain the Japanese and that by recognizing the status quo the Washington Conference treaties disregarded the rights of the Chinese.¹¹¹

The efforts by the irreconcilable senators to tarnish the Four-Power Treaty with the stigma of secrecy were largely ineffective. The Harding Administration denounced the charges and received public support in its endorsement of all the Washington Conference treaties. The Administration pointed out that the Five-Power Treaty had curbed naval competition and had advanced the cause of world peace. The Four-Power Treaty had abrogated the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and freed the United States from the burden of fortifying its Pacific islands. The Nine-Power Treaty had endorsed the Open Door policy and the controversies surrounding Yap Island, Shantung, and Siberia

¹¹¹Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 181-82, 204, 207. Senator Reed believed the United States should maintain a strong navy in the Pacific. In his opinion the non-fortification agreement rendered Guam and the Philippines defenseless. He stated that naval officers had informed him that without fortifications the Philippines could be taken in three days and Guam in less than twenty-four hours. See pages 205-6.

had also been settled in a manner consistent with United States policy. The Administration concluded that all the treaties were interrelated and failure to ratify any one of them would harm the cause of world peace.¹¹²

A poll conducted by the Literary Digest indicated that, of 803 newspapers polled, 723 supported ratification of all the treaties, sixty-six opposed ratification, and fourteen were uncommitted. Numerous organizations began to flood the Senate with petitions in order to make certain the treaties were ratified. The leaders in the movement were the National Council for the Limitation of Armament, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the Women's Pro-League Council, and the Gompers General Committee. No organization was more active, however, than the Federal Council of Churches. The council, which was composed of such groups as the Church Peace Union, the Unitarian Layman's League, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Quakers, presented the Senate a petition with more than 16,000 signatures supporting ratification of the treaties. The American Advisory Committee to the Washington Conference estimated that, of

¹¹²Ibid., pp. 174, 187, 197, 199.

13,878,671 letters received by 15 January 1922, a total of 10,092,736 were related to religious groups.¹¹³

Although public support for the treaties was overwhelming, the irreconcilables voiced strong opposition to the Four-Power Treaty. The wisdom of naming Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, to the delegation was now apparent. Lodge tried to push the treaty through the Senate while popular support was at its height. Committee meetings were minimal and brief and lengthy debates were avoided. In defending the Four-Power Treaty, Lodge pointed out that any decision required an unanimous vote of the signatories and the only obligation was to consult if an outside power committed aggression against a treaty power. Hughes also stressed the point that the treaty obligated the United States to do nothing but confer.¹¹⁴

¹¹³Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 172-74; Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 177. Numerous civic, educational, pacifist, and labor groups (as manifest by the Gompers Committee) also supported the treaties. Even steel manufacturers like Charles M. Schwab, head of Bethlehem Steel, endorsed the treaties. The steel manufacturers wanted to eradicate the bad reputation they had gained for supporting armaments as well as obtain a reduction in federal taxes. See Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 174-75.

¹¹⁴Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 176, 179-80; Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 193. Recognizing that the Senate was composed of fifty-nine Republicans, thirty-six Democrats, and one Progressive, the newspaper, the Brooklyn Eagle, noted that "one great difference between the Four-Power Treaty and the League

Fearful that the Four-Power Treaty might encounter difficulties, the Republican-controlled Committee on Foreign Relations decided to resolve the issue by adding a reservation, known as the Brandegee Reservation, on 27 February 1922.¹¹⁵ It stated that "'the United States understands that under the terms of this treaty there is no commitment to armed force, no alliance, no obligation to join in any defense.'"¹¹⁶

Voting on the Four-Power Treaty proceeded article by article on 24 March 1922. Opposition centered on Article Two because some senators believed it made the quadruple agreement an alliance. The article stated that if any signatory's rights were threatened by aggression all the contracting parties would confer in order to determine the most effective measure to be taken to meet the exigencies of the situation.¹¹⁷ A lengthy discussion ensued over the exact meaning of the word "alliance." According to Vinson,

. . . this preoccupation with the exact nomenclature of the treaty was carried so far as to become ridiculous. Senators became so engrossed in semantic studies that

Covenant is that one was of Republican origin and the other of Democratic origin.'" See Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 176.

¹¹⁵Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, p. 178.

¹¹⁶Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1922, 1:379.

¹¹⁷Buckley, United States and Washington Conference p. 182.

they carried to the debate dictionaries, encyclopedias, and treatises on international law. . . .¹¹⁸

After six attempts to amend Article Two failed, the Senate passed the article by a vote of sixty-six to twenty-eight with two abstentions. The other articles passed with minor opposition. The Brandegee Reservation passed by ninety-one to two and the entire Four-Power Treaty passed by sixty-seven to twenty-seven with two abstentions. Among the Republicans who voted against the Four-Power Treaty were Borah, LaFollette, and Hiram Johnson.¹¹⁹

Lodge's support for the Four-Power Treaty was instrumental in securing its passage. Unlike President Woodrow Wilson, Lodge was willing to accept a reservation. The American Ambassador to Great Britain, George Harvey, praised Lodge's efforts and stated that he thought it remarkable that a man so hated as Lodge could obtain a two-thirds majority on any measure.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸Vinson, Parchment Peace, pp. 199-200. Vinson notes that: "A Leader in this phase of the debate was Senator Frank Willis, who concluded, after reference to the Century Dictionary, the Encyclopedia Britannica, John Bouvier's Law Dictionary, and Lassa F. L. Oppenheim's work on International Law, that an alliance was a contract between two nations for the purpose of aggression or defense. This definition cleared the Four-Power Treaty; it was not a contract, and it was not designed for aggression or defense" [p. 201].

¹¹⁹Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 182-83.

¹²⁰Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 193.

Conclusion

The American public regarded the Washington Conference as a diplomatic success. The general belief was that the United States had achieved naval parity with Great Britain and forced Japan to accept traditional American goals in China.¹²¹ The public gave the Senate little credit for the success of the Washington Conference. The debate on the Four-Power Treaty had convinced the public that the Senate, which was charged with the responsibility for the failure of the United States to join the League of Nations, was again proving its inability to function as a constructive part of the treaty-making process. Vinson wrote that, ". . . when it was reported in May 1921 that Harding was going to Florida to get away from the Senate, an editor bemoaned the fact that most people could not afford that pleasure."¹²²

Despite this low popular esteem Vinson believes the Senate was very influential in shaping the foreign policy of the nation in 1921-1922. This was true, according to Vinson, because two failures in Presidential elections convinced the Republicans that only through unity could they regain control of the government. This need for unity gave irreconcilable senators like Borah and Johnson an inordinate

¹²¹Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 115.

¹²²Vinson, Parchment Peace, p. 213.

degree of power. Vinson believes that "Senate leaders might have succeeded in completely dominating Harding's foreign policy had it not been for the outstanding ability and tenacious resolution of his Secretary of State, Hughes."¹²³

Hughes's initiatives in foreign policy were checked by the irreconcilable senators in two important ways. First, their hostility toward the League of Nations forced Hughes to conduct a separate conference on disarmament. Second, they impeded the efforts of continued cooperation by opposing the plan for an Association of Nations. Vinson believes, therefore, that "the most vital question of the time, cooperative or unilateral policy for the United States, was decided in favor of the latter."¹²⁴ The strength of the Senate in influencing foreign policy was manifest by the wording of the Four-Power Treaty, which was written with the prejudices of the Senate in mind, and by the Brandegee Reservation to the treaty. Vinson's appraisal of the Washington Conference is pessimistic. He believes the agreements ". . . proved to be a parchment peace. It was peace conceived in the hope that pledges and public opinion

¹²³Ibid., p. 214. In Vinson's view the Senate "did dictate the larger goals of policy although nominal control of foreign affairs remained in the hands of the administration by virtue of the skill of Hughes."

¹²⁴Ibid.

unaided by international organizations and military force could meet the problems of a world power."¹²⁵

Ellis believes the Washington Conference proved the United States "was no shirker of international involvement in the area of disarmament, where she assumed her share of the initiative and bore at least her share of the burdens."¹²⁶

The capital ship ratio and naval holiday scheme eased the economic burden on all countries and reduced tensions. The Nine-Power Treaty bound the major powers to respect the Open Door policy toward China and the Five-Power Treaty established an overall sea equilibrium which left the United States dominant in the Atlantic, Great Britain dominant over the sea lanes from the English Channel to Singapore, and Japan dominant in the Western Pacific. The abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance meant Japan would no longer have the tacit support of the British in any imperialistic ventures. Most American experts even considered the nonfortification agreement a good deal because Congress probably would not have granted funds for fortification anyway. In Ellis's view, the failure to apply the ratio to all categories of naval shipping led to a cruiser rivalry which eventually produced severe

¹²⁵Ibid., pp. 214, 217.

¹²⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 131.

Anglo-American friction. Ellis recognizes, however, that the United States delegation had to exclude submarines and auxiliaries from the ratio agreement in order to win French acceptance of a lower ratio for its capital ships.¹²⁷

In Buckley's view the American delegation was fortunate in being able to replace a military alliance with a treaty in which the United States had to assume no obligations. The American delegation sought and achieved limited objectives by tying together disarmament treaties and political arrangements. Buckley contends the conference treaties were not failures. The weaknesses in the agreements lay in the failure to follow up the guidelines established at the conference. Whereas Ellis believes the major weakness was the failure to extend the ratio principle to auxiliary vessels, Buckley argues that, "never adequately reinforced, in time the Washington settlement creaked, cracked, and crumbled at its weakest point--the Nine-Power Treaty--and for this failure, American governments in the interwar period bear a heavy responsibility."¹²⁸

One result of the Washington Conference was an improvement in American-Japanese relations. During the 1920s forty percent of Japanese exports went to the United States. An earthquake that hit Japan in 1923 prompted

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 132-33, 135.

¹²⁸ Buckley, United States and Washington Conference, pp. 185-90; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 133.

Americans to send relief aid. After the earthquake huge American reconstruction loans poured into Japan with the encouragement of the State Department. American businessmen and financiers increased their trade and investments in Japan. During the 1920s democratic institutions steadily developed in Japan and social legislation and universal manhood suffrage were introduced. The influence of the military declined and Japan was pursuing a moderate policy toward China. Americans were upset over the frequent Chinese attacks on American missionaries and businessmen in China and were angry over China's inability to meet its financial obligations.¹²⁹

Not all Americans were pleased with the shift in relations with Japan. Naval officers, the Hearst press, and some senators were unhappy with the results of the Washington Conference because they believed it left Japan predominant in the Western Pacific. Naval officers were particularly bitter over the freeze on insular fortifications. They believed Japan could easily take Guam and the Philippines and then assume a defensive posture. The numerically weaker American fleet would be unable to assume an effective offensive once Japan conquered Guam and the Philippines. Navy planners began to consider an island-hopping expeditionary force and the use of

¹²⁹Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 116-18.

carrier-based air power as a method of compensating for United States naval inferiority in the Western Pacific. In Neu's view, ". . . during this decade of peace and hope the navy retained a fierce determination to carry a war to the home waters of Japan."¹³⁰

The Washington Conference marked a turning point in naval armaments. For the next fifteen years limitation rather than expansion characterized the international naval system. Why did the statesmen at the Washington Conference agree to limit their nations' naval growth? During the 1930s, and more particularly during World War II, critics of the Washington Conference believed the conferees had not gone far enough in limiting armaments and that their solutions were unrealistic.¹³¹

Ellis disagrees with the critics of the Washington Conference. Ellis argues that it is unfair to demand ultimate solutions from initial explorations. In his view "the Washington settlements approached a viable equilibrium as closely as the temper of the time and the status of the

¹³⁰ Ibid., pp. 115, 119. One example of the critical attitude of naval officers is evident by the publication, in 1922, of naval Captain Dudley W. Knox's book, The Eclipse of American Sea Power. See Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 134.

¹³¹ Roger Dingman, Power in the Pacific: The Origins of Naval Arms Limitation, 1914-1922 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 215-16. (Hereafter cited as Dingman, Power in the Pacific.)

power structure permitted."¹³² The failure of disarmament, in his opinion, was not so much that of the statesmen at Washington as of their successors. Successive statesmen of the 1920s and 1930s were unable to cope with nationalistic demands and solve the problems created by the Great Depression and thus they failed to improve upon the start made at Washington.¹³³

Roger Dingman, in his book, Power in the Pacific, agrees with Ellis that the Washington Conference statesmen accomplished as much as could be hoped for at that period of time. World leaders like President Harding and Prime Ministers Lloyd George and Hara Kei realized that imminent war was unlikely but that their respective nations needed a sound naval defense. On the other hand, all three recognized that nationalistic and revolutionary forces as well as disagreements among the wartime allies could lead to a new war. To preserve order and maintain peace an adequate navy was necessary. The problem was to decide what was adequate.

In trying to solve the problem the statesmen were guided in part by economic considerations. The statesmen realized that heavy naval armaments were expensive. Technology was another guideline that helped to determine

¹³²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 135-36.

¹³³Ibid., p. 136.

what was adequate. The conference participants recognized that capital ships were the standard of naval power. This prior consensus that capital ships were the yardstick for measuring comparative naval strength enhanced the opportunity for agreement at the Washington Conference. The difficulty over defining a standard would disrupt the later Geneva and London naval conferences.

Dingman agrees that diplomatic realities, economics, and technology helped to guide the statesmen at the Washington Conference, but he contends that, ". . . in the last analysis considerations of domestic politics were far more important."¹³⁴ Dingman minimizes the importance of international diplomatic activity as the major factor in ensuring the success of the Washington Conference. In his view

. . . politics within the capitals of the three major naval nations, far more than international relationships among them, determined the character and assured the success of the first strategic arms limitation in modern times.¹³⁵

In Washington, Harding wanted to prove his leadership capability and consolidate his control over the Republican Party. The support given to Senator Borah's demands for naval limitation convinced Harding that his goals could be achieved by concluding a naval arms

¹³⁴Dingman, Power in the Pacific, p. 217.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. xii.

limitation agreement. Dingman believes Harding's desire to lead his country and party was more important than Hughes's negotiating tactics in assuring the success of the Washington negotiations.¹³⁶

In London, Lloyd George was the leader of a coalition government which was preoccupied with the Irish problem. Lloyd George could not permit questions on naval policy to disrupt the harmony of his government. David Beatty, a British admiral, was eager to maintain the long-term domestic political well-being of the British Navy. The result was an agreement by Lloyd George and Beatty to compromise at Washington in order to preserve the coalition and consensus in London.

In Tokyo a similar alliance between the Prime Minister, Hara Kei, and the Chief Admiral, Tomosaburō-Katō, led to the decision to accept the decisions reached at the Washington Conference. Hara Kei saw in the Washington Conference an opportunity to consolidate his ties with the navy, reduce the army's influence over foreign policy, and increase civilian control over the military. Katō decided

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 217. Louis Potts believes "a chorus of revisionism has appeared" which upgrades the ability of Harding. Potts believes this trend began on 25 April 1964 when the Ohio Historical Society opened a 350,000-item collection of Harding's papers for scholarly investigators. It appears that Potts has overstated his case, however, when he argues that Harding did not abdicate leadership to Hughes in the formulation of foreign policy. See Louis W. Potts, "Who was Warren G. Harding?," The Historian 36 (August 1974):622, 635-37.

to accept the Washington agreements in order to avoid friction with party politicians over naval expansion costs and to conclude an alliance with Hara which would reduce the power of the army generals.¹³⁷

Dingman concludes that "for domestic political reasons that varied from capital to capital, then statesmen and admirals decided to limit the size of their navies by international agreement."¹³⁸ Although Dingman's interpretation has merit, his assessment of the minimal influence of Hughes's negotiating tactics appears less plausible. From beginning to end, the skillful diplomacy of Hughes enabled him to emerge as the leader of the proceedings at the Washington Conference. He grasped the mood of the public and successfully countered obstacles placed in his path by such opponents as the irreconcilable senators. Hughes, rather than Harding, provided the leadership that was necessary to achieve American involvement, and, in this case, commitment to the Washington Conference agreements. Dingman is correct, however, when he concludes that arms limitation is a political process. In his view,

The success or failure, wisdom or folly of arms limitation by international agreement depends, above all else, on careful, constantly changing, and correct

¹³⁷Ibid., pp. 217-18.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 218.

estimates of the domestic political risks and opportunities it presents to one's own leaders and to their prospective negotiating partners.¹³⁹

Hughes believed the Washington Conference had enhanced the opportunities for security and peace. Much of the good will he generated in American relations with both China and Japan was negated, however, by the 1924 Immigration Act which contained specific Oriental exclusion.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, Hughes had been the major architect of United States involvement in disarmament. Indeed, the time and effort expended by the United States Government prior to, during, and after the Washington Conference indicates a commitment to the cause of disarmament. The term "isolationism" is not a suitable characterization of the United States disarmament policies.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Samuel Flagg Bemis, "A Clarifying Foreign Policy," The Yale Review 25 (December 1935):223-24.

CHAPTER IV

POST-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

DISARMAMENT EFFORTS

The League of Nations and Disarmament

Although the Washington Conference slowed capital ship construction, it failed to halt an arms race in other categories. A new rivalry in cruiser competition emerged among the United States, Great Britain, and Japan. Another ominous development was the decline in the power that the statesmen at the Washington Conference had exercised over the military technicians. By the time of the 1927 Geneva Conference, the naval professionals and their technical advisors were so influential that devotion to naval armament took precedence over disarmament. Disarmament, therefore, declined during the remainder of the decade and it vanished during the 1930s. Ethan Ellis, author of Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, notes that, ". . . despite the ultimate failure of the movement toward disarmament, American involvement in it was deeper, and expenditure of energy

greater and longer continued than in any other area . . ." of diplomatic activity during the 1920s.¹

Disarmament had been one of the major objectives of the League of Nations. In his first draft of the covenant of the League of Nations, President Woodrow Wilson called for disarmament to "' . . . the lowest point consistent with domestic safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.'"² The expression "domestic safety" was deleted by the Commission on the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference, however, and replaced with the term "national safety." Having been relieved of the fear of Germany, the allied statesmen now retreated from their earlier positions of advocating extensive disarmament. The words "national safety" could be used to justify virtually any type of armament program.³

Unwilling to disarm themselves, the victorious Allies decided to disarm the defeated states. The rationale for compelling Germany and its allies to disarm, however, had been that it would influence other nations to do

¹L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), pp. 137-38. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

²Benjamin H. Williams, The United States and Disarmament (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1931), p. 239.

³Ibid.

likewise.⁴ The armies of the defeated Central Powers were to be limited to the following number of personnel: Germany 100,000, Hungary 35,000, Austria 30,000 and Bulgaria 20,000. The German Air Force was abolished and submarines were prohibited. The German Navy was reduced to six small battleships, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers, and twelve torpedo boats. The Germans, who had accepted an armistice on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points, reminded the allied powers that point four as well as the League covenant called for all nations to disarm. German resentment over the slow pace of allied disarmament led some observers to speculate that Germany might soon consider itself relieved of the armament restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles.⁵

When the United States Senate rejected membership in the League of Nations, several European states returned to the old pre-war system of diplomatic alliances. Bilateral

⁴Alden H. Abbott, "The League's Disarmament Activities--and the Washington Conference," Political Science Quarterly 37 (March 1922):3. (Hereafter cited as Abbott, "League's Disarmament Activities.")

⁵Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 241-42. The French draft for a League of Nations provided for an international army and navy to enforce the Treaty of Versailles. The proposal was vetoed by the other powers whose independent nationalism was stronger than a desire for a militaristic super-state. The continual French quest for security was further evident when the French Government indicated it hoped to increase its own armaments by acquiring a generous share of the German fleet. This scheme was altered by the German sailors who sank several ships at Scapa Flow. See pages 240-41.

treaties seemed to offer a larger degree of security than the League. France initiated the return to the alliance system by attempting a diplomatic encirclement of Germany. Alliances with Belgium in 1920 and Poland in 1921, however, gave the French only a momentary feeling of security. The French Government, therefore, soon sought a British guarantee for the security of Poland and Czechoslovakia's frontiers with Germany. The British Government, however, refused to commit itself to anything further than a guarantee of France and Belgium's eastern frontier with Germany.

The fear of Anschluss and a restoration of the Hapsburg Empire prompted both Czechoslovakia and Rumania, on the one hand, and Yugoslavia and Italy, on the other hand, to form alliances in 1920. By 1921 a Little Entente had been formed among Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. France had concluded separate alliances with each of the three Little Entente countries by 1927. In the meantime Poland and Rumania had also signed a defensive alliance.⁶ The advocates of disarmament were dismayed by this post-war quest for security and were anxious for the

⁶John W. Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security Since Locarno, 1925-1931: Being the Political and Technical Background of the General Disarmament Conference, 1932 London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932; reprint ed., New York: Howard Fertig, 1973), pp. 28-32. (Hereafter cited as Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security.)

League of Nations to take the initiative in planning for disarmament.

At a meeting in Rome, in May 1920, the League Council established the Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Naval, and Air Questions.⁷ The commission was the first agency created by the League Council to consider disarmament. Its function was to advise the council on such matters as disarmament, poison gas, and the control of traffic in arms and munitions. Being composed primarily of military technicians, the Permanent Advisory Commission did not receive a large amount of enthusiastic support from non-council members.⁸ The League Assembly, which was dominated by the smaller states, revealed a greater willingness than the council to take decisive action in reducing armaments.⁹ In 1920 the First Assembly of the League revealed its dissatisfaction with the composition of the Permanent Advisory Commission when it proposed the creation of a new body which would have the civilian element in the majority. The council approved the proposal and a Temporary

⁷Abbott, "League's Disarmament Activities," p. 6. Each nation represented on the League Council had one military, one naval, and one air representative. Other League members could send three temporary delegates when matters of direct interest to them were being discussed. See page 5.

⁸Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 242.

⁹Abbott, "League's Disarmament Activities," pp. 6-7.

Mixed Commission was created. The new commission was composed of six civilians, six experts from the Permanent Advisory Commission, four members of the Economic and Financial Committee of the League, and six members of the International Labor Office. The Assembly succeeded, therefore, in partially removing the armaments question from the control of the military element.¹⁰

The major accomplishment of the Temporary Mixed Commission was the publication of a yearly volume known as the Armaments Year-Book: General and Statistical Information. The annual publication contained detailed information concerning the organization of the armed forces of each country, the budget expenditures for national defense, and a list of industries capable of producing war material.¹¹ The United States Government was invited by the League Council to participate in the work of the Temporary Mixed Commission. On two different occasions Joseph C. Grew and Hugh Gibson represented the United States during the committee sessions. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes discontinued this practice after 1924, however, believing

¹⁰Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 243. The secretariat of both the Temporary Mixed Commission and the Permanent Advisory Commission were placed under the Disarmament Section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. The six civilians were selected from Brazil, Great Britain, Spain, France, Italy, and Japan. See Abbott, "League's Disarmament Activities," p. 6.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 243-44.

that the views of the United States Government had been explained fully enough to the committee.¹²

Between 1920 and 1923 the Temporary Mixed Commission worked on a draft treaty for disarmament. The discussions revealed a basic disagreement between the British and French Governments. The British Government believed that armaments were the primary cause of war and demanded that France reduce the size of its growing military force. The French Government believed that security must precede disarmament and urged the adoption of a series of mutual assistance pacts as a prerequisite to disarmament. The French position was endorsed by Belgium and most of the states of Eastern Europe.

By 1923 the British Government recognized the connection between security and disarmament, and the Fourth Assembly of the League was able to adopt a Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance.¹³ All signatories were to assist anyone of their number who became the victim of aggression. In return for this assistance, the signatories pledged to reduce their armaments to a point compatible with national security.¹⁴

¹²Clarence A. Berdahl, "Relations of the United States with the Assembly of the League of Nations," American Political Science Review 26 (February 1932):106-8.

¹³Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 33-34.

¹⁴Carl Hamilton Pegg, Contemporary Europe in World Focus (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 99. (Hereafter cited as Pegg, Contemporary Europe.)

The treaty was not accepted by the League Council, however, because there was no compulsory method of settling disputes. Since the determination of an aggressor would be made by the League Council, a unanimous vote would be required before any action could be taken.¹⁵

By the time of the Fifth Assembly in 1924, the advocates of disarmament had adopted a triple formula of disarmament, security, and arbitration as a basis for discussion. Arbitration offered an alternative to war and a test of aggression. The assumption was that the government with the guilty conscience would be unwilling to submit its dispute to arbitration and would thereby label itself as the aggressor. The end result of this reasoning was the adoption by the Assembly of the Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes.¹⁶

Each signatory of the Geneva Protocol was bound to submit to compulsory arbitration and, if the protocol were ratified, a conference for the reduction of armaments would be held. Although passed by the Assembly, the Geneva Protocol was not endorsed by the British Government. The British dominions feared entanglement in European disputes and the British Government feared the Protocol might lead

¹⁵Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 246.

¹⁶Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 34.

to a British-American naval confrontation. The United States, for example, could be declared an aggressor in some future dispute or could attempt to maintain economic relations with a country designated as an aggressor and blockaded by the Protocol signatories.¹⁷

The Geneva Protocol was not a complete failure because some of its spirit was carried over into the Locarno Treaty of Mutual Guarantee of 1925. The Locarno Treaty consisted of two distinct sets of treaties. In the first of these, Germany recognized the permanency of its frontier with France and Belgium. Great Britain and Italy agreed to assist either France or Belgium if either were the victim of unprovoked aggression. Germany also signed agreements with both France and Belgium which bound all to arbitrate disputes among themselves.

The second set of treaties concerned Eastern Europe. Germany refused to recognize the permanency of its frontier with Poland and Czechoslovakia but did agree to arbitrate disputes with either country. France signed treaties of mutual guarantee with Poland and Czechoslovakia. If Germany attacked France, therefore, Great Britain, Italy, Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia would aid France. If Germany

¹⁷Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 247-49; Pegg, Contemporary Europe, p. 101.

attacked either Poland or Czechoslovakia, France alone was pledged to offer them assistance.¹⁸

The Treaty of Locarno made a tremendous moral impression upon the world. "The spirit of Locarno" was a much quoted phrase which implied that a spirit of good will characterized the signatories. In November 1925 the Conference of Ambassadors announced that the Allies would begin evacuation of the Cologne Zone of Occupation within a few days. In December the League Council created the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament, which would replace the Temporary Mixed Commission, to lay the groundwork for a world disarmament conference. By September of 1926 Germany had been admitted to the League of Nations and given a permanent seat on the League Council.¹⁹

Although there was no specific provision for disarmament in the Locarno Treaty, the document was regarded as a step towards that general reduction of armaments that the Allies were pledged by Wilson's Fourteen Point Program. Although the British would have preferred such a provision, they realized that France would not agree to a reduction of armaments unless Germany accepted its border with Poland and Czechoslovakia as being final and definite. Poland and Czechoslovakia would also have been reluctant to disarm

¹⁸Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 37.

¹⁹Pegg, Contemporary Europe, pp. 111-14.

unless the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which had not participated in the Locarno Treaty, also agreed to disarmament.²⁰

In the meantime the League Preparatory Commission for Disarmament began work on a provisional draft treaty.²¹ The United States Government accepted an invitation to work on the commission and remained actively involved in its work. The Preparatory Commission was assisted by two sub-commissions. Subcommittee A, which was actually a revised version of the old Permanent Advisory Commission, dealt with the military side of disarmament and Subcommittee B dealt with economic and political questions. Subcommittee A determined the standard of work and the method of approach which dominated the discussions of the Preparatory

²⁰Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 41-42.

²¹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 237. The Preparatory Commission was composed of all members of the League Council and the following members of the Assembly: Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Argentina, Chile, Greece, and Turkey were later added to the commission. Three non-League member states, the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and Germany, also participated in the commission's work. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics did not participate until 1927 and, as already noted, Germany was admitted to the League Council in 1926. See Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 46-47, 49.

Commission.²² The work of the Preparatory Commission was slowed, however, by differences of opinion on several issues. The British, for example, disagreed with the French view that limitation of naval armaments should be applied only to total tonnage and not to various categories in detail. The United States and Italy opposed the French suggestion that some form of international supervision be implemented to enforce disarmament. The commission, therefore, made little progress.²³

The 1927 Geneva Conference

United States interest in disarmament had not diminished. The same influences which had led to the convening of the Washington Conference were still present. There was genuine desire for peace among disarmament advocates as well as a desire to maintain parity with Great Britain through limitation rather than by out-building the British. The Republican Administration was also eager to achieve some notable contribution in international affairs

²²Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 250-51. During 1926 Subcommittee A conducted eighty-six meetings in Geneva. The personnel composition of the subcommittee was as follows: fifteen generals, twenty-six colonels and lieutenant colonels, eleven majors, nine captains, four lieutenants, nine admirals and rear admirals, fifteen commanders and lieutenant commanders, one squadron leader, and five civilians.

²³Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 58-60.

in order to influence voters at the next election. President Calvin Coolidge's Administration had failed in its effort to bring the United States into the World Court and was eager to make another excursion into international affairs which seemed to offer greater prospects for success.²⁴

As critics had predicted, the failure of the Washington Conference to extend the ratio beyond capital ships soon led to an arms race in cruiser building. In 1923 the Conservative Party regained power in Great Britain and promptly began building cruisers. A similar situation occurred in Japan, France, and Italy. Late in 1924 the United States Congress approved the building of eight cruisers with a completion date established for 1 July 1927. Construction on five of the eight cruisers had begun when Coolidge indicated, on 7 December 1926, a willingness to apply the 5:5:3 ratio to other categories. Pressure for further construction was growing, however, and Congress refused Coolidge's request to postpone work on the other three cruisers.²⁵

On 10 February 1927 President Coolidge invited Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan to join the United States in negotiations for an extension of the Washington

²⁴Ibid., pp. 103-4.

²⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 140-41.

Conference naval treaties on disarmament. The resulting diplomatic activity revealed that the problems relating to auxiliary vessels were more technical than those relating to capital ships.²⁶ France, for example, wanted a total tonnage to be fixed without specifying vessel size while Great Britain and the United States wanted the size of vessels fixed in each category.²⁷ France and Italy did not wish to support a treaty covering all naval armaments unless agreement was simultaneously reached with regard to land and air weapons. They preferred to continue to work for disarmament exclusively through the League's Preparatory Commission. The United States, Great Britain, and Japan were less willing to discuss the interdependence of all three categories since their territories were virtually invulnerable to attack by land.²⁸

Coolidge, who enjoyed his reputation as an economy-minded President, invited the five powers to enter negotiations through their delegates to the League Preparatory Commission. Coolidge believed the League method would be too slow because it was engaged in attempts to

²⁶David Carlton, "Great Britain and the Coolidge Naval Disarmament Conference of 1927," Political Science Quarterly 83 (December 1968):574. (Hereafter cited as Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927.")

²⁷Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 105.

²⁸Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 574.

settle problems which were too complicated for a quick solution.²⁹ Great Britain and Japan accepted Coolidge's invitation but France and Italy declined to participate officially in the negotiations. They did agree, however, to be represented by unofficial observers. France's official reasoning for declining to accept the offer was that a naval conference would weaken the authority of the League by depriving the Preparatory Commission of part of its program. The Italian Government reiterated its belief that all types of armaments should be discussed and that its unfavorable geographical position made it impossible for Italy to further limit its naval armaments.³⁰

Instead of carefully selecting a group of civilian-dominated negotiators, as Secretary of State Charles E. Hughes had done, Coolidge and his Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg, decided to use the already existing delegation to the League's Preparatory Commission on the Disarmament Conference. This meant that naval officers would dominate the proceedings. Coolidge invited the other powers to follow his example and use their Preparatory Commission delegations. Great Britain and Japan agreed with this approach to the conference. The proceedings, therefore,

²⁹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 164.

³⁰Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 108-9; Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 165.

were dominated by technical considerations rather than political ones. Hughes had realized that disarmament was more a political than a technical problem and he had subordinated the opinions of naval officers to his political objectives.³¹

The most prominent members of the United States delegation were two civilians with diplomatic experience, Hugh Gibson and Hugh R. Wilson, and a naval officer, Admiral Hilary Jones. Eight other naval advisers, one legal adviser, a secretariat of four persons, and one archivist were attached to the American delegation. The conference began on 20 June 1927 and ended in failure on 4 August 1927. Only three public sessions were held while the bulk of the work was confined to the privacy of technical committees. The environment of the Geneva Conference, therefore, contrasted sharply with that of the Washington Conference.³²

Hugh Gibson was elected President of the Geneva Conference and on opening day he presented the United States proposals. Gibson recommended that the Washington Treaty ratios of 5:5:3 be extended to auxiliary

³¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 141-42.

³²Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 165-67. The Geneva Conference was primarily a two-power conference between the United States and Great Britain. Japan played a minor role and the Japanese delegates were generally content to support limitation as long as it did not interfere with their existing building program. See page 177.

vessels--cruisers, destroyers, and submarines.³³ The United States delegation also wanted ton-for-ton parity with the British. The delegation reasoned that, with few bases and Japan as a potential enemy, the United States should devote its full tonnage allowance to the construction of 10,000 ton, 8-inch gun ships with a lengthy cruising radius.³⁴

The British delegation, led by Admiral William C. Bridgeman and Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, wanted a further reduction in capital ship construction and complete abolition of submarines. The British delegates also argued for a division of cruisers into two categories on the basis of gun caliber and tonnage. They supported the limitation of vessels displacing more than 7,500 tons and possessing guns of larger caliber than six inches, but they opposed any limitation on the construction of smaller vessels.³⁵ The

³³Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 109. The chart indicates the tonnage increases recommended for the three powers by Gibson. Category A represents cruisers, B represents destroyers, and C represents submarines.

	United States	Great Britain	Japan
A	250,000 to 300,000	250,000 to 300,000	150,000 to 180,000
B	200,000 to 250,000	200,000 to 250,000	120,000 to 150,000
C	60,000 to 90,000	60,000 to 90,000	36,000 to 54,000

³⁴Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 143.

³⁵Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 576. Carlton states that the Japanese claimed they had to seek instructions from Tokyo and, therefore, "the Japanese delegates confined themselves in the first days of the conference to platitudinous expressions of good-will."

British delegation argued that Great Britain's scattered empire, numerous bases, and long sea lanes made a smaller type of vessel more feasible for the British than for the United States. The British delegation also preferred to increase rather than decrease total tonnage in order to maintain cruiser tonnage at a two-for-one ratio to that of any potential European rival.³⁶ Bridgeman recommended, therefore, that the accepted life of existing capital vessels be extended from twenty to twenty-six years, that the size of future capital ships be limited to a maximum of 30,000 tons, and that the existing ratio of 5:5:3 be applied to cruisers of 10,000 tons, carrying 8-inch guns.³⁷

Bridgeman frequently referred to what he termed as the doctrine of "absolute need." It meant that the defensive requirements of a nation must govern its construction policy rather than the requirements of other nations. The British doctrine of absolute need, therefore, contrasted sharply with the American demand for parity.³⁸ If the doctrine of absolute need were adopted the British would be able to show a much greater need of ships for defensive purposes than could the United States. This would give the British a larger fleet than the United States.

³⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 143.

³⁷Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 110.

³⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 144-45.

Gibson and his cohorts on the American delegation argued that cruisers which could be used for defense could also be used for offensive purposes such as destroying the commerce of an enemy. The American delegation also pointed out that the result of the cruiser tonnage proposed by the British was expansion rather than reduction. The purpose of a disarmament conference was to limit or reduce armaments and not to increase them. Gibson declared that the United States would sign no treaty which did not embody the principle of parity.³⁹

The British delegation insisted that Great Britain had an absolute need for 562,000 tons of cruisers which would include fifteen 10,000-ton cruisers with 8-inch guns and fifty-five 7,500-ton cruisers with 6-inch guns. The Americans demanded mathematical parity at a top tonnage limit of 400,000 which would include twenty-five 10,000-ton cruisers and twenty 7,500-ton cruisers, all carrying 8-inch guns. Ethan Ellis, author of Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, pinpointed the division of opinion by noting that

. . . Britain wanted stabilization on a higher tonnage level, according to the doctrine of absolute need, and the United States demanded parity on a lower level, with an emphasis on 10,000-tonners and 8-inch guns on cruisers of any tonnage.⁴⁰

³⁹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 172-73.

⁴⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 145.

The British were attempting to force the United States to construct exactly fifteen large and fifty-five small cruisers or abandon parity in one or both classes. The Americans argued that small cruisers with limited cruising radii would be unsuitable for operations in the Pacific Ocean where American naval bases were widely scattered and far apart.⁴¹

The discussions revealed that the United States delegation wanted to establish total tonnage limits prior to discussing the number of cruisers, whereas the British insisted upon settling the maximum number of cruisers before accepting overall tonnage figures.⁴² The point that aroused the most interest, however, was the British desire to reopen discussion on capital ships. In John W. Wheeler-Bennett's view,

. . . this appears to have taken the other delegations genuinely by surprise, and the British contention that it did not involve any actual modification of the Washington Treaty . . . failed to convince the Americans of the wisdom of adopting the proposal.⁴³

The United States and the Japanese delegation did agree, however, to discuss capital ships after agreement was reached on auxiliary vessels.

⁴¹Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 581.

⁴²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 145-46.

⁴³Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 112.

An equally disturbing issue to the Americans was the British insistence upon dividing cruisers into a large and a small class and applying the 5:5:3 ratio only to large cruisers. As already noted, the United States delegates believed a nation with few bases and with a potential enemy as far away as Japan needed several large cruisers with their longer cruising radii. On the other hand, the British argued that small cruisers were more practical because they were defensive rather than offensive in nature. The British delegation later insisted that Great Britain needed at least seventy small cruisers, between 6,000 and 7,500 tons with 6-inch guns, in order to protect their 80,000 miles of trade and communication routes.⁴⁴ Although the British did not mention the total tonnage they would need for seventy cruisers, it would obviously be well above the 400,000-ton maximum proposed by the United States.

Cruisers constructed in the 1920s ranged from 3,000 to 10,000 tons in displacement size. It was estimated that a 10,000-ton cruiser with 8-inch guns was two and one-half

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 111-15. Benjamin Williams states that the British arrived at the number of seventy cruisers in the following manner: On a basis of five cruisers for every three capital ships, twenty-five cruisers were to be assigned for duty with the fleet, which was ultimately to contain fifteen capital ships. Forty-five cruisers were to be used for direct trade protection. Of this number twelve would be refitting or refueling at any given moment. This would leave approximately one cruiser for every 2,500 miles of the 80,000 miles of British trade routes. See Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 169.

times as powerful as a 7,500-ton cruiser with 6-inch guns. The British argued that a general tonnage limit for all cruisers would only encourage the building of large cruisers and the net result would be an increase in combat power. They now proposed restricting the number of 10,000-ton cruisers with 8-inch guns to twelve, rather than their original suggestion of fifteen, for both the United States and Great Britain. At first the British suggested 7,500 tons as a limit for smaller cruisers but later they suggested 6,000 tons. In his book, The United States and Disarmament, Benjamin Williams contends that "the discovery that the 6,000-ton cruiser was the type best fitted for the defense of imperial interest seems to have come to the British government with great suddenness."⁴⁵ Great Britain had not constructed any such cruiser since the Washington Conference. In Williams's view the British argument about large and small cruisers was actually an attempt to conceal their unwillingness to agree to the principle of parity of cruisers with the United States.⁴⁶

Hugh Gibson informed the British delegation that 8-inch guns were necessary to protect the United States from

⁴⁵Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 169-70.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 171-72. Williams notes that statements by E. S. Emery, former First Lord of the Admiralty, and Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, indicated that they did not wish for the British to be bound with the United States in naval strength.

the huge fleet of British merchant ships which would easily be converted into cruisers armed with 6-inch guns. Gibson noted that Great Britain possessed 888,000 tons of these merchant ships as compared with only 188,000 tons of comparable ships in the United States. Gibson also reiterated the United States position that large cruisers were necessary because of the long distance between American bases. With Honolulu as a base, for example, the distance to Panama was 4,718 miles, to San Francisco, 2,091 miles, to Guam, 3,337 miles, and to Manila, 4,767 miles. In Williams's view, however, the United States actually desired the 8-inch gun more than the long cruising ability of the 10,000-ton ships. The United States wanted the larger guns for both trade route protection as well as for combat power with the battle fleet.⁴⁷

Throughout the discussions Gibson insisted that the United States did not wish to discuss cruiser tonnage in excess of 400,000 tons until the Washington Treaty expired

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 174-75. According to Williams, "in American naval plans . . . it was estimated that of forty-three cruisers required, twenty-eight were to be used for convoy and trade route protection. It is to this smaller group only that the argument concerning the long-steaming radius was applied." Most smaller cruisers had a cruising radius of 7,000 to 8,000 miles. Such cruisers, therefore, could reach wherever the United States Government might desire to send them. The United States prejudice against small cruisers appears to have owed less to the sparseness of American Pacific naval bases than to fears that such vessels would be inferior to the more numerous potentially armed merchantmen of the British. See Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," pp. 582-83.

on 31 December 1936. Bridgeman argued that numbers were more important to Great Britain than size and that Great Britain was prepared to forego construction on any more 8-inch gun cruisers until the United States and Japan had built up to the ratio established by the Washington Conference. Bridgeman insisted, however, that Great Britain wanted to limit the size and armament of small cruisers so that they might be defensive and not offensive weapons. The British did not, however, wish to agree in advance to a total tonnage of 400,000 because, as Bridgeman argued, it would place the British Empire in the position of accepting inferiority in offensive power rather than parity.⁴⁸

Just as the British-American impasse appeared beyond solution, the Japanese delegation, led by Viscount Makato Saito, assumed the role of mediators. The Japanese introduced three major proposals in an effort to salvage something from the conference. First, they suggested treating cruisers and destroyers as a single category in order to broaden the possibilities for compromise. Second, they suggested that the bulk of small cruiser tonnage consist of obsolescent vessels over sixteen years in age. The third suggestion was that the three powers agree on a short-term construction program without establishing any long-term precedents or obligations. Each of the three

⁴⁸Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 116.

suggestions failed to win the support of both the British and the Americans. The Japanese mediation efforts, therefore, ended in failure.⁴⁹

In the meantime the United States appeared to have won the battle for control of public opinion both in the United States and in Great Britain. Newspapers admonished the British for suggesting a further reduction of capital ships at a conference in which France and Italy were absent. The British Government was also criticized for its failure to recommend a limitation of small cruiser construction. In an article in the Political Science Quarterly, David Carlton wrote that "the British government was in fact widely--and correctly--suspected of seeking superiority over rather than parity with the United States in fighting craft."⁵⁰

By 29 June 1927 the volume of opposition to the British position at the conference had reached such dimensions that the British Government decided to concede parity to the United States. Some British officials, notably Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston Churchill, opposed the United States request for placing 8-inch guns on small cruisers. Churchill's influence within the British Cabinet became so great that on 19 July several members of the British delegation were recalled to London and given

⁴⁹Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," pp. 582-83.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 576.

instructions to oppose the American desire to place 8-inch guns on small cruisers. Viscount Cecil of Chelwood threatened to resign from the British Cabinet unless it conceded to the United States position on 8-inch guns. The British Cabinet refused Cecil's request and on 4 August 1927 the Geneva Disarmament Conference ended in failure. On 8 August Cecil resigned.⁵¹

There are numerous reasons for the failure of the Geneva Conference. One unbridgeable chasm was the United States delegation's belief that naval needs were relative to those of other powers rather than "absolute" as the British contended. The American delegates also believed the fairest method of limitation was to consider all cruisers as one class and to limit the total tonnage of all cruisers. On the other hand, the British delegation preferred to subdivide cruisers into two classes--large and small or offensive and defensive. The British delegates refused to discuss total tonnage until they received American support for the construction of seventy small cruisers. The American delegation refused to discuss numbers until agreement had been reached on total tonnage. The United States representatives wanted to mount 8-inch guns on small

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 578, 592, 594.

cruisers but the British delegates argued that 8-inch guns would easily defeat cruisers armed with only 6-inch guns.⁵²

In Ethan Ellis's view, "technical and strategic factors thus pushed each side toward equally irreconcilable and inflexible positions, forcing into the background the political considerations which had been brought to the fore at Washington."⁵³ Although large numbers of British and Americans believed that war between the two countries was unthinkable, the technically-oriented delegations refused to ignore the possibility of an Anglo-American conflict. The primary justification for this outlook rested on the assumption that the subject of neutrality and blockade rights in a war involving only one of them could lead to conflict.⁵⁴

The British Government stated that the conference failed because of the inability to reach an agreement on the question of gun caliber.⁵⁵ On the other hand, the United

⁵²Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 114, 117, 121. Wheeler-Bennett notes that the American delegation agreed to accept a secondary class of cruisers provided that the tonnage of an individual cruiser did not preclude the mounting of 8-inch guns. See page 122.

⁵³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 147.

⁵⁴Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 590.

⁵⁵Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 123. This is the same interpretation presented by David Carlton. See Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 590.

States Government declared that the major reason for the deadlock was the failure to settle the problem of total cruiser strength.⁵⁶ While noting the problems created by technically dominated delegations, Ellis concludes that the conference foundered over ". . . the American demand for mathematical parity and the British concept of absolute need."⁵⁷ Although David Carlton is overly dramatic when he states that "the Naval Disarmament Conference of 1927 was one of the most dramatically unsuccessful international gatherings of the twentieth century . . .," the conference did have a severe impact on Anglo-American relations.⁵⁸ The major result of the conference was the renewal of a naval arms race between the United States and Great Britain. Although Anglo-American tension increased in the short run, the long-term effect of the 1927 Geneva Conference was beneficial. In Benjamin Williams's view, "the discussion and publicity had had the effect of taking the matter out of the hands of naval experts and placing it in a field where public sentiment could exert an influence."⁵⁹

⁵⁶Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 123.

⁵⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 149.

⁵⁸Carlton, "Great Britain and Conference of 1927," p. 573. In Carlton's view, after the failure of the Geneva Conference, Anglo-American relations "became more strained than at any time in the interwar period."

⁵⁹Williams, United States and Disarmament, p. 178.

The United States Government began to reappraise its naval construction policies after the failure of the 1927 Geneva Conference. President Calvin Coolidge agreed with the conclusion reached by both the Departments of State and Navy and the American position at Geneva had been weak because the Navy was under-strength in cruisers. In the view of the historian Gerald Wheeler, "limitation on American terms would have required scrapping of cruisers by Great Britain and Japan; whereas limitation on British terms, or on a compromise basis, would have demanded naval construction by the United States."⁶⁰ Recognizing this weakness, Representative Thomas Butler introduced a bill calling for the construction of seventy-one new ships, twenty-five of them cruisers. The reaction to this proposed massive expenditure of public funds was so strong, however, that it was drastically altered by a substitute bill which called for the construction of fifteen cruisers and one aircraft carrier. The fifteen-cruiser bill became law but with a proviso that construction could be suspended if a new naval disarmament conference were scheduled.⁶¹

The deterioration in Anglo-American relations after the failure of the 1927 Geneva Conference led the United

⁶⁰Gerald E. Wheeler, "Isolated Japan: Anglo-American Diplomatic Co-operation, 1927-1936," Pacific Historical Review 30 (May 1961):166. (Hereafter cited as Wheeler, "Isolated Japan.")

⁶¹Ibid.

States to seek security via two other approaches. One was to increase participation in the League's Preparatory Commission on Disarmament and the other was the completion of the Kellogg-Briand Pact.⁶² While the United States Government was preoccupied with these endeavors, the British and French Governments reached an agreement on disarmament which was in direct opposition to the American viewpoint.

Just as there had been a division of opinion between the United States and Great Britain, so had there been one between France and Great Britain. The French believed, unlike the British, that land, sea, and air armaments were interdependent. The French also believed limitation of naval armaments should be applied only to total tonnage rather than to various categories. Still another conflict was the French insistence that land forces be restricted only to limitation of forces with the colors and that the system of composition of training of reserves should not be interfered with.⁶³

The Anglo-French deadlock hindered the work of the League's Preparatory Commission on Disarmament because all decisions within that body required a unanimous vote. In an effort to alleviate this problem, British Foreign Secretary

⁶²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 149. The Kellogg-Briand Pact will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁶³Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 59-60.

Sir Austen Chamberlain suggested to his French counterpart, Aristide Briand, a compromise proposal. Briand submitted a counter draft and the result was the Anglo-French Compromise of 1928. Both parties agreed that the Preparatory Commission should limit naval armaments by classes. Those craft to be limited were capital ships, aircraft carriers, surface vessels of 10,000 tons and under, mounting guns above 6-inch caliber, and large submarines. The French had now accepted the British position of recognizing two classes of cruisers and limiting those which the United States most favored. Because France had made a concession to the British views on naval classification, the British Government withdrew its opposition to the French position in regard to army-trained reserves.⁶⁴

The British and French Governments intended for the Compromise to remain secret until a suitable occasion would permit its publication. On 21 September 1928, however, one of William Randolph Hearst's newspapers, the New York American, published a resumé of the Anglo-French Naval Compromise. Although it was never explained how the Hearst press obtained the document, one of Hearst's reporters in Paris was deported in 1928 and so was Hearst himself over a year later.

A strong public reaction swiftly followed the publication of the compromise. Wheeler-Bennett wrote that

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 127-32.

". . . at once the greatest indignation was manifested in Great Britain and in Germany, but by far the worst reaction was in the United States."⁶⁵ The United States Government was not only upset by the British and French basing their compromise upon a naval limitation formula already rejected by the United States but also because the compromise occurred simultaneously with the negotiations for the Kellogg-Briand Pact whose purpose was the renunciation of war. Many Americans viewed the compromise as merely another example of the old, secret diplomacy which was prevalent prior to World War I.⁶⁶

On 28 September 1928 the United States Government formally communicated its disapproval of the compromise to the British and French Governments. The United States Government stated that it could not accept the compromise because it imposed restrictions on ships that were peculiarly suited to the needs of the United States. In its communique with the two governments the United States Government reiterated its position that limitation should apply to all classes of combat vessels. The United States Government would not accept 6-inch gun cruisers as a separate class because they could easily be mounted upon merchant vessels, thereby transforming them into efficient

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 136.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 136-37.

offensive vessels. Such an occurrence would leave the United States at a distinct disadvantage.⁶⁷

Ethan Ellis refers to the controversy over the Anglo-French Compromise as ". . . the high-water mark of Anglo-American ill will."⁶⁸ The rising tide of public protest over the compromise was so great in Europe and the United States that the British Government declared the compromise defunct. The British, therefore, had been forced to adopt a more cordial relationship with the United States.⁶⁹ Thus ended one of the more unfortunate episodes in the struggle for disarmament in the 1920s. Distrust of the British within the United States was so strong that the United States Congress passed, on 13 February 1929, the aforementioned bill which authorized the President to call for the construction of fifteen 10,000-ton cruisers with 8-inch guns and one aircraft carrier at a total cost of approximately 274 million dollars. Ironically, debate on

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 138.

⁶⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 152.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 153. The Italian Government supported the American position of assigning a "global" tonnage figure and opposed the Anglo-French Compromise. The German Government was also opposed to the compromise on the grounds that it might contain secret clauses limiting land forces or calling for the pooling of the British and French Navies. See Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 133, 135, 139-40.

the Kellogg-Briand Pact for the Renunciation of War paralleled debate on the rearmament bill.⁷⁰

The London Conference

New leadership on both sides of the Atlantic had paved the way to an accommodation. President Herbert Hoover believed Anglo-American solidarity was a prerequisite for effective disarmament. The economy-minded Hoover was aware that the expense of replacements, as well as new ship construction, would exceed a billion dollars. Hoover was also aware that the British Government could afford even less these high expenditures of money.⁷¹ In Great Britain Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain and several leading members of the Tory Party were eager to heal the wounds that had been created by the Anglo-French Compromise.⁷² In his inaugural address, on 4 March 1929, Hoover announced that it was the desire of his Administration to renew disarmament efforts. Hoover believed that the acceptance of the Kellogg-Briand Pact had created an atmosphere which would enhance disarmament efforts.⁷³ The League's Preparatory

⁷⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 150; Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 179-80.

⁷¹Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 168.

⁷²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 153-54.

⁷³Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 181-82.

Commission on Disarmament had been in adjournment but was scheduled to meet for its sixth session on 15 April 1929. Prior to the session the United States delegate, Hugh Gibson, met with Hoover in Washington, D.C. Hoover suggested to Gibson that the United States inject life in the Preparatory Commission by offering a bold proposal.⁷⁴

Gibson returned to Geneva and on 22 April 1929 he addressed the Preparatory Commission. While stating that the United States Government preferred limitation by tonnage categories, Gibson declared that in order to facilitate agreement the United States would consider the French proposal which combined total tonnage and tonnage by categories. Gibson then introduced what was thereafter referred to as the "yardstick formula." He believed a formula for estimating equivalent tonnage could be derived by considering such factors as age, unit displacement, and caliber of guns. In order for limitation of armaments to be effective, however, Gibson concluded that all types of combat vessels must be considered.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Raymond G. O'Connor, "The 'Yardstick' and Naval Disarmament in the 1920's," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review 45 (December 1958):443-44. (Hereafter cited as O'Connor, "Yardstick.")

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 443-45. The "Yardstick" idea was first suggested by Allen W. Dulles, in January 1929, in an article for Foreign Affairs. Dulles suggested that combat strength rather than tonnage alone be considered in determining parity. He agreed with an earlier French proposal that the age of naval vessels should be an important factor in evaluating naval power. Although the proof has not been

In Raymond G. Connor's view, the yardstick formula was

. . . hailed both by diplomats and by the public as the answer to the problems that had beset disarmament negotiations since the Washington Conference of 1921-1922, and it spurred the conversations that culminated in the London Naval Conference of 1930.⁷⁶

Gibson, Hoover, and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson were astonished by the reception given to an idea which they had intended merely to stimulate activity at Geneva. They had not consulted the Navy General Board prior to offering the proposal and they had not devised a precise instrument by which to measure naval strength. The Administration's yardstick formula was merely a suggestion which was not fully conceived, but it caught the popular imagination. Its psychological impact ". . . made possible a treaty in which, for the first time, all of the naval weapons of three great nations were limited and a relative position of naval power was established."⁷⁷

Hoover and Stimson decided that the best approach for the United States would be to request that each of the naval powers, the United States, Great Britain, and Japan,

cited, it was probably by design that Dulles's article coincided with a speech by Austen Chamberlain in which he urged that an equation be devised to reconcile the conflicting aims of the United States and Great Britain. See page 449.

⁷⁶O'Connor, "Yardstick," p. 441.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 448, 463.

submit a yardstick formula. Both men believed civilian representatives should formulate the yardstick with navy personnel serving only as advisors. The civilian representatives of each government would then compare the three yardsticks and attempt to reach an agreement. The United States would be represented at the conference by the new ambassador to Great Britain, Charles G. Dawes.⁷⁸

Prospects for a successful conference were enhanced when the Labour Party won the British election on 7 June 1929. The new Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, was a strong advocate of armament reduction.⁷⁹ When Dawes arrived in London he was no doubt embarrassed by claims in the British press that he brought with him the yardstick formula that would make possible the reduction of armaments. Dawes could only reply that each government should submit a separate yardstick at the appropriate time.⁸⁰ In the meantime Hoover and MacDonald made previously arranged

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 449-50.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 451. In addition to MacDonald's election, O'Connor notes that: "The mutual desire for bilateral negotiation, the moral force of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the prospects of a formula to reconcile the cruiser dispute, the relegation of the naval officer to a subordinate position, and the atmosphere of good will and high intention that prevailed, all tended to dispel doubts and encourage confidence."

⁸⁰Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1929, 3 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 1:127-28. (Hereafter cited as Papers Relating to Foreign Relations.)

gestures toward disarmament by announcing plans not to complete a few ships under construction.⁸¹

Dawes and MacDonald held a series of meetings and, as their conversations progressed, it became evident that both men were eager to prevent Japan from making exorbitant increases in the number of its cruisers. The historian, Gerald Wheeler, believes that ". . . the two governments agreed secretly to deny the Japanese demand for a ratio increase to 70 percent. Obviously a candid report of such discussions could not be made to the Japanese or to other interested powers."⁸²

On 28 June 1929 MacDonald reported his willingness to recognize parity in cruiser strength with the United States. He suggested that the United States should have eighteen 8-inch guns and twenty 6-inch gun cruisers to Great Britain's fifteen and forty-five in each category.⁸³ Meanwhile, Hoover and his advisers were searching for the yardstick that Dawes was supposed to have brought with him to London. The General Board of the United States Navy was reluctant to devise a yardstick, however, because it believed actual wartime conditions were so variable that an arbitrary formula would be unwise. Although the General

⁸¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 157.

⁸²Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 169.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 158-59.

Board did finally suggest a yardstick based upon displacement, gun size, and ship age, both the British and United States Governments eventually abandoned the quest for a suitable yardstick.⁸⁴

During the pre-conference diplomatic activity MacDonald offered still another concession by lowering the British demands for the number of 6-inch gun cruisers from forty-five to thirty-five. Hoover asked the General Board for its estimate of the minimum number of cruisers the United States could accept. In a memorandum of 11 September 1929, the General Board estimated the United States required twenty-one 8-inch gun cruisers totaling 210,000 tons and fifteen 6-inch gun cruisers totaling 105,500 tons. The British Government indicated it could not accept twenty-one 8-inch gun cruisers for the United States but could agree to eighteen if Great Britain were permitted fifteen 8-inch gun cruisers. Dawes informed Stimson and Hoover that the British Government had discovered that the Japanese were insisting upon a ratio of seventy percent in large cruisers. If the United States should have as many as twenty such cruisers, for example, Japan would demand fourteen. This would mean the British, with fifteen large cruisers, would

⁸⁴O'Connor, "Yardstick," pp. 451-53, 457, 462. Both governments reasoned that the attempt to devise a yardstick might lead to ". . . prolonged and highly technical mathematical discussions." See Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1:210.

have only one more than the Japanese.⁸⁵ On the other hand, if the United States would agree to eighteen large cruisers, the Japanese would build only twelve or thirteen and leave the British in a better position in regard to both Japanese and American cruiser strength.

In October 1929 MacDonald visited the United States in order to lay the groundwork for a conference. Although the cruiser difference remained unsolved, sufficient progress was made to justify the convening of a conference. On 7 October 1929 invitations were sent by the British Government to the Governments of the United States, Japan, France, and Italy to attend a naval conference in London.⁸⁶

On the eve of the London Conference, the United States possessed a naval force which was inferior to Great Britain in capital ships, aircraft carriers, and cruisers but superior to Great Britain in destroyers and submarines. Japan was above the 10:6 ratio, established by the Washington Conference, in aircraft carriers, large cruisers, and submarines but below it in capital ships, small

⁸⁵Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 185-86.

⁸⁶Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 157.

cruisers, and destroyers.⁸⁷ Hoover and MacDonald wanted to hold the Japanese to a 10:6 ratio. It was agreed, therefore, that Stimson should indicate to the Japanese Ambassador at Washington, Katsuji Debuchi, that Japanese demands for a 10:7 ratio might compel the United States Government to alter its attitude toward the prohibition on further fortifications at Guam and Manila. The Japanese Government remained undaunted, however, and continued to demand a 10:7 ratio for capital ships.⁸⁸

The French and Italian Governments believed naval disarmament was inseparable from land and air armaments. Both regarded security through political processes as an integral part of disarmament. Both believed disarmament was a problem that should be handled by the League of Nations

⁸⁷Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 188-89. The strengths of the three major fleets on the eve of the London Conference were as follow:

<u>Type of Vessel</u>	<u>United States</u>	<u>Great Britain</u>	<u>Japan</u>	<u>Ratios</u>
Capital Ships	532,400	608,650	292,400	10:11.4:5.5
Aircraft				
Carriers	76,286	115,350	68,870	10:15.1:9
Cruisers, over				
6-inch Guns	130,000	186,226	108,400	10:14.3:8.3
Cruisers, 6-inch				
Guns and Under	70,500	177,685	98,415	10:25.2:13.9
Destroyers	290,304	184,371	122,575	10:6.3:4.2
Submarines	<u>80,980</u>	<u>60,284</u>	<u>77,842</u>	<u>10:7.4:9.6</u>
Total	1,180,470	1,332,566	768,502	10:11.3:6.5

The table represents fleets which were undergoing construction or that were already completed.

⁸⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 163.

and that the global tonnage method of limitation was the most feasible approach to naval disarmament.

The major obstacle to Franco-Italian agreement on naval limitation was their competition in the Mediterranean Sea. The French Government wanted to maintain an open sea route of communications with its African possessions in Tunis, Morocco, and Algeria. The Italian Government was also interested in maintaining communications with its spheres of interest in Tunis, Libya, and Abyssinia. Both nations were concerned about access to the Suez Canal, and the Italian Government wanted a secure route from Italy through the Straits of Gibraltar to the Atlantic Ocean. When Italy demanded parity with France in naval power the French Government responded that it would agree to parity only in the Mediterranean Sea. The Italian Government argued that parity only in the Mediterranean would permit France to bring in its outside naval forces during wartime and dominate Italy. Italy could not accept anything less than parity with the entire French fleet.⁸⁹

The French Government continued to insist that naval disarmament could not be separated from other types of disarmament and that the League of Nations was the proper organ for discussing disarmament. The French Government wanted an agreement which would permit the signatories to

⁸⁹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 196-98.

use force against an aggressor. French Government officials believed a nonaggression agreement among the major Mediterranean powers, similar to the Four-Power Treaty of the Washington Conference, would be the most effective method of maintaining peace in the Mediterranean. The British Government admitted that all armaments were interdependent but that it was still wise to deal with one armament at a time. British Government officials also believed a Mediterranean agreement was unnecessary because all the Mediterranean powers were League members.⁹⁰

The London Conference was Henry Stimson's first great challenge as Secretary of State. It occupied much of his time for sixteen months. He rented a baronial estate outside of London and occasionally played golf on its private course in order to relieve the tension created by the negotiations. The historian, Ethan Ellis, criticizes Stimson for his inability to delegate authority as well as his preoccupation with the mechanics of the conference. This kept him immersed in unimportant details and often left him tired and short-tempered. Stimson's efforts were also handicapped because both the British and French leaders held power by narrow margins and were, therefore, reluctant to make undue concessions.⁹¹

⁹⁰Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 161-67.

⁹¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 166-67.

Despite these shortcomings Stimson had accumulated a vast amount of experience as United States District Attorney for the southern district of New York, Secretary of War under President William Taft, special agent to Nicaragua during the revolutionary period of 1927, and as governor general of the Philippines. Stimson was assisted by a talented group of delegates which included Charles G. Dawes, the Ambassador to Great Britain, Charles F. Adams, the Secretary of the Navy, Dwight Morrow, an international banker, Hugh Gibson, the Ambassador to Belgium, Senators David A. Reed of Pennsylvania and Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, and Admirals Hilary P. Jones and William V. Pratt. The Geneva delegation of 1927 had been almost submerged by naval experts. At the London Conference, however, as at Washington, the civilian representatives were again dominant.⁹²

Prior to the opening session of the conference, Stimson and MacDonald agreed to oppose the Japanese Government's demand for a 10:7 ratio. They disagreed, however, on whether battleship reduction should be by tonnage or numbers. Stimson was able to persuade André Tardieu, the French premier, to agree that the conference could possibly reach conclusions independently of the League

⁹²Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 189-91. In Williams's view, "not since the conference of Ghent in 1814 had a delegation of such all-around strength and prestige gone abroad to represent the American government in an international negotiation" [p. 189].

of Nations. An air of confidence permeated the atmosphere, therefore, when the conference opened on 21 January 1930.

After much tension between Pratt and Jones, the United States delegation agreed to accept eighteen as the maximum number of heavy cruisers that would be allowed the United States. Jones was so disappointed over the failure to obtain twenty-one heavy cruisers that he withdrew from the conference. Unlike Jones, Pratt preferred tonnage reduction and was willing to divide cruiser strength between large and small vessels. The United States delegation proposed, therefore, that large cruiser totals be established at eighteen for the United States, fifteen for Great Britain, and twelve for Japan. Total cruiser tonnages should be 327,000, 339,000 and 198,655, respectively.⁹³

While the discussions on cruiser strength were being conducted, the French and Italian delegations were jockeying for the support of the delegates. Tardieu insisted that France required a large navy because the total length of the coastlines of France and its colonies was 18,850 nautical miles and the total lines of communication

⁹³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 165, 167, 169-70. The United States delegation also proposed that destroyer tonnages be 200,000 for the United States and Great Britain and 120,000 for Japan. Submarines should not exceed a tonnage of 60,000 for the United States and Great Britain and 40,000 for Japan. The number of battleships should be fifteen for the United States and Great Britain and nine for Japan.

equalled 33,850 miles in length.⁹⁴ Tardieu argued that France must either have naval superiority over Italy or an international guarantee which would protect French security. The Italian delegation responded by declaring that Italy could accept nothing less than parity with France.⁹⁵

The unwillingness of France and Italy to reach an agreement convinced many observers that the conference would fail. Such a possibility seemed probable when the French Government released a statement to the press, on 13 February 1930, outlining an extensive naval armament program which would be undertaken unless an effective mutual guarantee against aggression was conceived which would permit reductions. In the meantime Tardieu's Cabinet fell and the conference adjourned for two weeks. It was 27 February 1930 before Tardieu reestablished his government and not until 6 March was Aristide Briand able to return to the London Conference to represent Tardieu's government. During the interim the delegates attempted to conceive a plan which would salvage the conference.⁹⁶

Briand suggested that the delegates attempt to formulate a security pact which would be acceptable to all

⁹⁴Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 199.

⁹⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 173; Williams, The United States and Disarmament, p. 171.

⁹⁶Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 200-201; Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 181.

the participants. The American delegates soon made it clear that they could not sign an agreement which would bind the United States to take military action against an aggressor. Efforts were then made to develop a pact which would obligate the United States to do no more than consult with the other signatories during an international crisis.⁹⁷ This approach became infeasible, however, when President Hoover announced that the United States could in no way be committed to a consultative pact with France.⁹⁸

The impasse was finally broken with the decision to adopt an escalator clause as a substitute for consultation. This clause permitted any of the major powers to increase auxiliary tonnage whenever it believed building by non-subscribing powers endangered its security. Although the escalator clause saved the conference, it was a virtual admission of the failure to achieve meaningful disarmament. The reasons varied according to the political climate in each nation. Prime Minister MacDonald's Labour Party held a slim majority in Parliament and MacDonald was uncertain of public support should Great Britain decide to underwrite French security. France refused to disarm due to fear of both Italy and Germany. Italy insisted on the right to continue building until parity was achieved with France.

⁹⁷Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 201-2.

⁹⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 175.

Hoover and Stimson feared that Senator William E. Borah and his supporters in the United States Senate would oppose even a mild commitment on consultation.⁹⁹

In the meantime negotiations proceeded on other issues. The Japanese Government wanted a 10:7 ratio in all categories of ships. The United States and British Governments insisted upon a 10:6 ratio. After several days of hard bargaining, Senator David A. Reed and Tsuneo Matsudaira worked out a compromise. The United States delegation agreed to complete only fifteen of its allotted eighteen 8-inch gun craft prior to 31 December 1935. By retaining its twelve vessels in this category, the Japanese would retain a 10:7 ratio until the end of the year 1935. After that date American construction could reestablish a 10:6 ratio. Japan was permitted a 10:7 ratio in light cruisers and destroyers and was accorded parity in submarines.¹⁰⁰

One of the most important agreements at the London Conference was the decision by the five powers to postpone construction on capital ship replacement tonnage until after 1936. The cost of building a capital ship in the 1920s was approximately \$40,000,000. The United States would have spent \$600,000,000 to build fifteen capital ships during the

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 176-77.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., pp. 177-79.

next twelve years. These astronomical costs led many naval experts to question the value of capital ships. Prior to the conference the British Government had even suggested abolishing capital ships. The final agreement stipulated that the United States would postpone building ten capital ships and would scrap three others, Great Britain would postpone building ten ships and would scrap five others, Japan would postpone building six and would scrap one, and France and Italy would postpone the construction of three capital ships each.¹⁰¹

The primary purpose of the London Conference had been to settle the cruiser rivalry between the major powers. Only the United States, Great Britain, and Japan were willing to sign an agreement on this category. As noted previously, the United States had reluctantly agreed to maintain only eighteen 8-inch gun cruisers instead of twenty-one which the delegates had demanded originally. Great Britain would be limited to fifteen and Japan to twelve. The cruiser tonnage limits were established as

¹⁰¹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 205-7. The agreement left the United States with fifteen capital ships (462,400 tons), Great Britain fifteen (474,750 tons), and Japan nine (266,070 tons).

323,500 for the United States, 339,000 for Great Britain, and 208,850 for Japan.¹⁰²

Since no country had constructed aircraft carriers up to the strength permitted by the Washington Conference Treaty, this provision remained unchanged. The British delegation contended that submarines were primarily offensive weapons and should be abolished. The French and Japanese delegates argued that submarines were important defensive weapons and should be retained. The Japanese did agree, however, to maintain their submarine strength at the same level as Great Britain and the United States (52,700 tons). Future submarines were to be limited to guns of 5.1 inches and under 2,000 tons. A clause was also adopted which stated that submarine commanders must ensure the safety of passengers on a merchant vessel before sinking it.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 210-12. The cruiser tonnage limits were as follow:

Cruiser Sub-Categories	United States	Great Britain	Japan
Guns of more than 6.1 inches (155mm.) caliber	180,000	146,800	108,400
Guns of 6.1 inches (155mm.) caliber or less	143,500	192,200	100,450
Total	323,500	339,000	208,850

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 210-11; 217-21.

The agreements were signed and the London Naval Conference closed on 22 April 1930. Although the conference had lessened Anglo-American tension, the French and Italian Governments had failed to reach a compromise. Italy continued to insist on maintaining parity with France and France refused to consider either extensive disarmament or the question of Italian parity without further guarantees of security.¹⁰⁴ The French Government was also unhappy with the British refusal to support its demands for security and disappointed with the American refusal to agree to a consultative treaty.¹⁰⁵

Although the Anglo-American schism had been healed, the British believed they had made the largest sacrifices at the London Conference. Five of the nine capital ships that were scrapped were British and all five were recently constructed vessels.¹⁰⁶ If the British made the largest sacrifices, the Japanese made the greatest gains at the conference. The agreements provided Japan with the military potential to dominate the Far East. Japanese critics, however, were angry because Japan had not been explicitly given a 10:7 ratio in all categories. Japanese disappointment with the London Conference was revealed when

¹⁰⁴Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, pp. 215-16.

¹⁰⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 180.

¹⁰⁶Wheeler-Bennett, Disarmament and Security, p. 200.

Admiral Takeshi Takarabe was handed a hara-kiri dagger upon his arrival in Japan and an assassination attempt was made upon Prime Minister Yoko Hamaguchi.¹⁰⁷

Reaction in the United States to the London Conference was not entirely favorable. The General Board of the United States Navy was unhappy because the United States was limited to eighteen cruisers and because the United States had exchanged 30,000 tons of 8-inch gun cruisers for 38,000 tons of 6-inch gun cruisers. The members of the General Board believed the larger tonnage of light vessels did not compensate for the loss of the greater combat power provided by the 8-inch gun cruisers.¹⁰⁸ The naval experts called to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were so critical of the London Conference that the Senate requested the papers documenting the negotiations. Despite Hoover's refusal to supply it with the papers, the Senate finally approved the London Conference Treaty, on 7 July 1930, by a vote of fifty-eight to nine.¹⁰⁹

Although the agreements at the London Conference reduced the ability of the United States Navy to defend the

¹⁰⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 181.

¹⁰⁸Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 212-13. Spokesmen for the United States Navy believed the agreements left the United States so weak in the Pacific that the security of the Philippine Islands was in jeopardy. See Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 170.

¹⁰⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 180.

Philippine Islands, Hoover refused to consider granting independence to the Filipinos. Cameron Forbes, an ex-Philippine governor general and Ambassador to Japan, noted in his journal that Hoover explained this conundrum by indicating that if the United States had granted the Philippines independence it would have destroyed the disarmament conference. According to Forbes, Hoover said that "'Great Britain was assenting to our program for disarmament only on the understanding that we were to remain in the Philippines: that were we to withdraw Great Britain would insist on a different ratio.'"¹¹⁰

The Geneva World Disarmament Conference

The London Conference proceedings and the German elections of September 1930 stimulated the work of the League's Preparatory Commission on Disarmament. The London Conference renewed hope for direct disarmament, but the German elections, in which the National Socialist Party increased its seats in the Reichstag from 12 to 107, indicated a significant increase in the spirit of German nationalism. The German elections also revealed that many

¹¹⁰Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," pp. 170-71. Wheeler suggests that Hoover and MacDonalld agreed that the United States would maintain a fleet operating out of Manila Bay and available for cooperation with Great Britain in case Japan threatened either country. In Wheeler's view, "it would also mean that America would set no bad example for British colonials by granting independence to an Asiatic possession" [p. 171].

Germans believed the League should fulfill the disarmament provisions of the covenant or that otherwise Germany should be permitted to increase its armaments. The Preparatory Commission finally completed a draft, on 9 December 1930, and recommended that a conference be held early in 1932. The League Council agreed and a conference was scheduled for 2 February 1932.¹¹¹

Prior to 1931 the League's Preparatory Commission on Disarmament had been virtually unnoticed due to the greater importance attached to the Geneva and London Conferences. The Preparatory Commission, however, had been working on a draft treaty since December 1925. Representatives from nineteen nations, including the United States, participated in the work of the Preparatory Commission from 1925 to 1932. The first session alone, which ended in November 1926, produced almost four million pages of records. The major issue was the familiar one of France insisting that security precede disarmament while Great Britain and the United States argued that if disarmament were accomplished first it would open a path to security.¹¹²

One of the most dramatic episodes in the work of the Preparatory Commission was a proposal by the Russian

¹¹¹Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 253-54. In Williams's view, ". . . at the meetings of the Preparatory Commission the United States . . . stood out as one of the most active and influential members of the Commission" [p. 255].

¹¹²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 182-83.

delegate, Maxim Litvinov, calling for immediate, complete, and general disarmament. Among other things, Litvinov proposed that each country be permitted to retain only a small police force whose size would be proportional to the population of each country. The French offered the most vehement opposition to the Litvinov proposal by contending that it ran counter to the trilogy of arbitration, security, and disarmament. The British concurred with the French sentiments and added that Russian propagandistic activities were the greatest obstacle to disarmament. The British also noted that the standards Litvinov suggested be used in determining police force size were loaded in favor of a large Russian force. A few representatives from other countries concurred with the British viewpoint that Russia wanted all nations to disarm in order to facilitate a worldwide proletarian revolution.¹¹³ Litvinov's proposal, therefore, was rejected by the Preparatory Commission.

A unique approach was suggested to the Preparatory Commission by the French delegation when it suggested budgetary limitation as a means of achieving disarmament. The French noted that Germany and her former allies were limited as to the numbers of soldiers and amount of war material they could possess but their budgets were unrestricted. The trend toward highly mechanized warfare

¹¹³Williams, The United States and Disarmament, pp. 258-60.

could enable them to increase spending and become highly effective with a numerically weaker army. The French also argued that budgetary limitation would be popular with taxpayers. Although the French avoided any comment on it, they were aware that their system of conscription at small rates of pay would enable them to provide a more powerful military force than Germany. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, the German Reichswehr was limited to 100,000 men and twelve year enlistments.

The United States offered the strongest opposition to the French proposal. Hugh Gibson, the United States representative, argued that costs were too variable to establish a common basis for budgetary limitations and that direct armament limitation was a more preferable approach. Only Japan, however, joined the United States in casting a negative vote when the final ballot was taken on whether to include budgetary limitation in the draft treaty.¹¹⁴

Another disagreement encountered by the members of the Preparatory Commission in the process of developing a draft treaty concerned the issues of trained reserves. Trained reserves were those individuals who had served for a period of active service and then retired to private life. Germany was the foremost advocate of limiting trained reserves as a method of disarmament. As already noted, the Versailles Treaty limited the German Army to 100,000 and

¹¹⁴Ibid., pp. 266-67, 270-71.

enlistments must be for a term of twelve consecutive years. This requirement prevented Germany from developing a large trained reserve. At first the United States supported the German viewpoint, but the combined opposition of France, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia to limiting trained reserves caused the United States to conform to their point of view. The representatives of these countries were still fearful of Germany and wanted to protect themselves with large citizen armies. The Preparatory Commission, therefore, voted down any provision for the numerical restriction of trained reserves.¹¹⁵

Other questions raised by the delegates of the Preparatory Commission were as follow: (1) Should full publicity be given in regard to each nation's armament status?; (2) Should international supervision be established as a means of reducing armaments?; (3) Should land material be limited?; (4) Should the numbers of men in the various navies be limited?; (5) Should naval fleets be limited according to overall global strength or by certain categories of ships?; and (6) Should the civil aviation industry be limited?¹¹⁶ In their final draft, the delegates finally agreed to limit the period of active service for

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 284-86.

¹¹⁶Ibid., pp. 275-98.

individuals in the military, establish a Permanent Disarmament Commission, limit the number of effectives in land, sea, and air forces, accept the method of naval limitation as embodied in the London Conference, and renounce chemical and bacteriological warfare.¹¹⁷

The World Disarmament Conference of 1932 opened at an inopportune time. Germany had been upset with the slow pace of the work of the Preparatory Commission and was demanding equality with other nations in the matter of disarmament. The German Government argued that the Treaty of Versailles directed the ex-Allies to disarm along with Germany. The French Government maintained that Germany should disarm first.¹¹⁸ France and Italy were undergoing a naval construction race, and Japan, which had attacked Manchuria in September 1931, was extending its conquests in that region.¹¹⁹ The opening session of the conference had to be delayed for one hour in order to permit the League Council to discuss the Japanese bombing of Shanghai.¹²⁰

Fifty-nine nations were represented when the conference finally opened on 2 February 1932. The

¹¹⁷John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Pipe Dream of Peace: The Story of the Collapse of Disarmament (New York: W. Morrow and Company, 1935; reprinted, New York: Howard Fertig, 1971), p. 4. (Hereafter cited as Wheeler-Bennett, Pipe Dream.)

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 82-85.

¹¹⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 185.

¹²⁰Wheeler-Bennett, Pipe Dream, p. 12.

conference was destined to be the last significant pre-World War II attempt to test the premise that armaments cause wars.¹²¹ Seven years of planning, however, had still not produced agreement. Each nation continued to consider disarmament in the light of its own special interests and problems. The United States and Great Britain called for the abolition of submarines but refused to consider any further limitations on battleships. The smaller naval powers denounced battleships but defended submarines on the basis that they were primarily defensive weapons. France continued to insist upon security before disarmament and Germany demanded that the ex-Allied powers disarm to Germany's level or permit Germany to build up to their level.¹²²

The nominal head of the United States delegation at the conference was Secretary of State Henry Stimson. He remained in the United States most of the time, however, and most of the negotiating was undertaken by Hugh Gibson. Gibson was assisted by four other civilians, Hugh Wilson, Norman Davis, Claude Swanson, and Dr. Mary Woollery.¹²³ There was still a strong desire within the United States for disarmament, mainly as a means for reducing government

¹²¹Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 172.

¹²²Wheeler-Bennett, Pipe Dream, pp. 7, 24.

¹²³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 185.

spending. Other factors were also important to the United States at the conference. The impact of the worldwide economic depression had led President Hoover to declare a one year moratorium on all intergovernmental war debts and reparations payments on 20 June 1931. The United States was unwilling, however, to consider any scaling down or postponement of inter-Allied war debts because the United States was the world's leading creditor nation and because it might release large sums of money in Europe for additional armaments.¹²⁴

After several nations presented disarmament proposals, it was finally agreed, on 25 February, to proceed within the framework as outlined in the Preparatory Commission's draft treaty. It was also decided to establish five committees to deal with land, naval, air, national expenditure, and political issues. It soon became obvious, however, that no definite progress would be made until after the French and German elections in March.¹²⁵ Another delay was occasioned by an Easter adjournment from 19 March to 11 April 1932.

On 26 March Gibson dispatched a telegram to Stimson in which he indicated his belief that the United States must

¹²⁴Wheeler-Bennett, Pipe Dreams, pp. 10-11. War debts and reparations will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹²⁵Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1932, 5 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), 1:48-51.

assume the leadership of the conference and present a plan lest the meeting fail.¹²⁶ In a speech before the conference, on 11 April, Gibson proposed the abolition of tanks, heavy mobile artillery, and poisonous gases. Gibson said, in part, "'the feeling of insecurity rests on fear of invasion. . . . The feeling of security will not be restored until we restore to defense the superiority over aggression which it enjoyed in former times.'"¹²⁷ Gibson believed that if armies were made nonaggressive they would be incapable of taking the offensive and all nations would feel more secure.¹²⁸ He proposed the abolition of tanks, gas, and mobile guns in order to please Germany because these weapons were forbidden Germany by the Treaty of Versailles. Great Britain supported Gibson's proposal but France did not believe his plan would provide adequate security. Stimson made a dramatic appearance at the conference in order to muster support for the proposal but it eventually was discarded after a lengthy debate over the definition of offensive and defensive weapons.¹²⁹

President Herbert Hoover now decided to emulate the tactics employed by former Secretary of State Charles Evans

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 59.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 79.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 60.

¹²⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 186-87.

Hughes at the Washington Conference by making a drastic proposal which he hoped would save the conference. Although Stimson assisted Hoover in formulating the plan, Stimson doubted it would salvage the conference. On 22 June 1932 Hoover announced a plan which would completely abolish tanks, heavy guns, and aerial bombardments.¹³⁰ Hoover also called for a one-third reduction in battleships and submarines and a one-fourth reduction in aircraft carriers, destroyers, and cruisers.

Neither the United States Navy nor the British Admiralty approved of Hoover's plan. The American navalists argued that Hoover's plan would leave the United States with too few large ships. In their view the greater fuel capacity of large ships enabled American ships to operate far from bases in the western Pacific. The British were upset because a reduction from fifteen to ten battleships would make it impossible for them to retain any capital ships in the Pacific for the protection of the dominions.¹³¹ The French Government was alarmed by the proposal because it feared a possible combination of Italian and German forces against France. The French refused to accept the plan unless the United States would sign either a mutual security treaty or agree to a consultative pact in case of a threat to the peace. When the United States refused to agree to

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 187.

¹³¹Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 173.

make any commitments to French security the conference rapidly degenerated and ended in failure. On 31 July 1932 the Nazis won 230 seats in the Reichstag and on 30 January 1933 Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany.¹³²

Ethan Ellis, author of Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933, concludes that disarmament failed during the 1921-1933 period due to the refusal of the United States Government ". . . to equate commitment with involvement . . ." and to the unwillingness of the United States public ". . . to pay the required price of political guarantees for the desired objective of arms reduction."¹³³ Europeans were equally unsuccessful, however, in their efforts to achieve disarmament. They were unable to use the League machinery or any political method of providing the military security that was a prerequisite to disarmament.¹³⁴ The only beneficial result of the failure of disarmament for the United States was the healing of the breach with Great Britain that had occurred at the abortive Geneva Naval Conference of 1927. Great Britain and the United States needed each other's assistance in the Far East. The long distance to the western Pacific and the naval reductions of 1922 and 1930 made Anglo-American cooperation mandatory

¹³²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 188-89.

¹³³Ibid., pp. 189-90.

¹³⁴Ibid., p. 190.

if either power were to effectively meet any challenges by Japan.¹³⁵

¹³⁵Wheeler, "Isolated Japan," p. 166.

CHAPTER V

UNITED STATES RELATIONS WITH EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA

War Debts

The war debt problem concerns the origination and the scheduled liquidation of all intergovernmental obligations--reparations, war loans, and relief and reconstruction credits--resulting from World War I. By 1932 as many as thirty conferences had been devoted entirely or primarily to a discussion of war debts, especially reparations. Twenty-eight countries were involved in the war debt problem during the period from World War I to 1933. Five of the countries were debtors only, ten were creditors only, and thirteen were both debtors and creditors. Ten of the countries were net debtors and eighteen were net creditors. Germany was the primary debtor country and the United States was the primary creditor.¹

The repayment process was not a simple matter of all debtors placing their payments into a single pool, out of

¹Harold G. Moulton and Leo Pasvolsky, War Debts and World Prosperity (New York: Century Company, 1932), pp. 3-4. (Hereafter cited as Moulton and Pasvolsky, War Debts.)

which all creditors received their share. Each net debtor country had to discharge at least a portion of its debts to each one of its creditors and each net creditor country had to receive at least a portion of the debt payment owed to it. This created the need for a large number of international financial transactions. The entire process was extremely complex because it involved the fiscal, currency, trade, and general economic conditions of all the countries.²

Intergovernmental indebtedness can be divided into three categories: (1) the war debts resulting from the need of Allied countries for foreign loans; (2) the relief loans designed to relieve suffering populations and provide for post-war reconstruction; and (3) the reparations payments imposed upon the defeated Central Powers. Prior to 6 April 1917, Great Britain assumed the responsibility for supplying the international financial requirements of the Allies. After that date the United States assumed the role of banker for Great Britain and the other Allied nations. When the United States entered World War I, therefore, all of the Allied powers were debtors to Great Britain.³

The amount loaned by the United States to twenty nations totaled, when funding operations began,

²Ibid., pp. 9-10.

³Ibid., pp. 25-29.

\$12,036,376,000.⁴ British Government loans were approximately eight billion dollars but this was offset by borrowing a little over four billion dollars from the United States and by gold shipments to Great Britain by the Allies. The French Government loaned approximately two and one-half billion dollars but its borrowings from the United States and Great Britain amounted to almost five billion dollars.⁵

The complex financial transactions among the Allies began in 1914 and did not end until 1920. The loans were made primarily for the purpose of financing purchases in the creditor countries. In their book, War Debts and World Prosperity, Harold G. Moulton and Leo Pasvolksy wrote that the United States treasury officials:

. . . were extremely careful in obtaining evidence of indebtedness for every dollar advanced and in making it clear to the borrowers that the loans were being made with a definite expectation that they would be repaid in full after the termination of hostilities--without reference to other problems of war liquidation.⁶

Loans among the European Allies, however, were regarded as subject to post-war adjustment. In Moulton and Pasvolksy's view, the European

. . . Allied governments had from the beginning regarded the loans among themselves as a phase of war co-operation

⁴L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 193. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

⁵Moulton and Pasvolksy, War Debts, p. 47.

⁶Ibid., pp. 47, 51.

and had assumed that these credits would be adjusted at the end of the conflict as a part of the general liquidation of the war.⁷

As early as 1918 the British Government attempted to obtain the consent of the United States to a general cancellation of the war debts. The United States Government, however, considered the debts to be valid obligations which must be repaid in full with interest.⁸ In order to determine indebtedness figures and to schedule payments, the United States Congress established, on 9 February 1922, the World War Foreign Debt Commission. Its membership included the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, and one representative from each House of Congress. The primary duty of the commission was to arrange for the repayment of the debts within a period of not more than twenty-five years (provided the debtors funded their debts during the year 1922) at an interest not lower than 4.25 percent. During the course of the debt funding negotiations, however, most of the provisions of this Congressional Act of 9 February 1922 would be substantially modified.⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 51.

⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 194-95; Sally Marks, The Illusion of Peace: International Relations in Europe, 1918-1933 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976), p. 47. (Hereafter cited as Marks, Illusion of Peace.)

⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 196-97; Moulton and Pasvolsky, War Debts, pp. 77-79.

It had been decided by the treaty makers at Versailles that Germany should pay reparations for the damage done to the civilian population and property of the Allies. The difficulty was determining how much Germany could and should be forced to pay. Unable to determine a final sum, the Versailles statesmen created a Reparations Commission which was charged with the duty of determining, by 1 May 1921, the total amount of Germany's obligations. In the meantime Germany was required to pay in cash or kind five billion dollars in order to cover the cost of the army of occupation.¹⁰ The French Government consistently demanded reparations payments in excess of those recommended by the economic experts at Versailles. With Frenchmen dominating the committee, the Reparations Commissions finally requested that Germany pay approximately thirty-three billion dollars within thirty years.¹¹

The Reparations Commission demanded that Germany submit at once ten million dollars in bearer bonds, which were to pay an interest rate of two and one-half percent, from 1921 to 1925, and thereafter five percent plus one percent amortization charges. After 1926, therefore,

¹⁰C. E. Black and E. C. Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe: A History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), pp. 101-2. (Hereafter cited as Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe.)

¹¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 196; Moulton and Pasvolsky, War Debts, pp. 145-46.

Germany would be required to make annual payments between 600 million dollars and 900 million dollars depending on how much of the original five billion had been paid by 1921. In addition to these monetary payments, Germany was required to pay reparations in kind to Belgium and France. France, for example, was to be given by Germany 500 stallions, 30,000 fillies and mares, 2,000 bulls, 90,000 milch cows, 1,000 rams, 100,000 sheep, and 10,000 goats. Germany was also required to surrender all of its merchant ships over 1,600 gross tons, one-half of the ships between 1,000 and 1,600 tons, and one-fourth of its fishing boats. German shipyards were required to construct 200,000 tons of ships annually for the next five years and submit these as reparations payments. Germany was forced to surrender twenty percent of its inland navigation tonnage and deliver to the Allies approximately forty million tons of coal annually over a period of ten years.¹²

The leading critic of reparations in the Allied camp was the British economist, John Maynard Keynes. In his book, The Economic Consequences of the Peace, Keynes argued that the reparations demands on Germany were much too excessive. Keynes believed that the restoration of the German economy was necessary for the economic health of all of Europe. The British prime minister, David Lloyd George,

p. 102. ¹²Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe,

agreed with this approach and soon the British and French Governments became involved in a dispute over the proper treatment of Germany.¹³ The French Government feared Germany and insisted that the Treaty of Versailles be strictly enforced, whereas the British Government was more willing to revise some of the stiffer economic provisions of the Treaty.¹⁴

It was not long before the European Allies linked their war debt obligations to the United States with reparations.¹⁵ The money to pay war debts could not conveniently be acquired from German reparations. On 1 August 1922 the British Government called for a cancellation of both reparations and war debts.¹⁶ The British Government wanted each nation to consider its subscription to the cost of the war as a willing

¹³Carl Hamilton Pegg, Contemporary Europe in World Focus (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 70. (Hereafter cited as Pegg, Contemporary Europe.) For additional information on Keynes's book, see Sir Josiah Stamp, "The Future in Retrospect: The Economic Consequences of the Peace," Foreign Affairs 13 (October 1934):104-12.

¹⁴Marks, Illusion of Peace, pp. 47, 50.

¹⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 196.

¹⁶Marks, Illusion of Peace, p. 47. The Allied Governments attempted to fulfill their war debt obligations to the United States only as long as they received German reparations payments. Their payments ceased simultaneously with the cancellation of reparations. See Hjalmar Schacht, "German Trade and German Debts," Foreign Affairs 13 (October 1934):3.

contribution to a common success.¹⁷ The United States Government refused to admit any connection between the two and argued that a cancellation of war debts would burden the American public with an undue share of the cost of the war.¹⁸

One of the problems with reparations was that the Allies preferred to receive money rather than commodities. If commodities alone had been requested, the German Government could have raised the money through taxes, purchased the specified commodities, and then sent them to the Allies. The transfer of money out of a country had limited possibilities. It was virtually impossible for Germany to pay its war debts in money. The German gold supply was so small it would have been quickly depleted if gold had been sent abroad. When Germany resorted to sending large quantities of paper money abroad, it depreciated in value when it became apparent that it would probably never be redeemable in gold at anything like its face value.¹⁹

The only remaining possibility was for Germany to pay reparations in the money of other countries. The debtor Allied nations had to resort to the same method. In Moulton

¹⁷Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1922, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1938), 1:410. (Hereafter cited as Papers Relating to Foreign Policy.)

¹⁸Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 223.

¹⁹Moulton and Pasvolsky, War Debts, pp. 12-13.

and Pasvolsky's view, "if payments have to be made by any debtor country in foreign currency, it is obvious that that country must be able somehow to earn the foreign currency required, for by hypothesis it is not to come as a gift."²⁰ Since foreign currency is earned primarily by the sale of goods to foreigners, debtor countries must sell to foreigners more goods and services than they buy from foreigners. In order to receive a completed debt payment, a creditor nation must be willing to buy from foreigners more goods and services than it sells to them. A debtor country, therefore, must have an excess of exports and a creditor country must have an import surplus if the debt is to be paid off.²¹ The United States interfered with this economic pattern, however, by adopting a high tariff policy throughout the 1920s in order to maintain a favorable balance of trade.²²

Germany reluctantly assumed the burden of paying reparations. The result was a sharp decline in the mark. At the end of 1921 the mark was worth only about two percent of its prewar value.²³ By the end of 1922 Germany was defaulting regularly on its timber and coal deliveries. On

²⁰Ibid., p. 14.

²¹Ibid., pp. 14, 16-17.

²²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 194.

²³Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 221.

9 January 1923 the Reparations Commission declared Germany in default by a vote of three to one. By the same vote, the Reparations Commission voted to occupy the rich coal mining region of the Ruhr. In each case France, Belgium, and Italy voted in the affirmative and Great Britain cast the lone negative vote. Both Great Britain and the United States launched formal protests when French and Belgian troops occupied the Ruhr.²⁴

The German Government's attempt to defeat the purpose of the occupation program through a policy of passive resistance failed. The German mark lost all value and Germany suffered spectacular inflation while Frenchmen and Belgians ran the railways and mined the coal of the Ruhr. In August 1923 Gustav Stresemann became the German Chancellor and he cancelled the program of passive resistance in September.²⁵

Even before the occupation of the Ruhr, Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes had suggested that an international committee convene to determine Germany's capacity to pay reparations. Early in November 1923 Great Britain invited the United States to join the British, French, Italians, and Belgians in a conference to study the reparations problem. French opposition to scaling down

²⁴Marks, Illusion of Peace, p. 49; Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 221.

²⁵Marks, Illusion of Peace, pp. 50-51.

reparations was finally overcome and a committee studied the problem from 14 January to 9 April 1924. The members from the United States were Charles G. Dawes, the chairman, Owen D. Young, and Henry Morton Robinson. The result of their efforts was referred to as the "Dawes Plan."²⁶

The Dawes Plan called for the evacuation of the Ruhr, a complete reorganization of German finances, a loan of 200 million dollars from the United States, and a sweeping tax reform. Annual reparations payments were to begin at 250 million dollars and gradually increase over a four year period to a standard payment of 625 million dollars. An American Agent General of Reparations, Parker Gilbert, was to supervise the complex administrative structure. Although most of the foreign exchange came from foreign loans, Germany was able to pay a total of \$1,994,566,695 in reparations between 1924 and 1930.²⁷

A vicious economic cycle now arose composed of American loans to Germany, German reparations payments to the Allies, and Allied war debt payments to the United States. In his book, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1923, Ethan Ellis described it as follows:

American investment dollars were transmuted into gold marks in the German industrial and commercial complex; these were funneled through the reparations hopper to

²⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 199-200.

²⁷Marks, Illusion of Peace, p. 53; Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, pp. 222-23.

Western Europe, emerging thence as pounds, francs, and lira in satisfaction of war-debt obligations.²⁸

The Dawes Plan provided only a schedule of payments, however, and failed to establish a date for the termination of reparations payments. In 1929, therefore, another committee was organized to formulate a plan for the final settlement of the reparations problem.

Owen D. Young of the United States served as chairman of the new committee. In addition to the United States, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy were represented on the committee. The meetings lasted from 11 February to 7 June 1929 and the end product was referred to as the "Young Plan." The plan lowered the total amount of reparations from approximately thirty-three billion dollars to approximately eight billion dollars. The payments were to be spread over a fifty-nine year period at an interest rate of 5.5 percent. The total payments on interest and principal would amount to a little over twenty-six billion dollars.²⁹

The Young Plan recognized the connection between reparations and war debts. The annual payments were divided into reparations and "outpayments." The reparations payments were to remain constant but the outpayments were tied to the debt obligations of Germany's creditors. If the

²⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 202.

²⁹Ibid., pp. 202-3.

debt obligations were lowered, the outpayments would be reduced proportionately.³⁰

The worldwide depression interrupted the fulfillment of the Young Plan. In order to soften the blow caused by the closing of the once-powerful bank of Vienna, the Kreditanstalt, President Herbert Hoover negotiated a moratorium on intergovernmental debts in July 1931. Payments of intergovernmental debts and reparations were to be suspended for one year. The German Government met with its European creditors in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1932. Reparations payments were cancelled but Germany was requested to deliver \$714,286,000 to the Bank of International Settlements to help liquidate reparations machinery and to cover credits which the bank had extended to Germany. The entire scheme, however, was contingent upon the success of Germany's creditors in reaching satisfactory arrangements with the United States. Hoover refused the requests of the European nations to cancel war debts, however, and debt revision remained a live issue for the incoming Administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Germany paid no more reparations and only Finland paid its war debts to the United States. The others made a final

³⁰Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 224.

token payment or, as in the case of France, defaulted on their payments.³¹

Although the United States Government was heavily involved in the war debt and reparations controversy, its reluctance to consider cancellation of the war debts or to formally recognize a connection between war debts and reparations did little to alleviate the economic problems in the 1920s.³² One possible solution to the problem would have been to separate war debts and peace debts. Thirty-six percent of the amount loaned to the Allied nations was loaned after the armistice and for purposes of peaceful reconstruction. This portion was actually a peace debt which the United States could have insisted be paid off. Although it would have placed a burden on American taxpayers, the war debt should have been cancelled.³³

The Outlawry of War Movement

Sources for support of world peace in the 1920s were in ample supply. In his articles in the Christian Century, Charles Clayton Morrison had been writing about the evils of

³¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 205-12; Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, pp. 303-5.

³²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 210-11.

³³Samuel Flagg Bemis, "A Clarifying Foreign Policy," The Yale Review 25 (December 1935):238.

warfare for years.³⁴ George Harvey sponsored a plan whereby the United States could not declare war without the sanction of a popular referendum, and John Dewey advocated that war be declared illegal under international law. In late 1922 the American Foundation for Peace sponsored a contest which offered \$100,000 for the winner of the best peace plan. More than 22,000 Americans entered the contest.³⁵

One of the most important of the peace advocates, however, was a Chicago lawyer, Salmon O. Levinson. Levinson was a Jewish refugee who had fled to the United States from Prussia in 1848. The horrors of World War I led him to formulate a plan which he referred to as the "outlawry of war." He believed it was unfortunate that international law recognized war as an institution. International law had outlawed the institution of slavery; why could it not also outlaw the institution of war?

Levinson was disappointed with the League of Nations. He believed it was a system without force--an alliance rather than a league. He converted Senator

³⁴Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 215. Morrison's ideas were also presented in his book, The Outlawry of War: A Constructive Policy for World Peace, in 1927.

³⁵John Chalmers Vinson, William E. Borah and the Outlawry of War (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1957, p. 53. (Hereafter cited as Vinson, Borah.) See, also, Selig Adler, The Uncertain Giant, 1921-1941: American Foreign Policy Between the Wars (New York: Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 88. (Hereafter cited as Adler, Uncertain Giant.)

Philander Knox to his viewpoint and supported him for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1920. Levinson failed to win the nomination for Knox, however, and failed in his attempt to have his plan included in the Republican Party platform. In December 1921 Levinson organized the American Committee for the Outlawry of War. His ideas appeared in a pamphlet, on 25 December 1921, entitled, "The Plan to Outlaw War."³⁶ His plan called for the establishment of peace through a codification of international law and the formation of a world court to administer the law.³⁷ Levinson won many important converts to his cause. In addition to Morrison and Dewey, Levinson received support from John Haynes Holmes, the pacifist minister of New York's Community Church, and Colonel Raymond Robins, the wartime head of American Red Cross activities in Russia.³⁸

³⁶Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt: Foreign Policy of the United States, 1913-1945 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 176-77. (Hereafter cited as Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt.) Levinson's ideas had been partly inspired by Charles W. Eliot, President-emeritus of Harvard, and the Progressive philosopher, Herbert Croly. See, also, John E. Stoner, S. O. Levinson and the Pact of Paris: A Study in the Techniques of Influence (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

³⁷Vinson, Borah, p. 60.

³⁸Robert H. Ferrell, Peace in Their Time: The Origins of the Kellogg-Briand Pact (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), pp. 32-33. (Hereafter cited as Ferrell, Peace in Their Time.) Vinson contends that Borah obtained much information from Levinson but did not always agree with him. See Vinson, Borah, p. 132.

Another of Levinson's chief converts was the anti-League Senator from Idaho, William E. Borah, who would become the chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1924. In his book, William E. Borah and the Outlawry of War, John Chalmers Vinson refers to the Idaho Senator as the "perfect isolationist." Borah was, however, an active participant in the peace movements of the 1920s. In Vinson's view Borah believed that "complete independence in foreign policy and cooperation with other nations to establish peace were not incompatible ideals."³⁹ Borah developed a large public following, a penchant for making news, and a reputation for opposing the viewpoints of others.⁴⁰ These characteristics were exemplified by Borah in his struggle to promote peace without committing the United States to a given line of procedure in a future exigency.

Although Levinson's opposition to the League of Nations appealed to him, Borah was opposed to the establishment of any administrative machinery for enforcing peace. Borah rejected the use of military force to execute the decrees of a peace organization.⁴¹ Borah preferred that the

³⁹Vinson, Borah, p. 16.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 9. Vinson notes that "the classic expression of this characteristic was attributed to Calvin Coolidge who upon seeing Borah riding horseback noted with surprise that Senator and horse were both going the same way."

⁴¹Vinson, Borah, pp. 60, 65.

enforcement of the outlawry of war be dependent upon an aroused world opinion. If this situation developed, outlawry would replace the League.⁴²

Levinson urged Borah to assume leadership of the outlawry movement in Congress. Borah hesitated to assume this position because of his belief that little would be accomplished in Congress until public opinion demanded such a course of action.⁴³ In his eagerness to convert Borah, Levinson eventually abandoned his support of the use of enforcement machinery and began to advocate merely a formal agreement among nations of the world to outlaw war.⁴⁴ On 13 February 1923 Borah finally introduced a resolution in the Senate which called for the outlawry of war. Although the Senate failed to adopt his resolution, the supporters of the movement continued their efforts to influence public opinion.⁴⁵

⁴²Adler, Uncertain Giant, p. 88.

⁴³Vinson, Borah, p. 128. Like a stubborn bachelor, Borah neither married outlawry nor abandoned it. Perhaps he was merely waiting for an opportune moment to use it as a program to make him a candidate for the Presidency. He may also have been giving lip service to it in order to retain the friendship of the politically influential Republican, Raymond Robins. See Vinson, Borah, pp. 141-42.

⁴⁴Adler, Uncertain Giant, p. 88.

⁴⁵Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 177. Robert Ferrell contends that Borah introduced the resolution to counteract President Harding's earlier proposal that the United States join the World Court. See Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, pp. 33-34.

Not all of the supporters of the outlawry of war agreed with the approach of Levinson and Borah. Nicholas Murray Butler, the President of Columbia University, and James T. Shotwell, Professor of History at Columbia, believed that outlawry would buttress the League's peace machinery. They believed League sanctions would be necessary to enforce any agreement on outlawry.⁴⁶ Shotwell was an active supporter of the 1924 Geneva Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. This plan was designed to eliminate war through compulsory arbitration. If this failed, the plan advocated disciplinary action under League auspices. Borah led the opposition to the protocol and it was defeated in 1925. Although Borah reintroduced his own outlawry resolution in December 1926, his preoccupation with the problems of prohibition, the World Court, Russian recognition, and the Nicaraguan crisis prevented him from giving it a strong endorsement.⁴⁷

In June 1926 Butler met the French Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand, during a visit to Paris. Butler suggested to Briand that civilized governments should abolish war and he advised Briand to read a chapter from Karl Von Clausewitz's book, On War, entitled "War as an Instrument of Policy." Butler believed that a careful reading of it would

⁴⁶Adler, Uncertain Giant, p. 88.

⁴⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 216.

convince Briand of the need for nations to renounce war as an instrument of policy.⁴⁸ The following spring Shotwell was sent by the Carnegie Endowment Commission for International Peace to the University of Berlin as a visiting professor. On 22 March 1927 Shotwell travelled to France and conversed with Briand on the subject of the outlawry of war. Shotwell claimed that he was the actual author of Briand's subsequent message to the American people.⁴⁹

On the tenth anniversary of America's entry into World War I, 6 April 1927, Briand addressed a message to the American people. Briand stated that the aims of the United States and France regarding disarmament were similar. Both nations were democratic and both were striving for peace. France, therefore, would be ready to agree "to any mutual engagement tending, as between those two countries, to 'outlaw war,' to use an American expression."⁵⁰ Briand declared that a bilateral pact between France and the United

⁴⁸Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, p. 66. Butler later claimed that this episode was the actual origin of the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

⁴⁹Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 178.

⁵⁰Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1927 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 2:611-12. (Hereafter cited as Papers Relating to Foreign Policy, 1927.) Coincidentally, on the same day of Briand's message, Levinson was sailing to France for a vacation. He heartily congratulated Briand upon his arrival in Paris. See Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 178.

States, to renounce war as an instrument of national policy, would greatly contribute to world peace.

Briand was motivated by several factors in making his proposal. He wanted to counteract American criticism of the French Government for its rearmament policies, its recent alliances with Rumania and Yugoslavia, its failure to pay war debts, and its refusal to participate in the Geneva Conference on Naval Disarmament that had been proposed by President Calvin Coolidge. Briand's primary motivation, however, was his desire to assure American neutrality in all circumstances.⁵¹ His proposal amounted to a negative alliance which would assure the French Government that the United States would never engage in war against France.⁵² Briand was apparently trying to forestall any possible diplomatic revolution that might put America on the German side in any future conflict.⁵³

American newspapers gave little publicity to Briand's notable proposal. His message appeared on page

⁵¹Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 178. Borah once declared that the French devoted too much time to contemplating that part of the Lord's Prayer which read, "forgive us our debts." See Vincent, Borah, p. 50.

⁵²Foster Rhea Dulles, America's Rise to World Power, 1898-1954 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 159. Shotwell and David Hunter Miller refuted the theory of a negative alliance. See Shotwell's War as an Instrument of National Policy and D. H. Miller's The Peace Pact of Paris.

⁵³Adler, Uncertain Giant, p. 89.

five of the New York Times and on page twelve of the New York Herald-Tribune.⁵⁴ Widespread public discussion of Briand's proposal did not begin until a letter by Butler appeared in the New York Times on 25 April 1927.⁵⁵ Butler assured his readers that Briand was not requesting that America join the League or the World Court. In Butler's opinion, Briand's offer was not mere rhetoric, and its sincerity was made more genuine by its appeal to the American people rather than to the American Government.⁵⁶ In an editorial on 2 May, the New York Times expressed dismay that the American Government had not yet replied to Briand's proposal. The editorial criticized Borah for not supporting the proposal and suggested that the reason for his silence was his anger over the French failure to disarm and pay its war debts.⁵⁷

That same evening Shotwell addressed a meeting of the Non-Partisan Association of the League of Nations in New York. The association adopted a resolution supporting Briand's offer and sent copies to the Senators, the President, and the Secretary of State.⁵⁸ On 4 May 1927

⁵⁴Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, p. 74.

⁵⁵David Hunter Miller, The Peace Pact of Paris (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), p. 8.

⁵⁶New York Times, 25 April 1927, p. 22.

⁵⁷New York Times, 2 May 1927, p. 20.

⁵⁸Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, p. 77.

Borah replied in a letter to the chairman of the association, Raymond B. Fosdick. Borah indicated interest in Briand's proposal and expressed the hope that Briand would produce a draft treaty on the subject. Borah noted that he would be especially interested in learning about Briand's definition of "outlawry of war."⁵⁹ In his reply to the association, on 12 May, Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg merely thanked the Association for its resolution.⁶⁰

Kellogg was displeased with both the private diplomacy of Butler, Shotwell, and Levinson, and with Briand's undiplomatic method of going over the head of the American Government to the people. Kellogg was also unhappy with Briand's timing. In 1927 the American Government was confronted with economic problems in Mexico (Dwight Morrow's famous mission had not yet occurred), civil war in Nicaragua, the Nanking incident in China, and with France's refusal to attend the Geneva Naval Conference. Kellogg viewed Briand's proposal as a clever attempt to create a bilateral political alliance which was contrary to traditional American policy.⁶¹ A treaty with France, in his

⁵⁹New York Times, 6 May 1927, p. 2. On 7 May 1927 a Times editorial endorsed Borah's request and indicated that the newspaper had received many letters of endorsement from widely scattered regions of the country. See New York Times, 7 May 1927, p. 16.

⁶⁰Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, p. 77.

⁶¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 217.

opinion, would anger other nations and would receive strong opposition in the Senate. The official government position, therefore, was one of silence, even though public opinion supported a reply to Briand's proposal.

Borah was the first to break the silence. In a speech in Cleveland, on 9 May 1927, Borah suggested that his still pending bill on the outlawry of war be linked with Briand's proposal into an international treaty branding war as a criminal act. Borah's major motive at the time was to prevent the powers from using force in troubled China.⁶² He proposed a five-power treaty between the United States, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Japan to ban war with China. While praising Briand's proposal, Borah urged him to put his terms into the form of a treaty.⁶³

On 21 May 1927 the dialogue over the issue was interrupted by Charles A. Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight to Le Bourget, France.⁶⁴ During the next few days the newspapers in France and America were filled with emotional articles praising Lindbergh's feat and describing his warm reception in France. A feeling of closer Franco-American unity began to pervade the atmosphere.⁶⁵ Briand chose this propitious moment to present his proposal to the United

⁶²Ibid., p. 218.

⁶³New York Times, 10 May 1927, p. 29.

⁶⁴Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 179.

⁶⁵New York Times, 31 May 1927, p. 20.

States Government.⁶⁶ On 26 May 1927 at a luncheon in honor of Lindbergh, Briand suggested to the American Ambassador, Myron T. Herrick, that the two governments sign a "Pact of Perpetual Peace."⁶⁷

The effect of Lindbergh's flight on those supporting outlawry was manifest on 31 May 1927, during the Memorial Day exercises at Columbia University. Butler and Shotwell submitted a draft for a treaty outlawing war and calling for arbitration and conciliation to settle international disputes. The draft treaty was to be a memorial to those who had died for their country. It was based heavily on the 1925 Locarno Agreements and the 1908 Franco-American Arbitration Treaty which was due to expire on 27 February 1928. Shotwell described it as an "American Locarno."⁶⁸ An editorial in the New York Times praised the draft treaty and emphasized its connection with Lindbergh's flight. In order to make the treaty more palatable for isolationists, the editorial carefully noted that the draft treaty in no way compromised the Monroe Doctrine or American immigration policies.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1927, p. 613.

⁶⁸New York Times, 31 May 1927, pp. 1, 18. Shotwell and J. P. Chamberlain, director of legislative drafting and research work at Columbia, were the actual authors of the draft.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 20.

Ellis believes that Coolidge and Kellogg were irritated with the volunteer diplomacy of Butler, Shotwell, and Chamberlain and with their failure to submit their draft to the government before presenting it publicly. Coolidge requested they submit their plan to the Department for study, however, while Borah announced his intention to reserve comment until he could examine the draft. A New York Times editorial referred to Borah's closed mouth attitude as being unnecessary ". . . official delicacy on his part."⁷⁰

Although little consideration was given to the Shotwell-Chamberlain draft, the State Department finally began to consider Briand's proposal at the end of June 1927. This activity was prompted by Briand's submission of a draft treaty to the State Department on 22 June 1927.⁷¹ In the meantime Kellogg and Coolidge had decided to inform the British and Japanese Governments of the proceedings and try to dispel any idea of the United States trying to negotiate a special agreement with France.⁷² On 24 June Theodore Marriner, the Chief of the State Department's Division of West European Affairs, listed several negative factors for

⁷⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 217; New York Times, 1 June 1927, p. 28, and 2 June 1927, p. 24.

⁷¹Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1927, p. 616.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 615-16.

Kellogg's consideration. Marriner noted that the proposed pact was an attempt to draw attention away from France's absence at the Geneva Naval Conference. In his opinion, the pact would anger the other European powers and conflict with France's obligations under the League covenant which called for her to aid in the punishment of an aggressor state. It might also be used by the French to postpone ratification of the pending war debt settlement and create the belief that payment was unnecessary. Marriner's solution to the problem, therefore, was similar to that offered two weeks earlier by Borah. Marriner believed a multilateral treaty, including Great Britain and Japan, would be better than a single treaty with France because the latter had connotations of being a negative alliance.⁷³

In the meantime Briand began to exert pressure on Kellogg to support his bilateral treaty proposal. Briand requested approval of his intention to make a public statement about the matter on 4 July 1927. Kellogg strongly opposed it, however, and insisted the dialogue be confined to normal diplomatic channels. Kellogg wrote, "we are not going to be stampeded into making any commitments at all on the subject by public statements by anyone prior to our negotiations."⁷⁴

⁷³Ibid., p. 617.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 618-19.

On 27 June 1927 Kellogg described his position in a letter to Coolidge. This became the official position of the government until December 1927. Instead of a bilateral treaty, Kellogg preferred to renew a series of expiring arbitration treaties negotiated by Secretary of State Elihu Root in 1908. These treaties had been signed separately by the United States with France, Great Britain, and Japan. They provided that unsettled diplomatic disputes concerning the interpretation of treaties would be referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. The signatories could exempt any matters that would affect their "vital interests," their "independence," or their "honor." In addition, before any case was submitted for arbitration, it must be approved by the United States Senate. Kellogg was eager to renew these treaties before they expired in 1928.⁷⁵

Many of the advocates of outlawry, however, were opposed to the retention of the exception clauses in future treaties.⁷⁶ A New York Times editorial advocated the

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 619. The United States also had signed the Bryan Treaties (negotiated by Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan) in 1913 with Great Britain and France. These treaties provided for a Commission of Conciliation to settle disputes of a nature similar to those in the Root Treaties. The Bryan Treaties excluded conflicts which might involve internal affairs, third parties, the Monroe Doctrine, or the League of Nations. The signatories agreed not to resort to war, for a period of one year, while the Commission made its investigation. See page 620 and Duroselle, From Wilson to Roosevelt, p. 179.

⁷⁶New York Times, 12 June 1927, sec. 2, p. 3.

omission of such exclusion phrases as "vital interests," "independence," and "national honor" in treaties. The New York Times believed the American Government should be willing to submit any dispute with another nation to arbitration without any limitations or reservations.⁷⁷ When asked by Kellogg for his opinion on the subject, Borah registered his opposition and declared that the Senate would defeat any such proposals because of their impracticality. Borah believed the Shotwell-Chamberlain Treaty, as well as a similar one proposed by the American Foundation for Peace, was impracticable because it did not retain the exclusion features.⁷⁸

In the meantime Levinson, Robins, and other advocates of outlawry continued to urge Borah to support Briand's draft treaty. Borah was skeptical, however, of the value outlawry would derive from a bilateral agreement.⁷⁹ He believed a bilateral treaty with France implied an alliance. If France declared war on another nation that was friendly to the United States, America would be bound not to fight France.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁷⁸Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1927, p. 620.

⁷⁹Vinson, Borah, pp. 127-30.

⁸⁰John D. Hicks, Republican Ascendancy, 1921-1933 (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 150.

In late October, however, Borah underwent a remarkable metamorphosis. It appears that the growing tide of public opinion, as well as his own desire to run for the Presidency, compelled him to act.⁸¹ In November Borah agreed to speak on outlawry in New York City. His wife's illness, however, forced him to cancel the address. He announced his views, therefore, in a telegram to Sydney Gulick, Secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. Borah indicated he would support Briand's Pact if it would serve as a prelude to a multilateral pact outlawing war.⁸² Borah indicated he would renew his outlawry resolution in the upcoming congressional session in December and call for the codification of international law and the establishment of an independent court to hear disputes.⁸³

With Congress due to convene in December 1927, several Congressmen were now ready to champion the popular cause. Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas introduced a resolution for outlawry to the press on 21 November and to the Senate on 8 December. Borah disapproved of the Capper Resolution, however, because it contained a paragraph

⁸¹Robert James Maddox, William E. Borah and American Foreign Policy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 175-77.

⁸²Vinson, Borah, p. 131.

⁸³New York Times, 22 November 1927, p. 5.

defining an aggressor. Like the earlier Shotwell-Chamberlain Treaty, the Capper Resolution defined an aggressor as that nation which failed to submit to arbitration before resorting to war. Borah believed evil nations could draft an ultimatum that would make it necessary for their victims to refuse arbitration.⁸⁴

In late November, Coolidge's opinion of outlawry was reported by the New York Times. Coolidge disliked the outlawry plans and believed a diplomatic exchange between the nations was the best way to prevent war. In his opinion, the chief obstacle to outlawing war was the constitutional provision giving Congress the sole power to declare war.⁸⁵ Outlawry of war, therefore, would be unconstitutional because it would conflict with the congressional prerogative to declare war.

Borah disagreed with Coolidge's interpretation. Borah believed Congress would not lose the power to declare war. His outlawry plan merely created a condition whereby there would be no need for war. The League covenant, on the other hand, was dangerous because its power to make war did conflict with congressional powers. Borah agreed with Coolidge, however, that it was difficult to define an aggressor. In Borah's opinion, a nation should not be labeled an aggressor merely because it refused to arbitrate.

⁸⁴Vinson, Borah, pp. 134-35.

⁸⁵New York Times, 27 November 1927, pp. 1, 2.

War should occur only when there was a violation of peace agreements and codified international law.⁸⁶

In the meantime Borah had captured the leadership of the outlawry forces in Congress. Realizing that Capper's political strength was in the midwestern farming country, Borah accepted an offer from the National Grange to draft a resolution for them on outlawry. Borah convinced them of the folly of trying to define aggressive war, and they accepted his interpretation of outlawry. His draft was approved without modification and endorsed by 800,000 members of the Grange. On 14 December 1927 Borah introduced his resolution to the Senate for the fourth time.⁸⁷

Borah's plan called for the outlawry of war between nations as a means of settling international controversies. War should be declared a crime and a code of international law based upon outlawry should be adopted. A court, modeled on the United States Supreme Court, should have the power to decide international controversies. The court's judgments, however, should not be enforced by war. As with the United States Supreme Court, the power of enforcement should be based upon the respect of all nations and the ". . . compelling power of enlightened public opinion."⁸⁸

⁸⁶New York Times, 27 November 1927, pp. 1, 2.

⁸⁷Vinson, Borah, pp. 134-36.

⁸⁸Congressional Record--Senate, December 12, 1927, pp. 477-78.

Borah now had to convince the State Department of the efficacy of his plan. On 14 December Kellogg wrote Borah that he had abandoned his opposition to outlawry and would support the Capper Resolution. In his reply the next day, Borah indicated his opposition to Capper's attempt to define aggressive war as well as to a Franco-American bilateral treaty. Borah wrote that ". . . to enter into an agreement with one particular nation not to go to war is practically an alliance against other nations."⁸⁹ In his opinion, outlawry should be multilateral and include at least the leading nations of the world.

The showdown between Borah and Kellogg occurred in a closed meeting of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations on 22 December 1927. Kellogg requested the committee's approval of his plan to conclude gracefully the Briand proposal by renewing the old arbitration treaty with France. Although the committee agreed, Borah pushed for a proposal on the outlawry of war. Borah noted that the danger of an alliance could be eliminated and the advantages of outlawry realized by making the agreement multilateral.⁹⁰

The day after the committee meeting Kellogg wrote a letter to Root which said, in part:

⁸⁹Vinson, Borah, p. 137. Kellogg had wanted to avoid outlawry because he believed arbitration and disarmament were the best means of maintaining peace.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 138.

From several conversations I have had with Senator Borah and after long consultation with the full committee I am sure the Senate would not ratify a bilateral treaty of this nature. The suggestion was made that I propose to France a renewal of the Root Treaty and submit a note to France suggesting all leading powers join in.⁹¹

On 28 December 1927 Kellogg sent a note to Briand. Kellogg proposed first a renewal of the expiring Root Treaty and second a multilateral treaty for ending war.⁹² Kellogg had now seized the initiative from Briand. Briand's plan to include America in the treaty guarantees, by which he had hoped to obtain security for France, had failed.⁹³

Borah played a central role in the formulation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. Kellogg's letter to Root appears to confirm that Borah's leadership in changing the treaty from a bilateral to a multilateral one is beyond dispute. William R. Castle, the Assistant Secretary of State, insisted, however, that Kellogg, rather than Borah, made the suggestion to the Committee on Senate Foreign Relations on 22 December.⁹⁴

It is difficult to discover who first thought of the idea,⁹⁶ but Borah's public speech on 9 May 1927 appears to

⁹¹Ibid., p. 139.

⁹²Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1927, p. 627.

⁹³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 221.

⁹⁴Vinson, Borah, p. 139.

⁹⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 220-21.

⁹⁶Ferrell, Peace in Their Time, p. 141.

antedate them all. No official endorsement of the idea of a multilateral agreement was made before that date. Castle did not suggest a multilateral pact until 11 May and Murriner not until 24 June. Even if Kellogg suggested it in the committee meeting on 22 December, Borah had written him about it on 15 December.⁹⁷ Additional evidence of Borah's influence on Kellogg has been provided by the historian, Ethan Ellis. Ellis wrote that:

The respect, not to say fear, with which Kellogg treated Borah is abundantly clear from the Secretary's communication with the chairman--the frequent letters, telephone conversations, and invitations to the Department for consultation, explanation, and justification of plans which were in process either of formulation or of implementation. Kellogg once made the remark (as paraphrased by Castle) that "you never have any idea what Borah is going to jump on and it is just as well to get his approbation in advance." This "ringing of Borah's doorbell" was sufficiently common and obvious to cause wide comment.⁹⁸

The contention that Borah is entitled to a claim of joint authorship with Kellogg, therefore, is not without merit.⁹⁹

Kellogg now proposed to Briand that France and the United States invite all the world to unite in renouncing war. When Briand proved reluctant to accept the proposal, Borah urged Briand to accept it because it would be an

⁹⁷Vinson, Borah, p. 140.

⁹⁸L. Ethan Ellis, "Frank B. Kellogg (1925-1929)," in An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century, ed. Norman A. Grabner (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 155-56.

⁹⁹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 221.

effective supplement to the League of Nations and the Locarno Treaties.¹⁰⁰ Briand finally agreed to a multilateral agreement and the result was known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact or the Paris Peace Pact. The major stipulation embodied in the treaty was an agreement by all the contracting parties to renounce war as an instrument of national policy in their relations with one another except in the case of self-defense. Sixty-three nations eventually signed the pact.¹⁰¹

The Kellogg-Briand Pact was ideally suitable for a policy of involvement without commitment. There was no method for enforcing the treaty or any stipulation of what should be done if a signatory violated it. Its force was merely moral and ethical. It could in no way be construed as a mutual assistance pact. Although it banned aggressive warfare, each signatory would determine whether or not its action was offensive or defensive in nature.¹⁰² The United States Government, for example, reserved complete freedom of

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁰¹Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, pp. 165-66. It was believed, at first, that Russia would refuse to sign the pact. Instead, Russia not only signed it, but the Russian Foreign Minister, Maxim Litvinov, induced all the states on Russia's western borders to sign a similar local pact. The Litvinov Protocol was signed in 1929 by Russia, Poland, Rumania, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

¹⁰²Pegg, Contemporary Europe, p. 117; Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 166.

action for itself in matters that would be affected by the Monroe Doctrine.¹⁰³

The World Court

The Permanent Court of International Justice, often referred to as the World Court, had been designed to supplement the activities of the League of Nations by acting as an arbiter in the settlement of international disputes. Fifteen judges, with nine-year terms, were eventually elected to the court. Its effectiveness was minimal, however, since states were not bound to submit disputes to it. It could render advisory opinions, however, if any dispute or question were submitted to it by the League Council or Assembly.¹⁰⁴

Having rejected the League, the United States had also rejected participation in the World Court. Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes, however, hoped to convince the Senate of the need to join the World Court. Hughes drew up a series of four reservations designed to seek adherence to the World Court but prevent involvement with the League of Nations. Hughes managed to win the support of President Warren G. Harding, and, in February 1923, the Administration

¹⁰³William E. Leuchtenberg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-32 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 117. (Hereafter cited as Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity.)

¹⁰⁴Black and Helmreich, Twentieth Century Europe, p. 155.

recommended to the Senate that the United States join the World Court. Senator William E. Borah led the opposition to the recommendation, exclaiming at one point that the court and the League bore the same relationship as water and H₂O, and the Senate refused to endorse Hughes's plan.¹⁰⁵

Calvin Coolidge's Administration appeared to have achieved a breakthrough when, after adopting a fifth reservation, the Senate approved adherence to the World Court on 27 January 1926. The fifth reservation, in effect, gave the United States a unique veto on advisory opinions. The League Council refused to yield to this demand for an American veto on issues to which the United States was not a party. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg refused to abandon the effort. With the assistance of Elihu Root, Kellogg renewed the battle with the Senate in 1929. The protests of anti-court Senators, led by Borah, were too strong, however, and the Senate continued to reject this and other proposals designed to win the adherence of the United States to the World Court. Its close connection with the League of Nations implied a commitment that most Senators were still unwilling to make.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 69-70.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 70-75.

Latin America

In the view of historian William E. Leuchtenburg,
 . . . in one area of the world, the United States made
 no pretense of a policy of isolation. To the tradition
 of American non-involvement in foreign affairs, Latin
 America, and especially the Caribbean, had long been an
 exception.¹⁰⁷

By 1924, for example, the United States controlled the
 financial policies of ten Latin American nations.

Leuchtenburg's thesis is supported by Ethan Ellis's view
 "that isolationism, whatever its weight in European
 relations, had never hampered United States policy toward
 nations to the south."¹⁰⁸

The United States Government developed a strong
 interest in Latin America after it acquired Puerto Rico and
 assumed responsibility for the future of Cuba. This
 interest increased with the decision to build the Panama
 Canal because the area now possessed a new strategic
 importance. The United States Government wanted to prevent
 any potentially hostile power from obtaining a foothold in a
 region that lay between its own territory and the canal.
 American foreign policy makers were especially interested,

¹⁰⁷Leuchtenberg, Perils of Prosperity, p. 107.

¹⁰⁸Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 231. One
 historian argues that Latin America was the laboratory of
 American foreign policy in the 1920s. See William Appleman
 Williams, "Latin America: Laboratory of American Foreign
 Policy in the Nineteen-twenties," Inter-American Economic
 Affairs 11 (Autumn 1957):3-30.

therefore, in discouraging revolutions and promoting economic progress in the Caribbean countries. Relations with all of the Latin American states, except Mexico, which was the province of a separate division, were handled by the Division of Latin American Affairs in the Department of State.¹⁰⁹

Although the United States Government granted independence to Cuba in 1903, it reserved the right to intervene if it became necessary to maintain orderly government. President Theodore Roosevelt adopted a corollary to the Monroe Doctrine when he announced that the United States would help Caribbean states correct any conditions that threatened to invite foreign intervention. In order to prevent foreign interference in the Dominican Republic, for example, Roosevelt established a customs receivership in 1905. In 1912 William H. Taft's Administration intervened to prevent civil warfare from erupting in both the Dominican Republic and in Nicaragua. President Woodrow Wilson believed that the United States should promote democracy among its neighbors. He opposed revolutions against constituted governments because he wanted to discourage the use of force to settle internal political disputes in the Latin American countries. In

¹⁰⁹Dana G. Munro, The United States and the Caribbean Republics, 1921-1933 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 3-4, 7. (Hereafter cited as Munro, United States and Caribbean Republics.)

order to discourage revolution, Wilson dispatched American military forces to Haiti and the Dominican Republic.¹¹⁰

The years between 1921 and 1933 were a period of transition from a policy of intervention in Latin American countries to one of being a "good neighbor" to these nations. In 1921 the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Nicaragua were under United States military occupation and in Cuba an official representative of the United States Government, General Enoch H. Crowder, was directing efforts to settle a disputed election and to deal with an economic crisis. Twelve years later Americans were still collecting customs revenues in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua and exerting a degree of financial control in Haiti. In other respects, however, these countries were freely managing their own affairs and the American military forces had departed, or were in the process of withdrawing, from each of the countries. The United States was actually being criticized for its failure to intervene in Cuba in order to terminate a harsh dictatorship led by General Gerardo Machado.¹¹¹

In general, under President Wilson United States governmental policy toward Latin America had been highly interventionist in nature. Secretary of State Hughes,

¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 4.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 371.

however, attempted to soften this image of Yankee imperialism. Hughes, for example, was the chairman of a Conference on Central American Affairs which was held in Washington from 4 December 1922 until 7 February 1923. The relationship became more strained, however, when Secretary of State Kellogg adopted a more unconciliatory policy toward Latin America during his four year term of office. The pendulum swung back toward conciliation when President Hoover inaugurated the real beginning of a good neighbor policy toward Latin America.¹¹² Since Hoover adopted the most active policy toward Latin America during the period of this study (1921 to 1933), American relations with its southern neighbors will be treated primarily from the perspective of Hoover's Administration.

In his book, Herbert Hoover's Latin American Policy, Alexander DeConde contends that historians have neglected the evolution of United States foreign policy toward Latin America during Hoover's Administration. Hoover believed in the peaceful settlement of disputes. He wanted to adopt a positive policy of nonintervention in Latin America. These goals were partially fulfilled when his influence was instrumental in settling the Tacna-Arica dispute and when the United States Marines were withdrawn from Nicaragua and

¹¹²Alexander DeConde, Herbert Hoover's Latin-American Policy (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), pp. ix, 4-5, 7. (Hereafter cited as DeConde, Hoover's Latin-American Policy.)

Haiti. Hoover's Latin American accomplishments received little publicity, however, because the worldwide depression attracted more attention during his Administration. Hoover's successor, Franklin D. Roosevelt, receives more credit for the good neighbor policy because he guided American foreign policy through a world war which made the American people conscious of foreign affairs.¹¹³

Hoover's knowledge of Latin America was garnered from his experiences as Secretary of Commerce and as Chairman of the Inter-American High Commission. The commission was charged with the tasks of establishing a greater degree of uniformity in commercial regulations and achieving greater financial stability between the United States and the Latin American nations. In DeConde's view, "Hoover saw the importance of good relations in regard to commerce, and he recognized in Latin America an ever growing market for American goods."¹¹⁴

United States relations with one Latin American country, however, had improved prior to Hoover's inauguration. As a result of the diplomacy of Dwight W. Morrow, American relations with Mexico had improved drastically since the time of President Woodrow Wilson's Administration. Wilson intervened in Latin American affairs

¹¹³Ibid., pp. ix-xii.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 6.

more frequently than any of his predecessors. In Mexico Wilson refused to recognize the government of Victoriano Huerta because Huerta had overthrown and murdered his reform-minded predecessor, Francisco Madero. On 11 March 1913 Wilson issued a "Declaration of Policy with regard to Latin America." In essence, Wilson claimed that governments established by force in violation of their country's constitution and, in opposition to the will of the people, would not be recognized by the United States. This new, moral diplomacy was a radical departure from traditional diplomacy which based recognition upon de facto control rather than de jure succession.¹¹⁵

Although Wilson eventually recognized a new government in 1915, led by Venustiano Carranza, Mexican-American relations remained turbulent throughout the 1920s. Carranza launched a reform program designed to free Mexico from the control of foreign clergymen, wealthy landlords, and foreign capitalists. Carranza hoped the end result of his reform efforts would leave Mexico in control of its national wealth.¹¹⁶ Article twenty-seven of Carranza's 1917 Constitution threatened the economic position of American citizens in Mexico. The article called for nationalization of the subsoil and for a radical land

¹¹⁵Ibid., pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 235.

redistribution program. This endangered American control of the Mexican petroleum industry and the land titles obtained by Americans under laws in force prior to the promulgation of the new constitution.¹¹⁷

Although Carranza was overthrown and killed in 1920, his reform policy remained unchanged under, first, Adolfo de la Huerta, and, later, General Alvaro Obregón. Harding and Hughes decided to combat the potential confiscatory provisions of article twenty-seven by withholding recognition of Obregón and by placing a ban on further American loans to Mexico.¹¹⁸ Although a formal treaty was not signed, an executive agreement was finally arranged after a series of meetings were held in Mexico City's Calle Bucareli between 14 May and 15 August 1923. In the Bucareli Agreement the United States agreed to recognize Obregón's government and Mexico agreed that American owners who had legitimately acquired oil lands after 1876, and before 1917, could retain them in perpetuity.¹¹⁹ The Mexican Supreme Court had also softened the effects of article twenty-seven in a series of court cases. In the so-called Texas cases

¹¹⁷N. Stephen Kane, "American Businessmen and Foreign Policy: The Recognition of Mexico, 1920-1923," Political Science Quarterly 90 (Summer 1975):297.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 297-98.

¹¹⁹Howard F. Cline, The United States and Mexico (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 208. (Hereafter cited as Cline, Mexico.)

the court declared that foreigners who had acquired oil lands prior to 1 May 1917, and who had implemented their intentions by "positive acts," would be secure against retroactive interference by the Mexican Government. The Bucareli Agreement was short-lived, however, because the new government of Plutarco Elías Calles interpreted it as being only a temporary arrangement.¹²⁰

From 1924 to 1927 relations between the United States and Mexico were strained. The American Ambassador to Mexico, James Rockwell Sheffield, maintained an unfriendly relationship with Calles and exerted a strong influence on Secretary of State Kellogg. The tension between the two governments was exacerbated by a 1925 Mexican Petroleum Law, designed to become operative on 1 January 1927, which extended Mexican control over all oil lands. This was a clear violation of the Bucareli Agreement and greatly troubled the American petroleum companies operating in Mexico.¹²¹

By 1927, however, two factors emerged which forced Mexico to consider negotiations. First, Kellogg had applied consistent pressure on Calles, even intimating that Mexico was a haven for Bolshevist activity, and, second, over-production in other areas had curtailed the demand for

¹²⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 237-39.

¹²¹Ibid., pp. 239-43.

Mexican petroleum. The Mexican Government needed the revenue from petroleum sales in order to finance its reform program. The transition from hostility to conciliation in Mexican-American relations, however, was most evident in the appointment of Dwight W. Morrow as the new Ambassador to Mexico.¹²²

Morrow, who was a former Amherst classmate of Calvin Coolidge, made the important decision to like Mexico and to respect the Mexicans. Morrow greatly impressed the Mexicans by securing a visit to Mexico by Charles A. Lindbergh, the aviation hero whose recent trans-Atlantic flight had made him famous in Mexico as in nearly every country. Utilizing an informal approach to diplomacy, Morrow was able to assist Calles in formulating agreements concerning the oil controversy, the church-state struggle, and the land reform program.¹²³ The oil controversy was settled when Morrow convinced Calles that a compromise was necessary and that the most feasible approach was legal rather than diplomatic or political.¹²⁴ The Mexican Supreme Court responded to Calles's orders and voided the most objectionable sections of the Petroleum Law of 1925 by declaring that recovery of

¹²²Ibid., pp. 243-46.

¹²³Cline, Mexico, pp. 210-11.

¹²⁴Stanley Robert Ross, "Dwight Morrow and the Mexican Revolution," The Hispanic American Historical Review 38 (November 1958):511. (Hereafter cited as Ross, "Dwight Morrow.")

all subsoil oil by the Mexican Government violated a prohibition on retroactive legislation contained in article fourteen of the 1917 Constitution.¹²⁵

The settlement of the oil controversy pleased everyone but the oil producers. They were pleased that the settlement protected their interests in lands on which positive acts had occurred but they were displeased because no decision had been made regarding the status of their so-called "untagged" lands--preconstitutional lands where no positive acts had been performed. Morrow refused to support the companies in this matter. The problem remained unresolved for several years.¹²⁶ In the view of historian Stanley Ross, "the United States had recognized the sovereign right of Mexico to legislate regarding property within her jurisdiction as long as such legislation was neither retroactive nor confiscatory."¹²⁷ The Mexican Government had won the argument that the subsoil was the property of the nation.¹²⁸

Morrow also became involved in a domestic problem involving church-state relations. Although this controversy was outside the realm of his formal diplomatic assignment,

¹²⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 248.

¹²⁶Ibid., pp. 248-49.

¹²⁷Ross, "Dwight Morrow," p. 515.

¹²⁸Ibid.

he was instrumental in promoting negotiations which settled the dispute. The Mexican Government wanted to continue its reform program by subjecting the Church to civil control. Decrees were passed which nationalized church property; closed schools, asylums, and convents giving religious instruction; and forbade teaching by members of religious orders.¹²⁹ Mexican Catholics resisted the legislation by resorting to a religious strike which terminated public services, an economic boycott, and armed rebellion.¹³⁰ After eighteen months of negotiations, both sides compromised and the church-state struggle was at least temporarily quelled.¹³¹

Morrow recognized that land reform was an essential part of the Mexican reform program. The Alien Land Law of 1925 was designed to secure certain privately owned lands for peasant occupancy. In the view of Stanley Ross, Morrow believed that ". . . the Mexican land legislation was valid and that Mexico had the right to expropriate private holdings to effect land reform so long as such action was neither discriminatory nor confiscatory."¹³² The land

¹²⁹L. Ethan Ellis, "Dwight Morrow and the Church-State Controversy in Mexico," The Hispanic American Historical Review 38 (November 1958):483. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, "Morrow and Church-State Controversy.")

¹³⁰Ross, "Dwight Morrow," p. 515.

¹³¹Ellis, "Morrow and Church-State Controversy," pp. 482-505.

¹³²Ross, "Dwight Morrow," p. 519.

reform program proceeded very slowly, however, and this issue occasioned little publicity and importance during the 1920s.¹³³

Dwight Morrow's mission to Mexico marked an important step in the transition from an attitude of imperialism to one of a good neighbor on the part of the United States Government.¹³⁴ Morrow not only contributed to the improvement of Mexican-American relations, but his diplomatic activity left the Mexican Government stronger and more stable.¹³⁵ A policy of conciliation would characterize Mexican-American relations throughout the Presidency of Herbert Hoover.

Latin American criticism of the interventionism of the United States was strong during the latter half of Calvin Coolidge's Administration. The issue of American imperialism was hotly debated at Rio de Janeiro during a meeting of the International Commission of American Jurists from 18 April to 20 May 1927. The Coolidge Administration was heavily criticized for its intervention in Nicaragua. The United States Government recognized one faction in Nicaragua and the Mexican Government recognized its rival. The United States representatives to the conference were

¹³³Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 250-51.

¹³⁴Cline, Mexico, p. 212.

¹³⁵Ross, "Dwight Morrow," p. 528.

unable to stop the passage of a resolution which declared that no state could interfere in the affairs of another.¹³⁶

Opposition to American foreign policy in Latin America was so heavy that Coolidge decided to attend the Sixth International Conference of American States in Havana in January 1928. Coolidge appointed Charles Evans Hughes as the head of the United States delegation. It was only the second time that the President of the United States had visited a Latin American country. Only two other Presidents had visited foreign territory while in office--Woodrow Wilson traveled to Europe and Theodore Roosevelt to Panama. Although harsh criticism, led by the Argentine delegation, was directed toward United States interventionism and high tariffs, Hughes was able to parry these verbal thrusts and prevent the adoption of any resolutions which would have condemned American foreign policy. In December 1928 the United States agreed to sign a general treaty of arbitration and conciliation at the International Conference of American States on Conciliation and Arbitration.¹³⁷

Hoover decided to capitalize on the good will engendered by the recent events. A few weeks after his election he departed on a ten week tour of Latin America. Hoover delivered twenty-five speeches on his tour of

¹³⁶DeConde, Hoover's Latin-American Policy, pp. 7-10.

¹³⁷Ibid., pp. 10-11.

Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil. In DeConde's view Hoover made his most significant pronouncement of future policy while in Buenos Aires. Argentina was the center of resistance to "Yankee imperialism" because the Argentines considered themselves the leaders of Latin American civilization. Hoover pleased the Argentines by referring to their country as the world's breadbasket and by denouncing both the principle of United States intervention and the "big brother" concept of relations between the United States and Latin America. DeConde believes Hoover's comments ". . . foreshadowed a repudiation of Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine."¹³⁸

Hoover's good will tour provided him with an opportunity to assist in settling the long-standing Tacna-Arica dispute. The controversy began with the Treaty of Ancon which ended the War of the Pacific in 1883. Chile had defeated Peru and Bolivia in the war and the treaty awarded the frontier provinces of Tacna and Arica to Chile for a period of ten years. After ten years a plebiscite had never been held, and, since the provinces formerly belonged to Peru, Peruvians wanted to recover them. Chile regarded the provinces as a buffer zone between itself and Peru as well as a possible depository of mineral wealth.

¹³⁸Ibid., pp. 14-17, 20-21.

Chile had attempted to "Chileanize" the territory and had intimidated the Peruvians in the area. The dispute had caused friction for many years and was often referred to as the "Alsace-Lorraine of South America."¹³⁹

In 1922 Peru and Chile finally agreed to submit their problem to arbitration by the United States. It was not until 1925, however, that a three-man Plebiscitary Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of General John J. Pershing. Chile continued to harass Peruvians in the disputed territory, however, and Pershing was convinced an honest election could not be held. Pershing resigned and the plebiscite was cancelled. By 1928, however, Secretary of State Kellogg had convinced both countries of the need to make another effort at conducting a plebiscite.¹⁴⁰ Hoover's good will tour speeded up the process and Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson, as well as Alexander P. Moore (United States Ambassador to Peru) and William S. Culbertson (United States Ambassador to Chile), were finally able to arrange a treaty, signed on 6 June 1929, and embodying virtually all of Hoover's proposals.¹⁴¹ Peru received Tacna and Chile was

¹³⁹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁴⁰Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 279-82.

¹⁴¹DeConde, Hoover's Latin-American Policy, p. 29. The negotiations remained exasperating until the final moments before a treaty was signed. In a dispatch to Stimson, Moore referred to the antics of Peru and Chile as similar to those of two baldheaded men fighting over a comb.

awarded Arica. Chile was to give Peru six million dollars, all public works, government buildings, and free port privileges in Tacna and a customs house and a railroad station on the Bay of Arica. Most countries, including Argentina, praised the United States for its role in settling the dispute. Bolivia was unhappy, however, because it had not received an access to the sea in the settlement. Stimson characterized the Tacna-Arica affair as being Hoover's greatest personal triumph in conciliation and arbitration.¹⁴²

Hoover believed the greatest barrier to cordial inter-American relations was the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary. In an effort to overcome this barrier, Hoover decided to publish a document known as a Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine. The document had been prepared in 1928 by a former Undersecretary of State, Reuben Clark. Clark had been directed by Kellogg to compile a statement on the Monroe Doctrine during the Kellogg-Briand Pact negotiations. According to DeConde, Clark's Memorandum was originally not intended for public consumption because President Coolidge did not agree with it. Hoover supported

¹⁴²Ibid., pp. 30-31. Hoover also played an important role in settling a boundary dispute between Guatemala and Honduras as well as laying the foundations for eventual boundary-dispute settlements involving Peru and Colombia in Leticia, and Bolivia and Paraguay in Chaco. See pages 31-44.

it, however, and had it published in the early part of 1930.¹⁴³

Clark suggested that Latin American countries need not fear the Monroe Doctrine because it was not designed to justify oppression but rather to guarantee Latin American freedom against imperialistic activity by European nations. Although the Memorandum has become known as a formal repudiation of the Roosevelt Corollary, it did not denounce all intervention, nor did it renounce the right of a unilateral interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States.¹⁴⁴ Dana G. Munro, who was Chief of the State Department's Latin American Division from 1929 to 1930, contends that the Memorandum did not signify a change in policy and that it did not represent a repudiation of the Roosevelt Corollary. In Munro's view Clark did not question the validity of the idea that disorder in the Caribbean affected the security of the United States. Munro believes that Clark's ". . . point was that it was not the Monroe Doctrine but the right of self-preservation that might justify efforts by the American government to improve conditions there."¹⁴⁵ Munro's conclusion is supported by

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 47-48.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁴⁵Munro, United States and Caribbean Republics, pp. 377-78.

Ethan Ellis who believes ". . . that even during the Hoover Administration the Department of State busied itself in minimizing the Memorandum's importance, and the Roosevelt Administration disclaimed all responsibility for it."¹⁴⁶

DeConde disagrees with this interpretation. In his view "by this time Hoover had gone much further than the document suggested. He had committed himself to a policy of nonintervention, regardless of the form under which it might be practiced."¹⁴⁷ DeConde believes that the Administration tried to show that Hoover's policy was one of peace and non-intervention.¹⁴⁸ By publishing the Memorandum, and by his efforts to arbitrate Latin American disputes and extract United States military forces from the area, Hoover revealed his intention of pursuing a new course of action in Latin America and DeConde's interpretation appears to be the more plausible one.

Hoover also developed a new course of action in Latin America when he abandoned the recognition policy that had prevailed since the Wilson Administration. Recognition or nonrecognition of revolutionary Latin American Governments had been a powerful political weapon of Presidents of the United States. Granting recognition to

¹⁴⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 270.

¹⁴⁷DeConde, Hoover's Latin-American Policy, p. 49.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., p. 51.

one faction and not to another was often merely another form of intervention in Latin American affairs. During the Wilson, Harding, and Coolidge Administrations the United States granted recognition only to those governments that came to power legally. Recognition would not be granted to any regime that gained control of a Latin American country through a coup d'état, revolution, or any other unconstitutional method.¹⁴⁹

The Hoover Administration followed two distinct and separate recognition policies. One was a specific recognition policy which pertained only to the five Central American Republics of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. The other was a general recognition policy which was applied to all other Latin American nations. A special recognition policy was necessary for the five Central American states because of preexisting treaties. In 1907 and 1923 these five republics had concluded treaties which stated that regimes which obtained power in any of the five republics through revolution, coup d'état, or any other illegal method would not be recognized. Although the United States was not a signatory of the 1923 treaty, the provisions were interpreted as likewise applying to the United States. The purpose of both treaties was to discourage the rebellions

¹⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 52-53.

that periodically plagued the republics. The Hoover Administration utilized the special recognition policy on two occasions. It was once applied to Guatemala and later to El Salvador.¹⁵⁰

The general recognition policy applied to the other Latin American nations. The Hoover Administration would recognize a revolutionary government when it obtained de facto physical control of a country, when there was no longer any effective resistance to its control, and when it indicated an intention to fulfill its international obligations. Stimson announced that the general policy was merely a return to the traditional recognition policy formulated by the first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson. The Hoover Administration proved true to its word by adhering to the policy when a wave of revolutions, caused by political discontent resulting from the world economic depression, spread throughout Latin America during the second half of 1930.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 52, 55-56. See pages 56-58 for a discussion of the episodes relative to Guatemala and El Salvador.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 53-55. A noteworthy example of Hoover's restraint occurred during a revolution in Panama on 2 January 1931. Hoover refrained from interfering even though at least one American citizen was killed. In DeConde's view, "that a Washington government would allow a revolution to take place near its vital canal and not exercise treaty rights to intervene was a significant break with the past" [p. 61].

Not only was Hoover opposed to political and military interventions in Latin American nations he was also opposed to intervention for the purpose of protecting private American investments. Hoover announced his opposition to "dollar diplomacy" in a speech in Washington, D.C., on 13 April 1929. Stimson reiterated this policy in a nation-wide broadcast, on 9 May 1931, when he declared that the United States would not use military force to collect debts from weaker powers. Stimson had already indicated that the United States could only offer coastal protection to United States citizens in Latin America. United States businessmen were warned that they would be conducting business in Latin America at their own risk, and, if they did not feel secure in the interior, they should withdraw to a coastal town. This policy also represented a break with the prevailing attitude that had characterized all administrations since the time of Wilson.¹⁵²

The worldwide economic depression had a deleterious effect on Latin American relations with United States businessmen. Most Latin American countries were debtor nations which were dependent on the export of one or two raw materials. The depression was more harmful to them than to countries with a more diversified economy. Many Latin American Governments defaulted on their debts and this

¹⁵²Ibid., pp. 59-64.

affected the United States because more capital had been invested in Latin America by United States businessmen than in all of Europe. The Latin American defaults angered American businessmen. They became irate, therefore, when Hoover announced that the United States Government could not provide relief to private American investors in foreign securities if defaults had occurred.¹⁵³

In DeConde's view Hoover's good neighbor policy had ". . . helped to overcome some of the fears and hates aroused by the policies of previous administrations; and it laid the foundation for a Latin-American policy that paid rich dividends in the crisis of World War II."¹⁵⁴ Interventionism had finally ceased to possess either necessity or justification. Hoover's decision to abandon interventionism, however, was not the result of any devotion to isolationism but rather an example of a greater and more intelligent concern for Latin American welfare than had existed during previous administrations.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³Ibid., pp. 66-71.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁵⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 289.

CHAPTER VI

THE MANCHURIAN CRISIS AND THE STIMSON NONRECOGNITION DOCTRINE

Stimson and the Formulation of American Foreign Policy

Sixty-two years old when President Herbert Hoover named him Secretary of State, Henry L. Stimson possessed impressive credentials for the position.¹ Stimson was a graduate of Phillips Academy at Andover, Yale University, and Harvard Law School. Richard N. Current contends that Stimson's brief period of military service as an artillery officer during World War I influenced his approach to diplomacy. Current believes Stimson thought of himself as a soldier even in civilian life. The proud owner of a Long Island estate, Stimson possessed a sense of noblesse oblige. He learned much about diplomacy from Elihu Root and his Long

¹Richard N. Current, "Henry L. Stimson," in An Uncertain Tradition: American Secretaries of State in the Twentieth Century, ed. Norman A. Graebner (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1961), p. 168. (Hereafter cited as Current, "Stimson.") Current implies that Stimson's age handicapped his performance because he suffered from high blood pressure, lumbago, biliousness, and indigestion. Able to work only two or three hours a day at a desk, he needed frequent exercise and relaxation.

Island neighbor, Theodore Roosevelt. He gained invaluable experience as a Federal District Attorney under Theodore Roosevelt, as Secretary of War under William H. Taft, as legal advisor to Calvin Coolidge on Latin American problems, and as governor general of the Philippine Islands.²

Stimson believed world peace could best be maintained through international cooperation. He considered the League of Nations, the Washington Conference agreements, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact as the foundation for a world peace system. Dorothy Borg has noted that Stimson ". . . regarded Japan's attack upon Manchuria as the first great test of this system and therefore as an event that had immeasurably grave and far-reaching implications."³

During the first half of his Secretaryship, Stimson generally maintained a workable relationship with his staff. But teamwork suffered a blow when his Undersecretary and good friend Joseph P. Cotton died in March 1931. Hoover suggested William R. Castle as Cotton's replacement, and Stimson always resented Castle's closer relationship with Hoover. Hoover later remarked that Stimson was ". . . more of a warrior than a diplomat . . ." and that he would have selected a new Secretary had he been reelected in 1932.

²Ibid., pp. 168-69.

³Dorothy Borg, The United States and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1933-1938: From the Manchurian Incident Through the Initial State of the Undeclared Sino-Japanese War (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 1. (Hereafter cited as Borg, The United States.)

From 1931 to 1933, therefore, Stimson worked more closely with his Assistant Secretaries, James Grafton Rogers, Harvey H. Bundy, and Allen T. Klots. In Far Eastern matters Stimson also consulted with the minister to China, Nelson T. Johnson, and the Chief of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs, Dr. Stanley T. Hornbeck.⁴

It is difficult to distinguish between the contributions of Hoover and those of Stimson. Although their relationship became more strained after the appointment of Castle, their differences had little impact on the effectiveness of diplomacy. Hoover worked longer hours and more arduously than did Stimson. Hoover also had more experience in world affairs than his Secretary of State. Stimson was more fond of military men and military ways than his superior. Hoover later wrote, "'instinctively, Mr. Stimson's first love was the law; and his second, the military field. Mentally he was a mixture of a soldier and an advocate.'"⁵

Both Hoover and Stimson were enthusiastic supporters of the Kellogg-Briand Pact which outlawed aggressive warfare as an instrument of national policy. Stimson, however, was

⁴Current, "Stimson," pp. 171-72; Robert H. Ferrell, American Diplomacy in the Great Depression: Hoover-Stimson Foreign Policy, 1929-1933 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 37-38. (Hereafter cited as Ferrell, American Diplomacy.)

⁵Ferrell, American Diplomacy, pp. 40-42.

more eager than Hoover to put "teeth" into it. Stimson, unlike Hoover, believed the Kellogg pact obligated signatories to assist victims of aggression. Stimson was also more willing to cooperate with the League than Hoover.⁶

Far Eastern Developments Prior
to the Mukden Incident

Throughout the 1920s the professional diplomats within the State Department were more concerned with China than Japan. There were more capable men in Peking than in Tokyo. Chiefs of the State Department's Division of Far Eastern Affairs, like Nelson T. Johnson (1925-28) and Stanley K. Hornbeck (1928-37), made Peking their headquarters. As Charles E. Neu has written, "the China experts formed a small, closely knit group who handed down concepts of American policy from one generation to the next."⁷

There was no comparable group of Japanese experts. From 1921 to 1932 six different diplomats served in Tokyo and most were political appointees. Although they served competently, their rapid turnover, limited contacts with the

⁶Current, "Stimson," pp. 176-77.

⁷Charles E. Neu, The Troubled Encounter: The United States and Japan (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), pp. 119-20. (Hereafter cited as Neu, Troubled Encounter.)

Japanese, and the adverse effects of exposure to a strange culture handicapped their performances.⁸

During the 1920s Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Revolution presented problems for Far Eastern diplomats. A major ingredient of Chiang's movement was the demand that the Western powers relinquish the special economic rights and privileges they had obtained by their unfair treaties.⁹ Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and Nelson T. Johnson recommended that the United States assume the leadership in readjusting China's relations with the West. Consequently, in 1928 the United States became the first nation to grant tariff autonomy and give de facto recognition to the new Nationalist Government.

The Japanese feared the Western policy of imperialistic collaboration in China was collapsing. They decided to adopt new measures to protect their rights in Southern Manchuria. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Baron Kijuro Shidehara, preferred to negotiate directly with Chiang's Nationalist Government. On the other hand, Prime Minister Tanaka Giichi chose to deal with the warlord who dominated much of Manchuria, Chang Tso-lin.¹⁰ On 4 June

⁸Ibid.

⁹A. Whitney Griswold, The Far Eastern Policy of the United States (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), p. 382. (Hereafter cited as Griswold, Far Eastern Policy.)

¹⁰Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 126.

1928 Tanaka's approach was undermined by the Japanese Kwantung Army. Desiring to provide a pretext for a military takeover of Manchuria, Colonel Komoto Daisaku and several Kwantung Army officers assassinated Chang Tso-lin. Although Tanaka and Shidehara were able to prevent the outbreak of war, Chang's son and successor, Chang Hsüeh-liang, became a determined foe of the Japanese.¹¹

In July 1929 Shidehara again became Foreign Minister.¹² He attempted to revive the policy of collaboration with the Western powers and win their support for Japanese interest in China. Shidehara hoped the 1930 London Naval Conference could be used to develop closer ties

¹¹Akira Iriye, After Imperialism: The Search for a New Order in the Far East, 1921-1931 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 192, 194. (Hereafter cited as Iriye, After Imperialism.) Iriye notes, however, that Chang did not immediately commit himself to the Chinese Nationalists' program of unification. Indeed, when he succeeded his father, Chang Hsüeh-liang was not the undisputed ruler of the Three Eastern Provinces (as they were called) in Manchuria. Consequently, he courted both the Japanese and Chinese Nationalists while attempting to consolidate his position in Manchuria. His eventual support for the Chinese Nationalists was more similar to a "warlord-type alliance" than a strong commitment to support Chiang Kai-shek. See Akira Iriye, "Chang Hsüeh-liang and the Japanese," Journal of Asian Studies 20 (November 1960): 33-43.

¹²Shidehara held his position from 1924 through 1927 and again from 2 July 1929 to 11 December 1931. Joseph C. Grew, the American Ambassador to Japan, described Shidehara's diplomacy "as a policy of economic retrenchment at home and conciliation abroad." See Joseph C. Grew, Turbulent Era: A Diplomatic Record of Forty Years, 1904-1945, ed. Walter Johnson, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1952), 2:932.

with the British and Americans. The Japanese left the conference in anger, however, because they failed to achieve a 10:7 ratio in all combat categories.¹³

Meanwhile, the Chinese Nationalists had encouraged Chang Hsüeh-liang to attempt to expel the Russians from Northern Manchuria. The Russians appeared to be weaker than the Japanese and, if the Russians were expelled, the Japanese might be frightened away. Soviet Russia and China severed relations and, on 17 November 1929, Russia attacked China.¹⁴ The Russian invasion was contrary to the Kellogg-Briand Pact. What would be the response of the signatories?

Stimson, believing that some action was essential, took the initiative. After a flurry of diplomatic activity, Stimson transmitted directly to the Chinese Government and indirectly, by way of France, to Soviet Russia a "statement" (not a note because the United States had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union) invoking the Kellogg Pact. Stimson expressed the hope that the other signatory nations would transmit similar statements. Thirty-seven of fifty-five nations followed suit.¹⁵ The Chinese-Russian

¹³Neu, Troubled Encounter, pp. 127-30.

¹⁴Robert H. Ferrell, "Henry L. Stimson," in The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy, 11 vols. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929), vol. 11: Kellogg and Stimson, ed. by Samuel Flagg Bemis, pp. 160-63. (Hereafter cited as Ferrell, "Stimson.")

¹⁵Ferrell, American Diplomacy, p. 59.

confrontation ended in December and the status quo was restored to the area. Mutual internal difficulties, however, rather than Stimson's invocation of the Kellogg Pact were the determining factors in their decision to terminate the fighting.¹⁶

Although Chiang and the Nationalists had received a setback in Northern Manchuria, their spirit of nationalism and distaste for foreigners in their country remained strong. Consequently, the eradication of Japanese influence in Southern Manchuria became their next major concern. Three major causes can be isolated in explaining the subsequent Manchurian crisis: (1) the political revival of China under the Nationalist Government, (2) the Great Depression which created a difficult economic situation in Japan and encouraged some Japanese to solve their nation's industrial and agricultural crisis through conquest, and (3) the rise of fanatical Japanese militarists (and nationalists) who took advantage of the trouble in Manchuria to promote their ideas of "purifying" their government in Tokyo.¹⁷

A major consequence of the world depression was the transformation of trade patterns. The decline in American

¹⁶Ibid., p. 62. Stalin was encountering supreme difficulties in launching his program of forced collectivization of agriculture and Chiang's numerous political opponents continued to resist his unification efforts.

¹⁷Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 219.

purchasing power and commodity prices resulted in a contraction of the American market for Japanese goods. This had a disastrous effect upon the silk industry. Silk was the most important item exported from Japan to America. Its price fell to twenty-five percent of what it was before the depression and Japanese exports to the United States fell forty percent in 1930.

American tariff policy only worsened conditions. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff of 1930 raised import duties on Japanese goods by an average of twenty-three percent. This reduced Japanese exports of chinaware, canned foods, and cultured pearls. Meanwhile, American exports to Japan declined by fifty percent in 1931.

Japan's trade with China suffered an equally radical decline during the depression. Indeed, by 1931 Japan was replaced by the United States as the biggest supplier of goods to China.¹⁸

One of the major results of Japan's economic catastrophe was to cause the Japanese to look upon Manchuria

¹⁸Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 279. Japan's failure to retain its preeminent place in Chinese and American trade was in part attributable to the adoption of the gold standard in January 1930. According to Iriye, "Japanese exports would have fallen without the lifting of the gold embargo, owing to the decline in purchasing power abroad; but the removal of the ban on the export of gold, coupled with the retention of the existing exchange rate, resulted in the appreciation of the yen and higher prices of Japanese exports. Domestically, prices of commodities fell because of the decline in export trade. The contraction of the American silk market severely affected agricultural incomes."

as their country's economic life line. Continued control of the South Manchurian Railway was deemed essential because it permitted the Japanese to trade in a vast newly-settled area without tariffs and other interference by foreign powers.¹⁹ Although few of Japan's surplus population moved to Manchuria, the area served as a source of raw materials and as an outlet for Japanese manufactured goods. Japan had a capital investment of over one billion yen and over 1,000 companies in Manchuria.²⁰

The depression had equally damaging effects on China. Although China's volume of trade increased by over twenty percent between 1930-1931, a fifty percent decline in silver prices nullified this increase. In dollar value there was a contraction of the China market for the goods of all countries whose currencies were based on gold. China's purchasing power declined while her foreign debts increased correspondingly. Twenty-five percent of China's income was utilized to repay its foreign and domestic debts. The Chinese Government needed foreign credit but could not receive any loans. China began informal negotiations with Japan, in September 1930, in an effort to solve this debt problem.

¹⁹Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 222.

²⁰L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 328. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

In its debt consolidation negotiations with China, Japan hoped to obtain the cooperation of the British and Americans. But the British opposed joint efforts in dealing with foreign loans and the Americans believed China's credit would best be restored by strengthening the Chinese Central Government and stabilizing its finances.²¹

In addition to achieving the liquidation of some of its outstanding debts, China also sought the termination of extraterritoriality. As Akira Iriye has noted, "Nanking officials wanted to reach quick understanding with Japan so that Britain and the United States could be induced to fall in line."²² When Japan, Great Britain, the United States, and France began to discuss the issue of China's territorial integrity, the Nationalist Government threatened to declare unilaterally the abolishment of extraterritoriality. The extraterritoriality problem with Japan, however, was interwoven with the more volatile issue of Manchuria--one could not be solved without the other.²³

²¹Iriye, *After Imperialism*, pp. 279-82. The so-called silver bloc, led by the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Key Pittman of Nevada, wanted to loan silver to China. But many American businessmen as well as the Chinese Government opposed this approach.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 286-87.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 287-89. Although draft treaties were arranged with the British and the Americans, final settlement of the extraterritoriality issue was postponed until 1943.

Two incidents in the summer of 1931 disrupted Chinese-Japanese diplomatic activity. The first was the Wanpaoshan Incident. On 1 July 1931 armed Chinese clashed with Korean immigrants at Wanpaoshan (west of Changchun, Manchuria). The Koreans had leased land in the area and were constructing an irrigation canal which would inundate the area. Although there were no fatalities and the Chinese and Japanese police quelled the disturbance, Korean-Chinese antagonism spread to Korea.²⁴ There, beginning on 3 July 1931, Koreans killed 127 Chinese, wounded 393, and destroyed much property over a three day period.²⁵ Meanwhile, the Nakamura incident also served to heighten Chinese-Japanese tensions. Captain Nakamura Shintaro was a Japanese intelligence officer performing a secret mission in Manchuria. When he mysteriously disappeared, the Kwantung Army and consular officials concluded that Chinese troops had killed him.²⁶

In their preoccupation with the Great Depression, American officials failed to perceive the mounting frustrations and discontent seething within Japan.²⁷ The

²⁴Ibid., pp. 290-91.

²⁵Denna Frank Fleming, The United States and World Organization, 1920-1933 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 395. (Hereafter cited as Fleming, The United States.)

²⁶Iriye, After Imperialism, p. 291.

²⁷Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 130.

Japanese resented the lower ratio accorded them at the London Naval Conference, the Oriental exclusion policy adopted by the United States in 1924, the failure of Great Britain and the United States to cooperate with them in Chinese debt consolidation, and the collapse of both the American and Chinese markets which created dissatisfaction among those suffering from falling incomes and unemployment. As Akira Iriye observed, "the year 1930 saw an alliance between these malcontents and the military critics of civilian foreign policy. Perhaps this is the most crucial factor in the history of pre-1931 Japanese militarism."²⁸

This resentment was channeled into opposition against the civilian government. In Iriye's view, "professional diplomats, epitomized by Shidehara, seemed to represent wealth, power, and education and to have failed to attend to the needs of the people."²⁹ In an attempt to appeal to the discontented Japanese, the military radicals began to advocate a "national renovation." According to Iriye, Shidehara's policies were now undermined at two levels: "The military opposed him because he chose to have confidence in friendship with Britain and the United States, while the economically dissatisfied masses attacked him for the class he represented."³⁰ On the other hand, the

²⁸Iriye, After Imperialism, pp. 283-84.

²⁹Ibid., p. 284.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 284-85.

military leaders were divided over their goals. Should they conduct a coup d'état while simultaneously conquering Manchuria? Some advocated dual action while others supported a "Manchuria first" policy. Still others advocated that a coup d'état precede the conquest of Manchuria.³¹

The Mukden Incident

Staff officers of the Kwantung Army were becoming increasingly alarmed over the increasing attempts by the Chinese Nationalists to undermine the Japanese economy in Southern Manchuria. The Chinese were attempting to put the South Manchurian Railway out of business by constructing an ingenious system of small rail lines which when completed and linked would surround the Japanese line. They were also planning to construct a port at Hulutao to compete with Japan's port at Darien. The Japanese were unwilling to permit the ruin of the railway just as Soviet Russia had not permitted a similar situation in regard to their Chinese Eastern Railway.³²

The Kwantung Army officers concocted a scheme to manufacture an incident which would provide them with a pretext for occupying all of Manchuria. The general staff

³¹Ibid., pp. 292-93.

³²Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 21.

officers in Tokyo endorsed the plan.³³ A patriotic Japanese, named Shumei Okawa, had presented certain army officers with a plan to overthrow the government in the spring of 1931. In Robert Ferrell's view, however, "his was not the mind behind the Mukden Incident, for that affair seems to have been the singular achievement of Colonel Seishira Itagaki of the headquarters staff of the Kwantung Army, assisted by several fellow officers."³⁴ Itagaki, who was later executed for war crimes by the Allies, seems to have planned to achieve peace, tranquility, and happiness in Manchuria through Kodo--the Imperial Way. This was to be a steppingstone to the Showa Restoration in Japan.³⁵

The Kwantung Army claimed Chinese troops blew up thirty-one inches of the track of the South Manchurian Railway at a spot a few miles north of Mukden on the night of 18 September 1931. The Japanese indicated the incident required defensive action by their troops; the Chinese accused the Japanese of merely concocting the incident for the purpose of taking Manchuria. Within minutes of the

³³Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 132.

³⁴Ferrell, American Diplomacy, p. 125. These officers were Lieutenant Colonel Ishihara, Lieutenant Colonel Kingoro Hashimoto, and Captain Isamu Cho. Although Okawa claimed to have participated in the planning, Itagaki appears to have been the actual leader.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 125-26.

supposed incident, the Japanese admitted the Mukden Express miraculously jumped the gap.³⁶ As Ethan Ellis observed,

If, as the Japanese claimed, the explosion ripped apart thirty-one inches of track, at a point where two rails joined, how was it possible for the southbound express from Changchun to cross the gap at full speed and reach Mukden on time and intact?³⁷

Although refusing to permit foreigners to examine the gap, the commander of the Kwantung Army displayed a collection of items from the alleged explosion such as iron plates, bent spikes, and sections of shattered crossties. Revelations after World War II at the Tokyo War Crimes Trial proved the Mukden Incident was a fraud. The Japanese Government had discovered the plot and ordered the Minister of War to send an officer to investigate. The officer was apparently one of the conspirators, however, and did nothing to prevent the incident.³⁸

Meanwhile, the small (10,400 troops) but highly efficient Kwantung Army began a gradual conquest of Manchuria. Although Chang Hsüeh-liang's army numbered over 200,000, its ineptitude was soon manifest. Mukden was easily overrun by Japanese troops and Chang's code was captured. Despite the probability of its capture, Chang delayed changing the cipher for weeks. Meanwhile,

³⁶Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 223.

³⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 331.

³⁸Ferrell, "Stimson," pp. 223-24.

dissension from the Communists and rebellious warlords within Chiang Kai-shek's ranks prevented him from supplying Chang aid.³⁹

It appeared that most Japanese supported the actions of the Kwantung Army. On the other hand, the Emperor, his advisors, the major industrial leaders, and civilian leaders, like Prime Minister Reijiro Wakatsuki and Foreign Minister Shidehara, opposed the army's actions. Although the War Minister, Lieutenant General Jiro Mimani, promised to restrain his troops, each day the Kwantung Army widened its area of occupation. The civilian authorities proved incapable of stemming the tide. Their policy of cooperation with the West had failed and the impact of the Great Depression, the patriotic appeals of the military leaders, the corruption and factionalism of Japanese political parties, and the antidemocratic nature of Japanese feudal traditions combined to place the military in control of policy.⁴⁰

Stimson and American Cooperation
with the League

The Kwantung Army selected an auspicious moment for its conspiracy. The rest of the world was preoccupied with

³⁹Ferrell, American Diplomacy, pp. 127-28.

⁴⁰Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 133; Ferrell, American Diplomacy, p. 129.

the Great Depression. In the United States ten million people were unemployed and the stock market averages were at an all-time low.⁴¹ Hoover and Stimson had little energy left for the Manchurian crisis. Stimson, however, was aware of the serious questions raised by the Mukden Incident. What was the extent of the Japanese Army's responsibility for the crisis? Could the civilian government in Japan restrain its army? If America exerted pressure on the Japanese to withdraw, would it merely increase the influence of the military? How much support would the depression-ridden American public give to a strong stand against Japanese aggression by its government? How much support would the United States receive from other nations? What should be the relationship of the United States to the League of Nations in responding to the crisis?⁴²

Stimson's initial decision was to adopt a policy of caution. According to his diary, Stimson decided to ". . . let the Japanese know we are watching them and at the same time to do it in such a way that will help Shidehara, who is on the right side, and not play into the hands of any Nationalist agitators on the other."⁴³ Stimson's cautious

⁴¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 332-33.

⁴²Ferrell, "Stimson," pp. 225-26; Borg, The United States, p. 2.

⁴³Christopher Thorne, The Limits of Foreign Policy: The West, the League and the Far Eastern Crisis of 1931-1933 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1973), p. 158. (Hereafter cited as Thorne, Limits of Foreign Policy.)

approach was supported by Hoover, Johnson, and Hornbeck. Castle believed American policy makers should accept Japanese dominance in Eastern Asia, and Ambassador Cameron Forbes in Tokyo defended Japanese policy. Some Americans suggested an analogy between Japan's actions in Manchuria and American action in the Caribbean.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Stimson had reached a decision on what should be American policy regarding the League. On 23 September 1931 Stimson dispatched a note to the American Consul in Geneva, Hugh Wilson. Stimson believed American policy should first urge that ". . . Japan and China themselves effect a settlement through direct negotiation." If this method proved ineffective, the second step should be to encourage China and Japan to submit their dispute to the League for settlement. If this proved impracticable, the final step should be ". . . to consider the machinery of article 7 of the Washington Nine-Power Treaty of 6 February 1922, or action such as may be practicable under the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact."⁴⁵

Stimson suggested to Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary-General of the League, that any provocative gesture such as

⁴⁴Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 135.

⁴⁵Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1931, vol. 3: The Far West (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 49. (Hereafter cited as Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931.)

sending a commission of inquiry should be avoided because the Japanese might "flare up" at the idea. Stimson indicated the United States would not interfere with the normal workings of League machinery but would hold the Nine-Power Treaty and Kellogg Pact in reserve, ". . . so that through them, America could 'pull [the League] out if they got into trouble,' perhaps by offering to act as a mediator."⁴⁶

Some authors, such as Denna F. Fleming, have been critical of Stimson's initial refusal to support the League. Fleming contends that if the State Department had developed closer contacts with the League in previous disputes, ". . . it would have realized the crucial importance of swift, united action at the start, and especially of finding out at once and by impartial inquiry what the facts were."⁴⁷ It is conceivable that the League could have sent a commission of inquiry earlier than it did had the United States given immediate support for such a project. A joint statement by the Western powers urging restraint, or even a withdrawal of ambassadors, might have proven feasible. As Christopher Thorne has written, "it seems likely that the Kwantung Army would have pressed on in open defiance, and might well have received widespread backing in Japan."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Thorne, Limits of Foreign Policy, pp. 158-59.

⁴⁷Fleming, The United States, p. 398.

⁴⁸Thorne, Limits of Foreign Policy, pp. 165-66.

On 30 September 1931 the League Council passed a resolution which requested Japan to withdraw its troops from the area they had occupied since the Mukden Incident. The council then recessed until mid-October. The Japanese, however, merely ignored the League resolution and on 8 October began bombing Chinchow. The bombing of Chinchow shocked Stimson out of his former complacent mood and he now began to consider new American initiatives to restore peace to the Far East.⁴⁹

Stimson obtained Hoover's permission to direct the American Consul at Geneva, Prentiss Gilbert, to participate in the deliberations when the League Council reconvened in mid-October.⁵⁰ The Japanese objected to a nonmember sitting with the council and contended that such an invitation required the unanimous consent of the council. The council president, Aristide Briand of France, replied that it was a procedural question that could be decided by majority vote.⁵¹ The council overruled Japan and on 16 October Gilbert appeared before the League Council.⁵²

⁴⁹Borg, The United States, p. 3; Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 135. Japan's bombing of Chinchow shocked world opinion because aerial attacks upon civilians were regarded as unjustifiable acts of brutality.

⁵⁰Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931, 3:154, 164, 167, 278.

⁵¹Fleming, The United States, pp. 403-4.

⁵²Borg, The United States, p. 4.

Meanwhile, Stimson remained acutely aware that he could take no action which would appear to make the United States a member of the League.⁵³ He personally telephoned Gilbert and reminded him to "keep modestly in the background" during the discussions and to talk only upon possible invocation of the Paris Pact.⁵⁴ Gilbert attended only four council meetings and only spoke twice.⁵⁵ But many League members wanted to treat Gilbert's initial appearance as a great occasion since it might signify the end of so-called "American isolationism."⁵⁶

The significance of Gilbert's initial visit provided the occasion for a seriocomic affair about where he was to sit. According to Ferrell, Stimson wrote in his diary that

. . . there came a telephone call from Geneva from Gilbert, bringing up again this infernal question of his seat at the table. Briand seemed to think that if we moved his seat from the table it would upset the whole stability of Europe, and then Gilbert read me a terrible long message from Briand on the subject . . . finally I decided that so long as Gilbert kept out of secret meetings . . . I would let him go on sitting at the damned table. He is, however to keep his mouth shut. . . .⁵⁷

⁵³Paul H. Clyde, "The Diplomacy of 'Playing No Favorites': Secretary Stimson and Manchuria," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 35 (September 1948):202.

⁵⁴Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931,
3:205.

⁵⁵Fleming, The United States, p. 404.

⁵⁶Borg, The United States, p. 4.

⁵⁷Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 228.

On 17 October 1931 the League Council (with the exception of Japan and China) decided to invoke the Kellogg-Briand pact by reminding Japan and China to seek a peaceful settlement of their dispute. Notes were sent to the nations by the individual signatories of the pact.⁵⁸ On 19 October Stimson informed Gilbert to cease attending meetings. Briand, Drummond, and the British representative, Lord Reading, urged Stimson to permit Gilbert to remain. They implied that his retirement would be interpreted as a rebuff to the League. Stimson acquiesced and permitted Gilbert to attend one more League Council meeting.⁵⁹

On 24 October 1931 the League Council agreed on a resolution. Japan and China were requested to settle their differences and Japan was called upon to withdraw from the occupied areas of Manchuria before the next scheduled council meeting on 16 November.⁶⁰ After Stimson expressed disapproval of establishing a time limit, the League Council drafted a new note merely urging Japan to withdraw but omitting the deadline. Stimson still hoped for a local

⁵⁸Borg, The United States, p. 5.

⁵⁹Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1933, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1949; reprint ed., New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1972), 1:248.

⁶⁰Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931, 3:366; Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan: 1931-1941, 2 vols. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943; reprint ed., New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1972), 1:36.

settlement between China and Japan and was anxious to avoid creating any further Japanese resentment toward American involvement in the crisis.⁶¹

As mid-November approached Stimson again decided to send a representative to cooperate with the League Council. But Gilbert's presence had been given too much significance in the opinion of Stimson.⁶² Rumors had circulated that the United States would soon join the League and that any action taken by the League Council would receive the complete support (even military) of the United States.⁶³ This time Stimson selected an internationally known figure, former Vice-President and currently Ambassador to Great Britain, Charles G. Dawes.⁶⁴ Stimson wanted Dawes to communicate with the League Council without creating the publicity that had characterized the presence of Gilbert.⁶⁵ Dawes replied that he would "lay low" and confer with individual League Council members on an informal basis in his luxurious suite at the Ritz Hotel.⁶⁶

⁶¹Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 338.

⁶²Borg, The United States, pp. 5-6.

⁶³Ferrell, American Diplomacy, p. 142.

⁶⁴Borg, The United States, p. 6.

⁶⁵Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931, 3:407, 452.

⁶⁶Borg, The United States, p. 6.

Dawes possessed limited knowledge of the intricacies of Sino-Japanese rivalries in the Orient.⁶⁷ Robert E. Olds, a State Department official, wrote that Dawes "' . . . made a very unfortunate impression here. He has become about as popular as a rattle snake. . . .'"⁶⁸ On one occasion Dawes became confused and addressed the Japanese Ambassador to Paris, Kenkichi Yoshizawa, as Mr. Yoshiwara. Dawes did not realize the latter name was that of the Tokyo brothel district. On another occasion he informed Japan's Ambassador to Great Britain, Tsuneo Matsudaira, that "'the Chinese are altogether too cocky. What you people need to do is to give them a thoroughly good licking to teach them their place and then they will be willing to talk sense.'"⁶⁹

When it appeared that the League Council might adopt economic sanctions against Japan, Stimson conferred with Hoover concerning the American position on the matter. Hoover was strongly opposed to an embargo. According to Stimson's biographer, Elting E. Morrison, "ever since Versailles Hoover had felt that sanctions applied to a large nation meant war."⁷⁰ Hoover believed sanctions bred

⁶⁷Ferrell, American Diplomacy, p. 144.

⁶⁸Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 231.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 232.

⁷⁰Elting E. Morrison, Turmoil and Tradition: A Study of the Life and Times of Henry L. Stimson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 382. (Hereafter cited as Morrison, Turmoil.)

"incurable hatreds" and he would not go around "'sticking pins in tigers.'"⁷¹ Hoover also stated that "'we would not under any event go to war and that that was contrary to our present policy and contrary to the views of the world.'"⁷² Stimson, therefore, directed Dawes to announce that the United States would not be willing to impose economic sanctions on Japan as it believed measures such as an embargo were a prelude to war.⁷³

The day of 16 November passed and Japan had not withdrawn from the occupied areas in Manchuria. Aware of the bad publicity they were receiving and concerned about the League threat of imposing economic sanctions, the Japanese proposed that the League sponsor a committee of inquiry. China agreed only with reluctance because in the interim period Japan would be permitted to retain full possession of her gains pending the report of the commission.⁷⁴

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 339. Richard N. Current contends that "Hoover looked upon disarmament, rather than economic warfare, as the proper means to implement a pact of peace." See Richard N. Current, Secretary Stimson: A Study in Statecraft (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), p. 107.

⁷³Papers Relating to Foreign Relations, 1931, 3:488.

⁷⁴Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 340-43; Borg, The United States, p. 7.

On 10 December 1931 the Commission of Inquiry was established. The five members were the Earl of Lytton (Victor Alexander George Robert Bulwer Lytton), chairman, Major General Frank R. McCoy of the United States, Dr. Heinrich Schnee of Germany, Count Luigi Aldrovandi-Marescotti of Italy, and General Henri-Edouard Claudel of France.⁷⁵ The Japanese had cleverly evaded the likelihood of an embargo by suggesting and approving the establishment of the commission. Within the American Government, Stimson, Klots, and Rogers had favored an embargo but Castle, Hornbeck, and Hoover advocated a more cautious approach. The discussions conducted by Dawes also reveal that the British and the French had no greater desire for sanctions than did Hoover.⁷⁶

Stimson and the Nonrecognition Doctrine

Shortly after the establishment of the Lytton Commission, the Japanese Government of Prime Minister Wakatsuki and Foreign Minister Shidehara was driven from office. This ended Shidehara's moderate policy. The new government under Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai was dominated by the military. On 2 January 1932 the Kwantung Army captured Chinchow. All of South Manchuria now belonged

⁷⁵Fleming, The United States, p. 435.

⁷⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 342-43.

to the Japanese. This new aggression proved the insincerity of Japan's promise to halt operations pending the report of the Lytton Commission.⁷⁷

The Japanese conquest of Chinchow greatly angered Stimson. Three and one-half months of caution had failed. It was obvious that the Japanese would not obey the League. Stimson decided the United States must resort to unilateral action. As he states, it was time to "' . . . wind it up with a snap.'"⁷⁸ But he realized neither Hoover nor the depression-ridden American public would support war.⁷⁹

The American Minister to China, Nelson T. Johnson, recommended to Stimson that:

It seems to me that the powers signatory to the Kellogg Treaty owe it to themselves and to the world to pronounce themselves in regard to this Japanese act of aggression which I consider to have been deliberately accomplished in utter and cynical disregard of obligations which Japan as a nation shares with the other signatories of the pact.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Borg, The United States, pp. 7-8; Ellis Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 343-44.

⁷⁸Borg, The United States, p. 8.

⁷⁹Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 236.

⁸⁰Russell D. Buhite, Nelson T. Johnson and American Policy Toward China, 1925-1941 (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1968), p. 64. Buhite notes that Johnson believed the fate of Manchuria was of secondary importance as compared with the fate of the League. "Japan could control Manchuria and it would make little difference to the United States. However, if the Kellogg Pact and other peace apparatus were spurned, the world was headed for 'a new Sarajevo'" [p. 65].

Stimson believed the situation called for a quick, decisive move. Disappointed with League efforts, he now abandoned conciliation and adopted a policy of diplomatic coercion. He decided, in conjunction with Hoover, to issue a unilateral declaration immediately but to frame it so broadly that any nation which so desired could follow suit.⁸¹ On 3 January 1932 Stimson drafted his famous nonrecognition note. He rewrote it the following day and Hoover approved it. Two more days were spent refining it and it was dispatched to China and Japan on 7 January 1932.⁸² The note read, in part, as follows:

The American Government . . . cannot admit the legality of any situation de facto nor does it intend to recognize any treaty or agreement . . . which may impair the treaty rights of the United States or its citizens in China, including those which related to the sovereignty, the independence, or the territorial and administrative integrity of the Republic of China, nor to the international policy relative to China, commonly known as the open door policy; and that it does not intend to recognize any situation, treaty, or agreement which may be brought about by means contrary to the covenants and obligations of the Pact of Paris of August 27, 1928, to which Treaty both China and Japan, as well as the United States are parties.⁸³

There is general agreement that the Stimson doctrine was obviously based upon the Bryan-Lansing note of 11 May 1915. Robert Lansing drafted and Secretary of State William

⁸¹Borg, The United States, pp. 8-9.

⁸²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 344-45.

⁸³Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Japan, 1931-1941, 1:76; Ferrell, "Stimson," pp. 238-39.

Jennings Bryan revised a note in response to the Twenty-one Demands levied by Japan against China during World War I. The Bryan note was designed to protect the principle of the Open Door.⁸⁴ It stated that the United States could not recognize any situation in China which impaired the ". . . treaty rights of the United States and its citizens in China, the political or territorial integrity of the Republic of China, or the international policy relative to China commonly known as the Open Door policy."⁸⁵ It should be noted, however, that Stimson utilized stronger diplomatic language than Bryan. Bryan stipulated nonrecognition only of agreements or undertakings, whereas Stimson indicated nonrecognition of "any situation de facto." This would include nonrecognition of a new and independent Manchurian state.⁸⁶

There is disagreement about who first suggested the idea to Stimson. It appears that Hoover first suggested the notion of using nonrecognition in a conversation with Stimson on 9 November 1931 (after the Japanese conquered Tsitsihar). It seems likely, however, that the matter could have been discussed in the State Department prior to Hoover's suggestion. Morrison, for example, suggests that there is tentative evidence connecting Rogers with making

⁸⁴Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 344.

⁸⁵Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, pp. 194-95.

⁸⁶Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 249.

the original proposal. Stimson recorded in his diary that he had conveyed Hoover's suggestion to Castle, Klots, and Hornbeck and that "'Hornbeck had advanced the rather common idea that this remedy didn't amount to anything because we had tried it in 1915.'"⁸⁷ But the idea of nonrecognition was raised again in a letter to Stimson from the news commentator, Walter Lippmann, on 22 December 1931.⁸⁸

Current contends that Hoover always believed the Stimson doctrine should be called the "Hoover-Stimson doctrine." Hoover preferred the latter because he believed it would be a political asset in his campaign for reelection. But Stimson never gave Hoover credit for the doctrine.⁸⁹

Current concluded that it ". . . may properly be called the Hoover-Stimson doctrine in the form in which it developed from 1931 to 1933, since it was then suggested by Hoover and formulated by Stimson."⁹⁰ But nonrecognition had a different meaning for each man. As Current notes, for Hoover ". . . nonrecognition remained a final and sufficient measure, a substitute for economic pressure or military force, a formula looking toward conciliation and peace and

⁸⁷Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 346-47.

⁸⁸Morrison, Turmoil, p. 284.

⁸⁹Current, "Stimson," p. 172.

⁹⁰Richard N. Current, "The Stimson Doctrine and the Hoover Doctrine," American Historical Review 59 (April 1954): 541.

relying on the moral force of public opinion for its effect."⁹¹ That was the Hoover doctrine.

On the other hand, Current suggests that Stimson believed nonrecognition was ". . . a preliminary to economic and military sanctions, a way of drawing sharp the issue between the United States . . . and Japan, a means of laying down the ideological grounds for war if, as he expected, war eventually should come."⁹² That was the Stimson doctrine--or, perhaps the Stimson-Roosevelt doctrine. Since the latter view ultimately prevailed, Current believes it is justifiable that the policy of nonrecognition should bear Stimson's name.⁹³

Stimson later indicated that the nonrecognition doctrine was the greatest constructive achievement of his life.⁹⁴ Initial reports from Geneva indicated widespread support for Stimson's note among the members of the League and a New York Times editorial declared that "if Mr.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 542.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid. Ethan Ellis and Amin Rappaport concur with Current's interpretation but by a different reasoning process. They believe that since the fall of Chinchow led Stimson to enunciate the policy which would otherwise have gone unborn, the term "Stimson doctrine" is the most valid title for the nonrecognition policy. See Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 347.

⁹⁴Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 262. (Hereafter cited as Stimson and Bundy, On Active Service.)

Stimson's views prevail . . . they will give to the Briand-Kellogg Pact a power and scope which few supposed it had."⁹⁵ Quincy Wright, a noted authority on international relations, wrote, "'no diplomatic note of recent or even more distant years . . . is likely to go down in history as of greater significance in the development of international law.'"⁹⁶ With the publication of this note, according to McGeorge Bundy, Stimson became ". . . the outstanding advocate of collective condemnation of Japan."⁹⁷

Unfortunately, the Stimson doctrine had few constructive results. Much to Stimson's chagrin, the British failed to support him nor, perhaps due to the British example, did any other government.⁹⁸ The British were immersed in the problems created by the Great Depression and, like Hoover, believed the Nine-Power Treaty and the Kellogg-Briand Pact were to be "moral instruments" rather than military alliances that required the use of force to sustain the Open Door or world peace.⁹⁹ The

⁹⁵New York Times, 8 January 1932, p. 2; New York Times, 9 January 1932, p. 16.

⁹⁶Thorne, Limits of Foreign Policy, p. 414.

⁹⁷Stimson and Bundy, On Active Service, p. 236.

⁹⁸Borg, The United States, p. 9.

⁹⁹Gerald E. Wheeler, "Isolated Japan: Anglo-American Diplomatic Co-operation, 1927-1936," Pacific Historical Review 30 (May 1961):172.

British believed, as they had since the beginning of the twentieth century, that Manchuria was a legitimate sphere of interest for the Japanese. The British regarded it as an area to absorb the energies of Japan that might otherwise be directed toward the Yangtze Valley (the British sphere of influence) or even Australia or India. The British and French reluctance to support Stimson was also an indication of their view that a strong Japan was a desirable counterweight to Russian Communism.¹⁰⁰

In their reply to Stimson's note, the Japanese denied they were resorting to any improper acts and concluded sarcastically that the United States had always been ". . . alive to the exigencies of Far Eastern questions"--meaning American imperialistic activity in Hawaii and the Philippine Islands.¹⁰¹

Although Stimson's role in the Manchurian crisis did not end with the nonrecognition note, a detailed analysis of the subsequent events are beyond the scope of this study. Stimson's note did not halt the Japanese advance. When the Japanese attacked Shanghai in late January 1932, Stimson attempted to obtain British support for a joint Anglo-American invocation of the Nine-Power Pact. Six days of transatlantic telephone conversations with the British

¹⁰⁰Griswold, Far Eastern Policy, pp. 425-26; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 362.

¹⁰¹Ferrell, American Diplomacy, pp. 160-61.

Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, led only to what Stimson termed as a British "rebuff" to his proposal.¹⁰²

Although Chinese resistance forced them to withdraw from Shanghai on 18 February 1932, the Japanese were able to create the independent state of Manchukuo in Southern Manchuria. Acting on the advice of Rogers, Stimson made another verbal effort to rally world opinion to support stronger measures against Japan. Stimson addressed a public letter to Senator William E. Borah. In the letter Stimson reminded Japan that failure to observe the Nine-Power Pact would justify American reconsideration of the nonfortification provisions of the Five-Power Treaty.¹⁰³ This was an implicit threat that if further acts of Japanese aggression occurred the United States might fortify Guam and the Philippine Islands.¹⁰⁴

As in the case of the nonrecognition doctrine, the Borah letter had little effect on the British and the French. The smaller nations of the League wanted to follow it up by invoking economic sanctions against Japan. The British and the French were able to block the move, however,

¹⁰²Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 350-51.

¹⁰³Ibid., pp. 352-53.

¹⁰⁴Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 254. Stimson said in retrospect that the Borah letter had at least five unnamed addressees. It was designed to encourage China, enlighten the American public, exhort the League, stir up the British, and warn Japan. See Current, Secretary Stimson, pp. 100-101.

and the League Assembly settled for a milder resolution which amounted to a nonrecognition resolution.¹⁰⁵

Stimson's final effort to block Japanese aggression was an attempt to link the United States with the League enforcement machinery through the Kellogg Pact. But Hoover forced Stimson to eliminate the more forceful passages he had planned in a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations, on 9 August 1932.¹⁰⁶

On 3 October 1932 the Lytton Commission published its report. Although critical of both China and Japan, it noted that Japanese actions had far exceeded any Chinese provocations. The report recommended that Japanese investments in Manchuria should remain but Chinese sovereignty in the area should be preserved. Japan rejected the report and withdrew from the League of Nations on 24 February 1933.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

In some respects the United States followed Stimson's policies more closely after his departure from the

¹⁰⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 354; Ferrell, "Stimson," p. 256.

¹⁰⁶Neu, Troubled Encounter, p. 141; Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, pp. 358-60.

¹⁰⁷Ferrell, "Stimson," pp. 256-59.

State Department. During Roosevelt's Administration Secretary of State Cordell Hull applied nonrecognition to the Italian conquest of Ethiopia. As Secretary of War under Roosevelt in 1940-1941, Stimson was finally able to witness the imposition of an embargo on Japan. He also witnessed the Japanese response on 7 December 1941.

During the Nuremberg Trials of 1946, the chief American prosecutor, Justice Robert H. Jackson, quoted Stimson when he justified the charges against the accused as being in violation of the Kellogg Pact. During the Korean conflict the columnist James Reston implied American policy was a consequence of Stimsonian guidelines when he wrote, "'to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Mr. Stimson was much more than an illustrious predecessor. He was a personal hero, carefully studied and perhaps unconsciously followed.'"¹⁰⁸ The Eisenhower-Dulles as well as Truman-Acheson opposition to Communist aggression also owes a debt to the policies of Stimson.¹⁰⁹

Several observers have frequently concluded that the Manchurian crisis was the first link in a clear and carefully planned chain of events from 1931 to 1941. The British League delegate, Viscount Robert Cecil, believed Japanese aggression encouraged Italian and German aggression. Stimson later commented that the road to

¹⁰⁸Current, "Stimson," pp. 178-79.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 179.

World War II began on the railroad tracks near Mukden. Historian Sara R. Smith wrote that "the road from Manchuria led directly through Ethiopia to Spain, to Munich and Warsaw, and back across the Pacific to Pearl Harbor."¹¹⁰

It seems more plausible, however, to conclude that the Manchurian crisis preceded, and had links with, World War II but did not cause it. By the same token the Manchurian crisis did not cause the downfall of the League but it did deliver a major blow to its prestige and reveal some of the League's inherent weaknesses.¹¹¹ It is more difficult to analyze the role of Stimson. Stimson blamed the British for their failure to support the United States in a joint statement opposing Japanese aggression. Stimson's pronouncements, however, as Christopher Thorne has indicated, "encouraged the expectation that one could exert influence without accepting responsibility."¹¹² Sara R. Smith concluded that "the simple fact is there was no one to take the lead. The United States would not do so and, . . . Great Britain felt she could not run the risk. . . ."¹¹³

¹¹⁰Sara R. Smith, The Manchurian Crisis, 1931-1932: A Tragedy in International Relations (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 261. (Hereafter cited as Smith, The Manchurian Crisis.)

¹¹¹Thorne, Limits of Foreign Policy, pp. 405-8.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹³Smith, Manchurian Crisis, p. 261.

Stimson himself, in later years, admitted his approach had been inadequate. In light of the opposition of the British, the President, and the League to sanctions, however, it is difficult to think of a viable alternative. Perhaps the problem rested with the earlier failure to provide sufficient enforcement machinery in the Nine-Power and Kellogg-Briand Pacts. These treaties, as well as Stimson's nonrecognition doctrine, were framed in the idealistic, legalistic, and moralistic framework that has been such a common feature in American diplomacy. George F. Kennan provided an appropriate conclusion when he wrote the following in 1951:

Today we have fallen heir to the problems and responsibilities the Japanese had faced and borne in the Korean-Manchurian area for nearly half a century, and there is a certain perverse justice in the pain we are suffering from a burden which, when it was borne by others, we held in such low esteem.¹¹⁴

Although Stimson miscalculated in his judgment of the future, he deserves praise for his sincere, vigorous, and ingenious efforts to halt aggression in the face of overwhelming obstacles. Stimson's persistent and resourceful efforts to formulate an activist policy were thwarted, however, by the inertia manifested not only by the President, Congress, public opinion, and the press, but by the representatives of France, Great Britain, and the

¹¹⁴George F. Kennan, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 52.

League of Nations as well.¹¹⁵ A venture into the realm of speculation is irresistible. If Stimson had accepted the British position and recognized that Japan had legitimate interests in Manchuria, the political situation as well as the balance of power in Eastern Asia might be more favorable to American interests today.

¹¹⁵Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 361.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Generalizations, according to historian Chester G. Starr, are the summation of those views of historical explanation and causation which the historian has exhibited in the selection and arrangement of his factual data. In Starr's view generalizations "are useful to the historian not only as valid inferences and summations of specific historical facts but also as stimuli for further thought."¹ The manner in which the historian phrases his generalizations reflects his opinion of the best mode of communicating his thoughts to others. Generalizations serve their purpose if they assist us in understanding a particular situation and enable us to communicate this understanding to others. Since generalizations are a vital part of the American college survey course, it is important for the history teacher to be knowledgeable about the historiography of his

¹Chester G. Starr, "Reflections Upon the Problem of Generalization," in Generalization in the Writing of History: A Report of the Committee on Historical Analysis of the Social Science Research Council, ed. Louis Gottschalk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 3, 12.

subject.² The history teacher should avoid either of two extremes: (1) presenting facts without making generalizations and (2) making profound generalizations without any factual basis.

The generalization that American foreign policy in the 1920s was characterized by "isolationism" is questionable. It is an especially dubious characterization if it is compared with the period 1935-1941. Manfred Jonas, in his book, Isolationism in America, 1935-1941, has aptly illustrated that isolationism was far more prominent and evident in this pre-World War II period than in the 1920s.³ It is a semantic problem. If one interprets isolation to mean seclusion from, or complete abstention from and indifference toward, world affairs, the term is inaccurate if applied to the 1920s. If by isolation one means a predisposition to avoid commitments in international affairs, the term is accurate for this period. The evidence indicates that "involvement without commitment" is a more precise and meaningful term than "isolation" if one is describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. In Ethan Ellis's view "the word 'isolationism,' as applied to the

²Ibid., pp. 3, 16, 75. Chester G. Starr believes that greater attention in the training of history graduate students needs to be given to the problem of generalizing. See page 18. See, also, David H. Fischer, Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

³Manfred Jonas, Isolationism in America, 1935-1941 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966), p. 3.

Republican years, is a misnomer, except possibly in the narrow sense of refusal to join the League of Nations."⁴

In the years before World War I, Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan defined American foreign policy by the following formula: in Asia, cooperation; in the Caribbean, predominance; in Europe, abstention.⁵ Although there was much disillusionment with World War I, American participation in world affairs in the 1920s was considerable. By 1933 the United States had become heavily involved in Asian affairs as was evident by the Washington Conference, the subsequent disarmament conferences, and the Manchurian crisis. The United States Government had made it clear, however, that it was unwilling to use economic or military force in order to contain Japanese imperialism in Asia. In the Caribbean the United States retained the Monroe Doctrine but repudiated the "big brother" connotations that were implicit in the Roosevelt Corollary. In its relations with Europe the United States Government had refused to join the League of Nations or the World Court but had actively participated in the settlement of the reparations problem, the disarmament conferences, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact.

⁴L. Ethan Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, 1921-1933 (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1968), p. 36. (Hereafter cited as Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy.)

⁵Samuel Flagg Bemis, "A Clarifying Foreign Policy," The Yale Review 25 (December 1935):224.

Many American history textbooks designed for college survey courses continue to use the term "isolation" in describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. Although the six textbooks examined by this writer did not offer a specific definition of isolationism, their explanations of American foreign policy in the 1920s come closer to justifying the epigram "involvement without commitment." In The American Nation John G. Garraty entitles Chapter Twenty-seven, "Isolationism and War: 1921-1945." Although Garraty uses the term isolation frequently, he fails to present a specific definition for it. Implicit in his explanation, however, is the belief that isolation meant steering clear of entanglements and opposing international cooperation.⁶ Thomas A. Bailey describes the early years of Warren G. Harding's Administration as being an era of "semi-isolationism" during which the United States Government sought "benefits without burdens."⁷ On the other hand, Bailey discovers a modicum of acceptance of world responsibilities during the latter years of Harding's Administration and during the terms of Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover.⁸

⁶John A. Garraty, The American Nation: A History of the United States, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 743-45.

⁷Thomas A. Bailey, The American Pageant: A History of the Republic, 5th ed. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1975), pp. 808-9.

⁸Ibid., pp. 840-42.

In their textbook, American History: A Survey, Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, and Frank Freidel entitle their section on American foreign policy in the 1920s "The Resurgence of Isolationism." They describe the era as being characterized by the desire of foreign policy makers to avoid making commitments or participating in collective security agreements.⁹ Rebecca Brooks Gruver defines American foreign policy in the 1920s as being a "retreat from responsibility." In Gruver's view Americans in the 1920s "desired not simply peace, but peace through noninvolvement."¹⁰ Bernard Bailyn et al. entitle their section on the 1920s "A New International Order, 1920-1929." In their view, "although opponents within the government accused one another of being 'internationalists' or 'isolationists,' almost all shared a common desire to strike some reasonable balance between America's involvement and its detachment."¹¹ They contend that, although ". . . an aversion to new commitments surfaced repeatedly during the

⁹Richard N. Current, T. Harry Williams, and Frank Freidel, American History: A Survey, 4th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), p. 643.

¹⁰Rebecca Brooks Gruver, An American History, 2nd ed. (Reading Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1976), p. 860.

¹¹Bernard Bailyn, David Brion Davis, David Herbert Donald, John L. Thomas, Robert H. Wiebe, and Gordon S. Wood, The Great Republic (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1977), pp. 1158-59.

twenties," the United States Government did not withdraw altogether from international affairs.¹²

A virtual abandonment of the term isolation is evident in the textbook, The National Experience. John M. Blum et al. avoid using the term in both their chapter headings and in their subtitles. Their three chapters on the 1920s are entitled "War and Its Sequel," "A New Age of Business," and "The End of an Era." In their subtitles relating to foreign policy they refer to "All the Advantages," "The Image of America Abroad," "Deluded Diplomacy," and "Diplomacy in Depression." Blum et al. regard American foreign policy in the 1920s as being primarily an attempt to seek all the advantages and none of the responsibilities.¹³

Authors of textbooks for the college survey course in American history should either make reference to a specific definition for the term isolation or avoid using it completely. An examination of the sections relative to American foreign policy in the 1920s, in the six aforementioned textbooks, has convinced this writer that the explanations of the authors conform more closely to the

¹²Ibid., p. 1161.

¹³John M. Blum, Edmund S. Morgan, Willie Lee Rose, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Kenneth M. Stamp, and C. Vann Woodward, The National Experience: A History of the United States, 3rd ed. (Atlanta: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), pp. 580-82.

generalization of "involvement without commitment" than to the term isolationism. Whatever textbook is used, the teacher of the college survey course in American history should carefully define whatever term he chooses to describe American foreign policy in the 1920s.

There is a paucity of periodicals which focus primarily on pedagogical and curricular experimentation in history at the post-secondary educational level. One journal and two newsletters provide the most useful information on the subject. These publications are, respectively, The History Teacher, Group for the Use of Psychology in History, and the American Historical Association Newsletter. Other periodical sources which occasionally treat historical pedagogy at the college level are Social Studies, Community College Social Science Quarterly, and Social Education. A perusal of these scant sources, as well as the equally scarce number of books on the subject, reveal that historians have utilized a great variety of methodological approaches in their teaching. The methods are so varied, diverse, and isolated, however, that it is difficult to conceive of any trends in history curricula and pedagogy. The evaluations by both the students and the teachers of the methodology utilized indicate that any of a great variety of approaches will be successful if adequate preparation by the teacher precedes the learning process. Since history teaching is an

individual act, formulating exact specifications that insure a quality history course is probably impossible.

Descriptions of the ways history teachers approach their task, however are useful if they are regarded as possibilities for adaptation.

Prior to teaching any subject, the history teacher needs to determine his objectives, what he expects from the students, and how much interpretative knowledge he will require of the students. In making these decisions the teacher must be aware of the needs, abilities, and objectives of the students. The history teacher should also be aware of the problem of values in establishing objectives in his instruction. What value or values, for example, will be utilized in determining if American foreign policy during a certain period was good or bad? Has American foreign policy been motivated by national interests or moral responsibility? Although it is obviously motivated by national interests, the government must formulate policy that the public will support. History teachers need to explain, therefore, the motivations behind American foreign policy. History students also need to be made aware of how their values affect their judgments about history in general and American foreign policy in particular.

Historians have become concerned about what has been perceived as a disinterest in history among college students. Billy Rojas, for example, believes there are four

reasons for this trend: (1) society's current emphasis on the acquisition and development of technological skills, (2) the career-orientation of students, (3) the allegedly boring nature of survey courses, and (4) the failure of history to experiment with new teaching strategies.¹⁴ In the view of Gordon Connell-Smith and Howell A. Lloyd, historians are often more concerned with the interests of scholarship than with those of the students.¹⁵

These and other concerns about the teaching of history have had an impact on history teachers. This is evident by the increasing amount of literature that is being devoted to historical pedagogy.¹⁶ Historians are asking questions and making decisions about what should be their objectives in teaching history classes. Is the objective of the survey course, for example, to teach knowledge of the historical discipline, assist the student in acquiring self-knowledge, develop good citizens, strengthen critical thinking, or learn something about the values and beliefs of other generations? Historians are also exploring various

¹⁴Billy Rojas, "End of History," Social Studies 63 (March 1972):118-24.

¹⁵Gorden Connell-Smith and Howell A. Lloyd, The Relevance of History (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1972).

¹⁶Martin Ballard, ed., New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1970).

methodological approaches to the study of history.¹⁷ How should the course, for example, be organized? Should it be organized around specific problems, periods, topics, themes, and interpretations, or should it be arranged chronologically? A judicious blend of each of these organizational approaches might provide the most adequate format for the course. The subject of American foreign policy in the 1920s can be easily adapted to any of the aforementioned organizational approaches.

In Robert A. Waller's view the lecture method of instruction is the most frequent object of criticism in the college survey course of American history. Waller believes that "a sharp break from dependence on lectures, textbooks, and objective examinations is frequently suggested as the best means of urging the learning process on to the learner."¹⁸ A few of the new methods being utilized are the comparative approach, inquiry training, problem solving, local history, oral history, family history, and involving students in the collection and utilization of primary sources.¹⁹

¹⁷Robert A. Waller, "Teaching the Survey Course in United States History," Community College Frontiers 3 (Fall 1974):55-57.

¹⁸Robert A. Waller, "The United States History Survey Course: Challenges and Responses," The History Teacher 8 (February 1975):201.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 201-207.

The new method most suitable to the subject of American foreign policy in the 1920s is problem solving, an inquiry, or a comparative approach in the teaching of history. Students can be encouraged to find and cite examples which either refute or support the idea that American foreign policy was isolationist in the 1920s. Such an exercise should encourage discussion and stimulate the students to make comparisons with, and judgments about, contemporary foreign policy. The result should be a greater realization by the students of the importance of exercising caution when making generalizations about any subject. The teacher of the survey course in American history, however, must dare to generalize if only for the purpose of presenting a thesis for debate. Generalizations are necessary in a survey course and the professional training of historians should include instruction in how to deal with the difference between generalizations and their factual bases.²⁰

Not only should the teacher of the survey course in American history dare to generalize, he should also present an opinion on the subject. It is best, however, to withhold the opinion until the students have had an opportunity to give their opinions. This practice will avoid inhibiting the student who might disagree with the instructor. The

²⁰Louis Gottschalk, "Summary," in Generalization in History, ed. Louis Gottschalk, pp. 208-9.

teacher should emphasize that his generalizations are always tentative and subject to correction by new evidence.

Advocates of the inquiry method contend that it enables students to learn subject matter as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills which will enable them more effectively to cope with future problems. The inquiry method enables students to learn how to identify problems, to formulate hypotheses, to gather data from available sources, to test hypotheses logically, and, finally, to state generalizations. Historical facts are neither ignored nor assigned a secondary role in the inquiry method, but rather their role is different. Facts become the raw material for a better understanding of concepts, interpretations, and generalizations.²¹

The teacher should first formulate objectives for the class. The objectives for the study of American foreign policy in the 1920s could be as follow: (1) to determine whether the term isolationism is the most reasonable generalization to apply to the period, (2) if not, to formulate a generalization which better describes the period, and (3) if the evidence supports the term isolationism, to formulate a definition for the term.

²¹James R. Miller and James Hart, "Testing History as Inquiry," The History Teacher 6 (May 1973:353. (Hereafter cited as Miller and Hart, "History as Inquiry.") See, also, Byron G. Massialas and C. Benjamin Cox, Inquiry in Social Studies (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 115-135.

Another worthwhile objective could be to enable students to realize that, although generalizations are useful learning tools, care should be taken when formulating them because there are exceptions to all generalizations. By applying the inquiry method to the study of American foreign policy in the 1920s, the student should also realize that life is filled with contradictions and complexities and that generalizations can easily be turned into their opposites.

Since inquiry presupposes curiosity, the teacher's primary task is to motivate the students so they will have a desire to learn. This can be accomplished by providing them with conflicting interpretations, such as those cited in Chapter I of this work. Another approach could be to relate it to a problem. Did American foreign policies in the 1920s, for example, contribute to the outbreak of World War II? Students should then be encouraged to speculate by forming their own hypotheses about American foreign policy in the 1920s. In the next step students should ask themselves how they can know if their hypotheses are valid. They must determine what questions need to be answered to prove their hypotheses and then decide what evidence is needed to substantiate these answers.²² These speculations might include some of the following statements: (1) the United

²²Clair W. Keller, "Adding Inquiry to the 'Inquiry' Method," The History Teacher 4 (November 1970):49. (Hereafter cited as Keller, "Inquiry Method.")

States Government retreated to its traditional policy of isolationism in the 1920s because of the disillusionment with and the reaction to American involvement in World War I; (2) the United States Government accepted a leadership role after World War I and became heavily involved in international affairs; (3) the refusal of the United States to join either the League of Nations or the World Court proves that the United States reverted to a policy of isolationism after World War I; (4) although the United States Government failed to join the League of Nations and the World Court, it was heavily involved in such international issues as disarmament, war debts and reparations, and in numerous other international political problems occasioned by its relations with Europe, Latin America, and the Far East; (5) American foreign policy was characterized by both isolationism and internationalism during the 1920s; and (6) neither isolationism nor internationalism is a reasonable generalization for American foreign policy in the 1920s and another term or phrase needs to be formulated to describe the era.

The next step in the verification process consists of accumulating available data in order to examine the evidence. The textbook, monographs, newspapers, and the Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States can be utilized in this process. The class could be divided into committees organized on the basis of each

presidential administration or on a topical or chronological basis. Organization according to chronological divisions is the least desirable approach because of the difficulty in determining the divisions. The year 1922, for example, might be a suitable break for discussing matters concerning disarmament, but inappropriate for the study of United States-Latin American relations. For a similar reason, organization according to presidential administrations is not desirable.

Because of its greater adaptability, the topical approach is the most feasible when utilizing the inquiry method. The committees could be assigned such topics as disarmament, war debts and reparations, American relations with the World Court and the League of Nations, and American relations with Latin America and the Far East. Each committee could be assigned the task of determining the most reasonable generalization for its particular subject area. The committee chairman could assign the committee members either certain materials or certain topics to research. The topical approach is preferable because it will enable the student to become familiar with a variety of sources rather than only one or two.

If the committee's subject is disarmament, the workload could be divided among the committee members according to the following subtopics: the Washington Conference, the war outlawry movement, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Geneva

Conference, and the London Conference. The committee on war debts and reparations could subdivide its workload into the following subtopics: the Treaty of Versailles, the Franco-Belgian occupation of the Ruhr, the Dawes Plan, the Young Plan, President Herbert Hoover's moratorium on inter-governmental debts, and the Lausanne Conference.

Division according to the foreign policy of each Presidential Administration appears to be the best approach for the committee on American relations with the World Court and the League of Nations, as well as for the committee on American relations with Latin America and the Far East. The study of each of the Administrations could be assigned to two different committee members whose goal would be to formulate the most reasonable generalization for describing their Administration's foreign policy. Each of the committees should be charged with the responsibility for formulating a hypothesis, gathering data, analyzing the data, testing the hypothesis, and stating a generalization.

Each of the four committees should be given one classroom period to present its problem, hypotheses, sources, evidence, and generalizations. Each individual committee member or each chairman could present the report. A fifth period could be devoted to a review, summary, and discussion, conducted by the teacher, in which the entire class attempts to formulate a generalization which seems to

offer the most reasonable explanation for American foreign policy in the 1920s.

The sixth class period could be utilized for evaluation of the students. In an article in The History Teacher in 1973, James Miller and James Hart noted that "fortunately, many teachers do ask the 'right' questions in class, but unfortunately many ask the 'wrong' questions when they evaluate their students. In other words, history is taught as inquiry but not evaluated as inquiry."²³ The evaluative instrument must be designed so that it actually tests the critical thinking and problem solving skills which have been utilized in the inquiry method. The long hours spent in leading the students through the inquiry process are likely to be negated if the evaluation tests only the historical facts rather than the skills developed through the inquiry method.

Benjamin S. Bloom's editorial work, entitled Taxomy of Educational Objectives, is a valuable guide for teachers who wish to analyze the level of their test items as well as establish objectives for their classes. Although the six-level hierarchial taxonomic structure was developed as a system for classifying educational objectives, it can also be utilized for analyzing examination questions. Bloom contends that learning can be classified according to three

²³Miller and Hart, "History as Inquiry," p. 354.

major divisions--the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor domains. According to Bloom, "the cognitive domain . . . includes those objectives which deal with the recall or recognition of knowledge and the development of intellectual abilities and skills."²⁴ The affective domain includes objectives which describe changes in interest, attitudes, and values, while the psychomotor domain involves the manipulative or motor-skill area. The hierarchial levels within the cognitive domain are arranged in an ascending order of complexity labelled as knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Although Bloom implies that the student masters lower level objectives before moving to higher level objectives, the teacher can determine the student's understanding of knowledge on the lower levels by asking an upper level question.²⁵

According to Bloom, knowledge level objectives ". . . emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material, or phenomena."²⁶ A few illustrative objectives are: (1) the student will be able to list the steps involved in the inquiry process, (2) the

²⁴ Benjamin S. Bloom, ed., Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals (New York: David McKay Company, 1956), p. 7. (Hereafter cited as Bloom, Taxonomy.)

²⁵ Miller and Hart, "History as Inquiry," p. 356.

²⁶ Bloom, Taxonomy, p. 62.

student will be able to list ten major historical sources that are available for studying American foreign policy in the 1920s, and (3) the student will be able to list five major events related to American foreign affairs in the 1920s. A few illustrative questions are: (1) describe the various steps in the inquiry process, (2) list ten historical sources that are available for studying American foreign policy in the 1920s, and (3) list the major provisions contained in the Dawes Plan.

At the comprehension level, Bloom contends that students should be ". . . expected to know what is being communicated and to be able to make some use of the material or ideas contained in it."²⁷ A few illustrative objectives are: (1) the student will be able to state the problem under investigation in his own words, (2) the student will be able to define the terms isolationism, involvement, disillusionment, outlawry of war, war debts, and reparations, and (3) the student will be able to describe the causes of such major events as the Washington Conference, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Manchurian crisis. A few illustrative questions are: (1) in your own words describe the problem concerning the use of the term isolationism when referring to American foreign policy in the 1920s, (2) What is meant by the phrase outlawry of war?,

²⁷Ibid., p. 89.

and (3) What were the major issues discussed at the Washington Conference?

Application level questions require the student to apply a method, theory, principle, or abstraction to a new situation.²⁸ An illustrative objective is: the student will be able to write an essay describing those events in the 1920s which were examples of either isolationism or involvement in international affairs. A few illustrative questions are: (1) argue for and against Japanese immigration exclusion in 1924 and develop a conclusion regarding its long-range results; (2) using American foreign policy in the 1920s as a paradigm, discuss whether you believe strong nations should attempt to control international events; and (3) using the Washington Conference as an example, discuss why no real compromise is ever completely satisfactory to all parties concerned.²⁹

At the analysis level, students are required to break down the material into its constituent parts, to make explicit the relationships among elements, and to recognize the organizational principles which hold together the communication as a whole.³⁰ Two illustrative objectives

²⁸Miller and Hart, "History as Inquiry," p. 358.

²⁹Thomas A. Bailey and Hugh Ross, The American Pageant Quizbook (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1975), p. 155. (Hereafter cited as Bailey and Ross, Quizbook.)

³⁰Bloom, Taxonomy, p. 145.

are: (1) the student will be able to describe the effects of the Washington Conference, the Dawes Plan, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, and the Manchurian crisis and (2) the student will be able to describe the purpose and point of view of the various authors whose works will be examined in connection with this assignment. A few illustrative questions are: (1) Why was it misleading to argue that there was no connection between reparations and Allied war debts?, (2) How did the Washington Conference hamper the work of the League of Nations and prepare the way for the emergence of Hitler?,³¹ and (3) select one of the books you read in connection with this assignment and describe the author's purpose and point of view in regard to American foreign policy in the 1920s.

At the fifth level of Bloom's taxonomy, synthesis level objectives require the student to assemble elements and parts in order to form a pattern or structure not clearly there before.³² An illustrative objective is: the student will be able to write an essay in which he formulates a reasonable generalization for describing American foreign policy in the 1920s. A few illustrative questions are: (1) argue both sides of the

³¹Bailey and Ross, Quizbook, pp. 155, 159.

³²Bloom, Taxonomy, p. 162.

proposition that the United States should have promptly cancelled all of the Allied war debts, (2) to what extent did the attitude of the United States on war debts, reparations, and tariffs contribute to the rise of the dictators?,³³ and (3) using your research as a basis, what hypothesis concerning American foreign policy in the 1920s now seems plausible?

At the evaluation level, Bloom believes students should be able to make quantitative and qualitative judgments about the extent to which materials and methods satisfy criteria. Although evaluation is placed last in the cognitive domain, it is not necessarily the last step in thinking or problem solving. The evaluative process can be the prelude to the acquisition of new knowledge and lead to a new attempt at comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.³⁴ An illustrative objective is: the student will be able to write an essay describing logical fallacies in the argument that American foreign policy in the 1920s was isolationist. Two illustrative questions are: (1) What inconsistencies did you find in American foreign policy toward Latin America in the 1920s? and (2) cite examples of policies and events which were inconsistent with the premise that American foreign policy was isolationist in the 1920s.

³³Bailey and Ross, Quizbook, p. 159.

³⁴Bloom, Taxonomy, p. 185.

The utilization of committees, working within the framework of the inquiry method, permits a large amount of interaction among students and between the students and the teacher. It is also flexible enough to allow teachers to either increase or decrease the requirements. It can be the focal point for an entire course or for only one class period.³⁵ Its greatest value, however, is that it focuses upon the art of teaching and encourages both the teacher and the students to be creative.

Foreign policy in a democracy must conform in the long run to the popular will. It is doubtful, therefore, that the governmental leaders during 1921-1933 could have committed the nation to strong positions in international affairs. The United States had only recently acquired the status of a great power, and leadership in other countries was equally unwilling, especially during the Manchurian crisis, to make strong commitments. By their reluctance to equate involvement with commitment, however, the United States governmental leaders of the 1920s do not qualify for the attribute of greatness.³⁶ The foreign policies they developed, therefore, were not a spectacular success.

If the governmental leaders during the 1920s made mistakes, it was at least in part because they were acceding

³⁵Keller, "Inquiry Method," p. 52.

³⁶Ellis, Republican Foreign Policy, p. 369.

to the popular will. This development provides an important teaching point. It is important for students and other citizens to be knowledgeable about American foreign policy in order to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Utilization of the inquiry method, in the teaching of American foreign policy in the 1920s, can make students aware of the importance of history, strengthen their critical thinking, develop their civic awareness, and assist them in achieving one of the most important objectives of education--self-knowledge.

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